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INNOVATIVE LEADERSHIP OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AFFECTING DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP OF TEACHERS

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Abstract

Amidst the rapid technological advancements and transformations that have come to define the current era, the world has undoubtedly entered the digital age. This presents both opportunities and challenges for 21st-century citizens, fostering unprecedented levels of exchange, connectivity, and integration through technologies that have become an intrinsic part of our daily lives. This is particularly evident in the realm of communication, information exchange, and even financial transactions. In Thailand, educational institutions must establish clear goals for developing human resources, planning, and preparing a workforce that is ready to enter the job market upon graduating at various levels. The primary objective is to expand educational opportunities through digital technology. Effective educational management relies on several key administrative factors, with school administrators playing a pivotal role. School administrators must embody leadership qualities that enable them to integrate and implement technology into school practices, encompassing both instructional management for teachers and internal administrative management. Furthermore, they must actively promote innovation in teaching and learning within the institution. Notably, innovative leadership is crucial for guiding organizations towards directions that align with contemporary circumstances. This encompasses five key aspects: 1) Innovative personality traits 2) Innovative thinking 3) Innovative vision 4) Innovative risk-taking 5) Innovative team building. When school administrators demonstrate such innovative leadership, it becomes a barometer of success and the quality of their management, as well as the quality of the staff and the institution itself. Ultimately, this translates into highly effective educational management practices.

Keywords: Innovative Leadership, Digital Citizenship

Introduction

Education is crucial for national development, serving as a tool to cultivate high-quality individuals with fully realized potential. Therefore, education has been reformed into Education 4.0, focusing on human resource development, research, and innovation to enhance the country's competitiveness. Developing human resources is a key mechanism for leading the nation into the 21st-century global society, aligning with the 20-year national strategy and the development of Thailand 4.0 (Office of the Secretary-General, National Education Council, 2562, p. 150). Innovation involves applying creative ideas and concepts to produce improved outputs or work methods. This includes developing new technologies or more efficient work processes. Innovation is not merely doing something different; it means creating a positive impact on organizations and society. Creativity alone does not generate organizational innovation; it must be implemented to benefit the organization (Chaiyasert Promsri, 2561, p. 417). Educational leaders at the school level play a vital role in improving educational quality. They are key to practical and cultural change within the institution, representing the ideas and practices that enhance its value (Sheninger, 2014, p. 6). Leadership enhances organizational

efficiency and effectiveness. A lack of leadership hinders collaborative work. Therefore, leaders must possess leadership qualities: the ability to collaborate, communicate ideas effectively, embrace change, take risks, and think outside the box (George, 2012, p. 663). Modern educational administration requires innovative leaders with new ideas, methods, and approaches to effectively develop educational institutions (Othman & Rahman, 2013, p. 176). Such leaders are essential in today's world; organizations need them to drive innovation. Organizations lacking innovative leaders often lag in development (Gliddon, 2006, p. 13). Therefore, it is crucial for today's educational leaders to be innovation champions and role models (Wooi, 2013, p. 78).

The importance of education in national development during globalization, with its rapid changes in information and technology, is undeniable. To ensure quality education that adapts to the current global landscape, educational leaders require innovative leadership. This type of leadership enables the creation of new and beneficial innovations for educational institutions, fostering quality education amidst constant global change. Leaders are directly involved in creating, developing, and driving change within educational institutions – primarily, school administrators. Therefore, the need for innovative leadership among school administrators is undeniable. While success in administration stems from various factors, leadership is a key factor contributing to administrative efficiency.

The Meaning of Innovative Leadership

Several scholars offer definitions of innovative leadership:

Weiss and Legrand (2011, pp. 36-37, cited in Sukanya Chaemchoi, 2555): Define innovative leaders as those capable of addressing complex problems or opportunities, discovering novel and unprecedented approaches. These leaders possess "innovative intelligence" to effectively respond to and resolve real-world challenges, fostering organizational innovation.

Aornong Rojanwattanabool (2554): Views innovative leadership as leveraging personal strengths in competence, personality, role, and social attributes to empower individuals to create value-adding innovations for the organization.

Kanokorn Sombapran (2560, p. 85): Describes innovative leadership as possessing the knowledge to create new things to drive organizational change, implement new operational processes, and generate organizational innovation and improvements.

Chaiyasert Promsri (2561, p. 424): Contrasts innovative leadership ("innovative leaders") with conventional leadership ("Conventional Leadership"), arguing that the latter cannot lead organizations toward innovation. Modern organizations require a different leadership style.

Sukanya Chaemchoi (2562, p. 130): Characterizes innovative leadership as the ability to perceive and attend to details, conduct in-depth analysis, embrace new ideas, think creatively differently, and build upon existing concepts to find new solutions or create tangible innovations.

Sutham Thammthasananon (2564, p. 108): Defines innovative leadership as possessing competence, personality, and the ability to discover new approaches using innovative processes to drive organizational change and meet the demands of a changing era. This includes supporting creative thinking and generating tangible innovations in organizational management. In summary, innovative leadership encompasses the leader's characteristics, behaviors, or processes that utilize knowledge and skills to create innovation within educational institutions or organizations, driving staff to create innovations or devise new methods and approaches.

Kwanchonok Tonak (2556, pp. 30-37): Analyzes the components of innovative leadership for basic education administrators, identifying five key elements:

1. Visionary Change: Leaders possess foresight, modern vision, analyze trends and changes, proactively address change, and create visions that drive innovation and improve educational quality.

2. Shared Participation: Leaders establish shared goals, encourage collaboration, participate in suggestions and problem-solving, build positive relationships, promote teamwork, and foster trust, empowering everyone to create beneficial innovations.

3. Creating an Innovative Organizational Climate: Leaders foster a culture that values innovation, create a relaxed and supportive environment, encourage communication and self-development, reward and incentivize innovation, and transform the organization into an innovation-driven entity.

4. Creativity: Leaders demonstrate critical thinking, problem-solving, and work processes, encourage creative thinking, provide freedom of thought, support flexible work, create options for work practices, and encourage the application of diverse methods to create valuable innovations.

5. Risk Management: Leaders prioritize experimentation, encourage the adoption of new innovations, control activities and operations to mitigate potential harm, manage uncertainty, and systematically monitor risk management.

Pisitthawat Klinthaithong (2559, pp. 27-154): Identifies seven core components of innovative leadership indicators for secondary school administrators:

1. Innovation Vision: School administrators clearly envision the school's future, leading to change aligned with the environment, creating a school culture that aligns with all staff, and implementing the vision effectively.

2. Innovative Strategy: Administrators possess foresight, predict future trends (including the perspective of 21st-century predictions), and develop strategies to achieve their vision and goals.

3. Innovative Creativity: Administrators demonstrate expertise from knowledge, experience, and advanced work skills; they think critically, connect knowledge to new ideas, and develop abstract ideas into practical, usable innovations.

4. Change Leadership: Administrators are systematic thinkers, capable of analyzing, planning, and defining complete work processes before implementation. They utilize information and communication technologies to support innovation, promote activities fostering innovative cultures, and possess the skills to manage according to plans.

5. Innovative Risk-Taking: Administrators make quick decisions without fear of failure, handle complex problems or high-pressure situations, and accept the consequences of their decisions and actions.

6. Innovative Networking: Administrators create

Digital Citizenship

(Chutima Sacchanan, 2564, pp. 4-31; Suman Yusin, 2563, pp. 12-52) "Digital citizenship" refers to citizens who use digital media and social media with an understanding of appropriate behavioral norms, and who are capable of using media and technology safely, effectively, and responsibly.

Key characteristics of quality digital citizens (Chutima Sacchanan, 2564, pp. 4-32-4-33; Suman Yusin, 2563, pp. 12-53-12-54) include:

1. Skills in maintaining a positive online identity.
2. Critical thinking and analytical skills.
3. Skills in maintaining online safety.

4. Skills in protecting personal information.
5. Skills in managing online time.
6. Skills in managing digital data/traces.
7. Skills in coping with online bullying.
8. Skills in using online media with kindness and good manners.

Ribble (2011) states that the concept of digital citizenship helps educators and technology leaders understand what students should know to use technology appropriately. Digital citizenship is more than just a teaching tool; it's a way to prepare students for responsible technology use in a technology-saturated society.

The NSW Department of Education and Communities (2011) views digital citizenship not merely as awareness and management of online dangers, but also as the creation of safe online communities. It encompasses understanding personal data management and internet literacy, using one's online presence to safely, creatively, and inspiringly shape and change the world, and encouraging others to do the same.

Digital citizenship skills are crucial for navigating modern life, as individuals increasingly live in both the physical and digital worlds. Proficiency in both real-world and online social interactions is equally important. Scholars and organizations highlight the significance of digital citizenship as follows:

Common Sense Media (2009) notes that today's children and adolescents are leveraging the power of digital media to explore, connect, create, and learn in new ways. However, this can also lead to mistakes. Schools face related challenges such as cyberbullying, digital cheating, and digital safety concerns. These issues underscore the need for students to learn digital literacy and digital citizenship skills.

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