The Development of Ethical Leadership Development Model of School Administrators Under the Office of Primary Education Service Area

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Abstract

This research aimed to create a model for developing ethical leadership for school administrators under the Office of Primary Education Service Area through identifying the model components, examining both the current and the desirable conditions, and determining needs priorities for development. Five key components of ethical leadership for the school administrators are trust, responsibility, respect, citizenship, and fairness. The current conditions were found to be at high levels overall, whereas the desirable condition and needs for development were at the highest level, with the needs priorities listed as follows: (1) fairness, (2) citizenship, (3) responsibility, (4) respect and (5) trust, respectively. The developed model was determined, assessed, and affirmed by seven experts fully qualified in the field as the most suitable, feasible and useful.

Keywords: ethical leadership, development model, school administrators, office of primary education service area

1. Introduction

The National Education Act, which can be regarded as the highest law for education of the nation, emphasizes personal development, particularly in terms of creating beauty. This is evident in the definition of education in Section 4, Paragraph 1, which states, "Education is a learning process for the personal and social development of individuals through the imparting of knowledge, training, practice, transmission of culture, enhancement of academic progress, building a body of knowledge, and creating a learning environment and society with factors available conducive to continuous lifelong learning." The National Education Act emphasizes the development of individuals and society according to the Sufficiency Economy Principle. This means that education should help people develop their potential in all dimensions, become good people, and become talented and qualified. It should also create opportunities for everyone and promote social equality. The 2009–2018 education reform proposal aims to promote morality and ethics in a systematic way, by establishing clear goals and principles for education. These goals should emphasize the importance of morality, ethics, values, and conscience. Guidelines for education management should ensure that all aspects of education, from curriculum to assessment, promote morality and ethics and improve the learning process. This can be done by incorporating more opportunities for students to learn about morality and ethics, by providing them with positive role models, and by evaluating the effectiveness of education reform. This will help to ensure that the reforms are having the desired effect of promoting morality and ethics.

Education management is currently unable to mold children and youth into good citizens of society who can keep up with the current changes in our society, which is characterized by competition in almost every aspect. There is international competition in terms of trade, economy, politics, and technology because countries are constantly trying to improve their positions in the global market. The Thai education system is unable to keep up with the rapid changes in society, such as the rise of fashion, mobile phones, and other technologies. This has fragmented the teaching and learning process and created a disconnect between education and the real world. The Thai education system has a strong focus on academic achievement, and students are often rewarded for their grades and test scores. This can lead to neglecting other important areas of development, such as character, ethics, and social skills. The news is full of stories about children and young people behaving inappropriately. This is a clear sign that something is wrong with the way we are raising our children. A growing number of people are only interested in themselves and their own personal gain, lacking compassion for others and willing to do whatever it takes to get ahead, even if it means hurting others or destroying the environment. Current education systems often focus on developing students'

academic skills, but they often neglect their moral and ethical development. This can lead to a case of talented people lacking morality and ethics and becoming selfish and self-serving.

Leaders inspire their followers to change by meeting their needs, values, and ethics. Effective school administrators play a leadership role in education by managing educational institutions in a way that meets the needs of their students and staff. Educational personnel are also invested in education, and it is important to support them as well (Pichayapha Yuenyao, 2018). An effective leader must not only be well-versed in morality and the ability to teach people with words but also, more importantly, they must conduct themselves as good, virtuous role models (Suthep Pongsriwat, 2007). Effective school leaders motivate their staff to perform their duties with enthusiasm by having a vision, knowledge, and the ability to apply new technological processes appropriately. They guide individuals towards achieving their goals and are willing to adapt to changing conditions (Kanokorn Somprath, 2019).

School administrators need to have strong ethics in order to effectively manage schools. School administrators play a vital role in setting policies and guidelines for success. They must have the vision to foresee problems and promote the development of students in all areas of intellect, mind, knowledge, morality, ethics, and culture. They must also be able to create a positive work environment wherein staff are motivated to cooperate and participate actively in all activities. The National Education Act (B.E. 1999, Section 6) states that education must be "[t]o develop Thai people to be perfect human beings in terms of body, mind, intellect, knowledge, and morality with ethics." This means that education should not only focus on academic achievement but also on the development of students' moral character. Effective school administrators can create a positive learning environment wherein students can thrive both academically and morally. They do this by setting a good example, providing guidance and support, and creating a culture of respect and cooperation. Educational administrators are important role models for their subordinates. They should always be mindful of morals and ethics, and they should demonstrate ethical leadership by being good role models themselves. This includes teaching professional ethics to others, both in words and actions. By modeling good behavior and teaching others to do the same, educational administrators can help to create a more ethical and virtuous educational environment. Ethical leadership is important because it is scarce in today's globalized world. Unethical behavior is rampant at all levels of society, from individuals to powerful organizations. In this environment, it is more important than ever to have leaders who are guided by strong moral principles. Ethical leaders create organizations that are ethical, productive, and sustainable.

The researchers have a keen interest in the ethical leadership of school administrators. They also are motivated to study how to create a model for developing effective school administrators who can be of great service to the Education Service Area and the Thai educational system as a whole.

The research objectives aim to study the components of ethical leadership in school administrators, study the current and desirable conditions and needs of ethical leadership for school administrators under the Office of Primary Education Service Area, and develop an ethical leadership development model for school administrators under the Office of Primary Education Service Area.

2. Method

The research methodology involves research and development, divided into three phases:

Phase 1 involves a group of seven experts checking the suitability of components for ethical leadership. Phase 2 involves administrators, teachers, and educational personnel from educational institutions under the Office of Primary Education and the Office of the Commission for Advanced Education, with a population of 37,212 people and a sample group of 380 people. Phase 3 involves a group of 15 experts in educational administration for the development of an ethical leadership development model.

The research tools include the Ethical Leadership Component Assessment from the Educational Institution Administrators; opinion questionnaires for administrators, deputy administrators, and schoolteachers about the current and desirable conditions of ethical leadership; and a questionnaire on the validity, suitability, feasibility, and utility of the development of effective private school management in the Northeastern Region. The creation and testing of tools involve studying research papers, concepts, and theories related to ethical leadership; constructing a Rating Scales questionnaire with a five-level rating scale according to the Likert method; creating a questionnaire consistent with the objectives and operational definitions of research variables; validating the questionnaire with the dissertation advisors and five experts for content validity; and conducting a trial (Try-Out) with a population of 30 people to find the reliability of the questionnaire using the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient.

3. Data Collection

The data collection method used in the study involved three phases, with each phase having specific objectives and data collection methods.

Phase 1 involved studying the components of ethical leadership among school administrators. The researcher contacted the Faculty of Education at Northeastern University to request assistance from experts in assessing the appropriateness of ethical leadership components. The researcher then coordinated with informant groups to collect data, recorded observations, and collected documents and pictures of activities.

Phase 2 focused on studying the current conditions, desirable conditions, and needs for model development of ethical leadership for school administrators under the Office of Primary Education Service Area. The researcher mailed a questionnaire to the sample group, with a return envelope enclosed for respondents to return the questionnaire by mail. The researcher also prepared online documents for faster delivery of information.

Phase 3 involved the development of an ethical leadership development model for school administrators under the Office of Primary Education Service Area. The researcher requested an official letter from the Faculty of Education to support data collection and coordinating activities. The researcher collected data through focus group discussion, analyzed and synthesized the data, and presented reports to the participants.

The statistical data analysis consisted of content validity and questionnaire reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The basic statistics used were frequency distribution, percentage, mean and standard deviation, and PNI modified. Open-ended questions were analyzed through content analysis.

Overall, the data collection method used in the study was comprehensive and involved various methods to collect data from different sources, including online and offline processes. The statistical data analysis used also helped to ensure the validity and reliability of the data collected.

In summary, the research focused on ethical leadership for school administrators under the Office of Primary Educational Service Area. The study identified the core components and sub-components of ethical leadership, assessed the current and desirable conditions along with needs assessment of ethical leadership, and developed a model of ethical leadership for school administrators.

4. Results

The findings indicated that trust, respect, responsibility, good citizenship, and fairness are the core components of ethical leadership. The current state of ethical leadership for school administrators was found to be at a high level, but there is still room for improvement, especially in terms of justice and good citizenship. The desirable condition of ethical leadership for school administrators was found to be at the highest level, with trust being the most important component, as shown in the Table below.

Table 1.

Main component	Sub-components	x̄	SD	Level of appropriateness
1. Trust	1. Honesty	4.86	0.38	Highest
	2. Integrity	4.71	0.49	Highest
	3. Keeping Promises	4.57	0.53	Highest
	4. Loyalty	4.86	0.38	Highest
2. Responsibility	5. Auditable Responsibility	4.57	0.53	Highest
	6. Striving for Excellence	4.57	0.53	Highest
	7. Self-Control	4.86	0.38	Highest
3. Respect	8. Humility	4.57	0.53	Highest
	9. Dignity	4.71	0.49	Highest
	10. Accepting Others	4.86	0.38	Highest
4. Citizenship	11. A Good Samaritan About Himself	4.86	0.38	Highest
	12. A Good citizen About Civics	4.86	0.38	Highest
	13. Good Samaritan on Politics and Governance	4.71	0.49	Highest
5. Fairness	14. Process-Based Decision Making	4.86	0.38	Highest
	15. Impartial Decision Making	4.86	0.38	Highest
	16. Making Decisions With Integrity and Accuracy	4.86	0.38	Highest
Total		4.76	0.44	Highest

Table 1 demonstrates that the suitability of the main components and sub-components of ethical leadership for school administrators were, overall, at the highest level. The five main components are (1) trust, which has four sub-components, namely (a) honesty, (b) integrity, (c) promise keeping, and (d) loyalty; (2) responsibility, which has three sub-components: (a) auditable accountability, (b) striving for excellence, and (c) self-control; (3) respect, which has three sub-components: (a) humility, (b) dignity, and (c) accepting others; (4) citizenship, which has three sub-components: (a) a good citizen about oneself, (b) a good citizen for the country, and (c) a good citizen about politics and governance; and (5) justice, which has three sub-components: (a) decision making of process, (b) neutral decision making, and (c) making decisions with integrity.

The results of the study of current and desirable conditions and needs for development are shown in the table below.

Table 2. Mean Analysis Standard Deviation of Respondents, Current Conditions, and Prayong's Picture of the 4 Leaders of School Administrators, Primary Educational Service Area Office

List	Current Condition			Desirable Condition		
	x̄	S.D.	Operational Level	x̄	S.D.	Operational Level
1. Trust	4.44	0.64	Highest	4.79	0.33	Highest
2. Responsibility (responsibility)	3.58	0.64	Highest	4.60	0.53	Highest
3. Respect	3.67	0.64	Highest	4.63	0.49	Highest
4. Good citizenship (citizenship)	3.38	0.64	Highest	4.75	0.41	Highest
5. Justice (fairness)	3.20	0.65	Highest	4.77	0.41	Highest
Total	3.65	0.64	Highest	4.71	0.44	Highest

From Table 2, it can be seen that the overall current situation of ethical leadership for school administrators under the Office of Primary Educational Service Area is at a high level (x̄ = 3.65, S.D. = 0.64) when considering each item;

trust had the highest mean level ($\overline{x}$= 4.44, S.D.=0.64), followed by respect ($\overline{x}$ = 3.67, S.D.= 0.64), responsibility ($\overline{x}$ = 3.58, S.D.= 0.64), good citizenship ($\overline{x}$ = 3.38, S.D. = 0.64) and justice ($\overline{x}$ = 3.20, S.D.= 0.65).

The overall desirable condition of ethical leadership of school administrators was at the highest level ($\overline{x}$ = 4.71, S.D.= 0.44). When considering each item in descending order, it was found that trust has the highest level ($\overline{x}$ = 4.79, S.D. = 0.33), followed by fairness ($\overline{x}$ = 4.77, SD = 0.42), good citizenship ($\overline{x}$ = 4.75, S.D. = 0.41), respect ($\overline{x}$ = 4.63, S.D. = 0.49), and responsibility ($\overline{x}$ - 4.60, S.D. = 0.53), respectively.

Needs priorities for ethical leadership development for executives of educational institutions are shown in the table below.

Table 3.

System	Current Condition	Desirable Condition	PNI Modified	Prioritize
1. Trust	4.44	4.78	0.076	5
2. Fairness	3.20	4.75	0.484	1
3. Good Citizenship	3.39	4.73	0.395	2
4. Respect	3.72	4.64	0.247	4
5. Responsibility	3.61	4.60	0.276	3

From Table 3, it is clear that the needs priorities (PNI modified) for developing ethical leadership for school administrators, in ascending order, are (1) fairness, (2) citizenship, (3) responsibility, (4) respect, and (5) trust.

Regarding the results of developing an ethical leadership development model for school administrators, the components of ethical leadership for school administrators were studied to ascertain the priorities of the components through the study of current condition and desirable conditions and needs priorities, and then they were analyzed and synthesized to create the model for development of ethical leadership for school administrators.

The developed model for ethical leadership of school administrators under the jurisdiction of the area office primary education consisted of five components:

(1) Trust—honesty, integrity, keeping promises. and loyalty

(2) Responsibility—auditable responsibility, striving for excellence, self-control

(3) Respect—humility, dignity, acceptance of others

(4) Good citizen (citizenship)—being a good citizen by own self, for the country, and for politics and government

(5) Fairness—process-based decision making, impartial decision making, and making decisions with accuracy and integrity

All five components are closely correlated and integrated. Condition assessment tools for school administrators help them determine their strengths and weaknesses from the internal environment, and they can help administrators foresee opportunities and obstacles from the external environment as well as the impact on school administration at all times. Then, the PDCA quality cycle should be the tool used to improve work processes systematically with the aim of solving problems, developing and improving the work process until it is continuously efficient.

Components of ethical leadership of school administrators under the Office of Primary Educational Service Area were analyzed to determine the significance of the issues related to current conditions and desirable conditions, and needs were analyzed and prioritized for creating the desired model.

Based on the opinions of experts who scrutinized the ethical leadership development model for school administrators, the model is feasible, suitable, and useful at the highest level.

The chart below shows the component parts of the model for ethical leadership for primary school administrators under the Office of Primary Education Service Area.
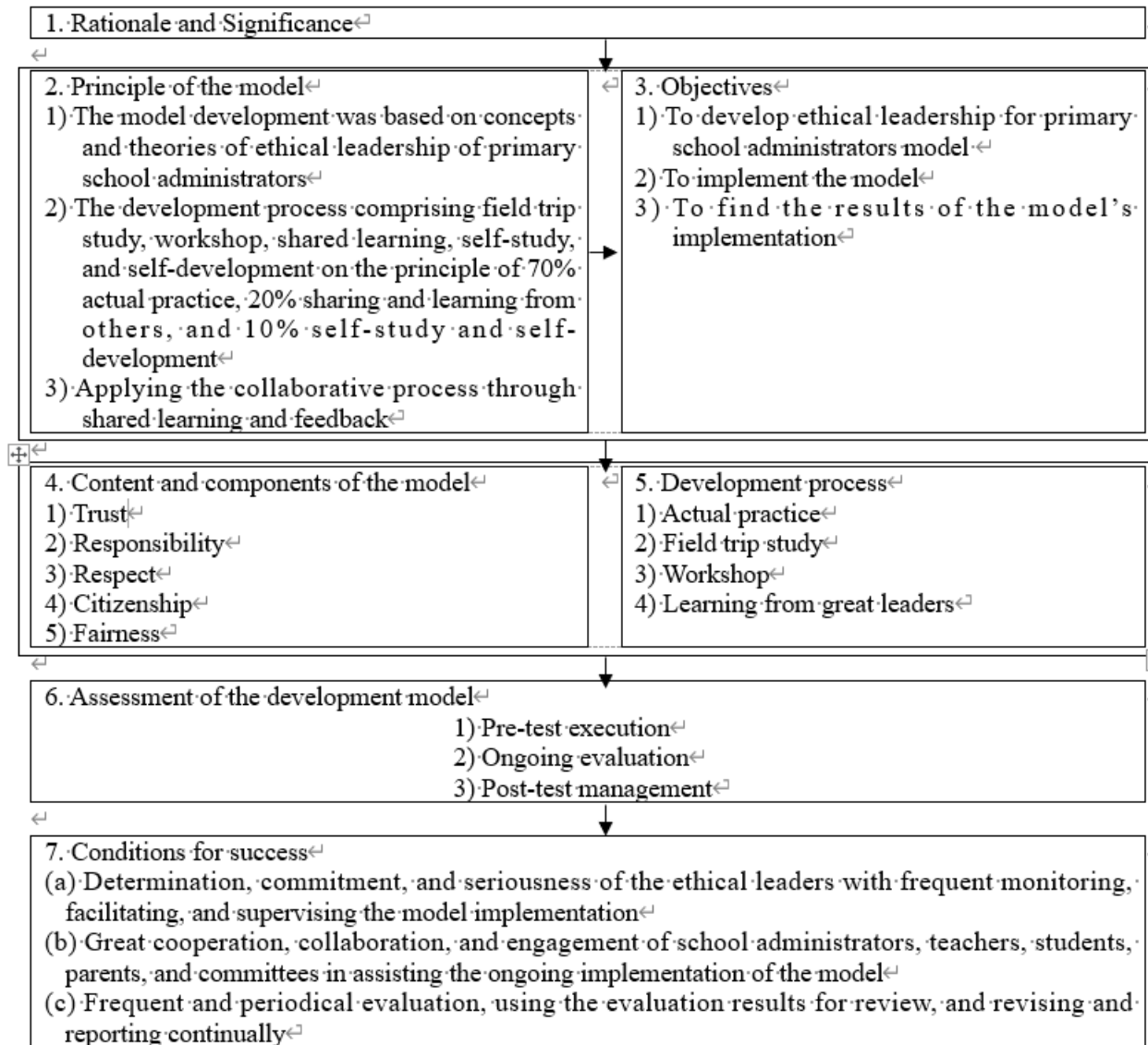
1. Rationale and Significance

2. Principle of the model
1) The model development was based on concepts and theories of ethical leadership of primary school administrators
2) The development process comprising field trip study, workshop, shared learning, self-study, and self-development on the principle of 70% actual practice, 20% sharing and learning from others, and 10% self-study and self-development
3) Applying the collaborative process through shared learning and feedback

3. Objectives
1) To develop ethical leadership for primary school administrators model
2) To implement the model
3) To find the results of the model's implementation

4. Content and components of the model
1) Trust
2) Responsibility
3) Respect
4) Citizenship
5) Fairness

5. Development process
1) Actual practice
2) Field trip study
3) Workshop
4) Learning from great leaders

6. Assessment of the development model
1) Pre-test execution
2) Ongoing evaluation
3) Post-test management

7. Conditions for success
(a) Determination, commitment, and seriousness of the ethical leaders with frequent monitoring, facilitating, and supervising the model implementation
(b) Great cooperation, collaboration, and engagement of school administrators, teachers, students, parents, and committees in assisting the ongoing implementation of the model
(c) Frequent and periodical evaluation, using the evaluation results for review, and revising and reporting continually

Figure 1. The Development of Ethical Leadership Development Model of School Administrators Under the Office of Primary Education Service Area

5. Discussion

The results of the study of the components of ethical leadership of school administrators consisted of 5 main components and 16 sub-components, namely trust, responsibility, respect, citizenship, and justice. From the analysis of the components, it can be seen that ethical leadership is consistent with the study of Kanokon Somprach and colleagues (2013) in which responsibility, fairness, trust, disposition and empowerment were found as indicators of ethical leadership for school principals in Thailand. It is also in line with Itersity (2023), asserting that honesty, justice, respect, community and integrity are key components of ethical leadership, which are exactly the same components as those listed by the Indeed Editorial Team (2021) and Bromley's (2020) "Study in Covid-19: Why We Need Ethical Leadership More Than Ever and What It Looks Like."

It is also consistent with Kongtoey (2017), who studied the development of ethical leadership indicators of school administrators under the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration. The results showed that the ethical leadership components of school administrators in schools under the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration consisted of five components: trust, justice, respect, responsibility, and honesty.

It should be observed that the community aspect of ethical leadership asserted by recent scholars in this field seems less prominent and not succinctly stated as a key component in this study. The researcher realized that many key

aspects, such as trust, respect, responsibility, and citizenship, are all incorporated into the community component. This study emphasized and integrated all the community sub-elements in the above-mentioned components already.

For ethical leaders to build community, they must take into account their own and their colleagues' purposes while working towards goals that are suitable for both of them.

When the area of ethical leadership development is further explored, it can become a solid foundation for leadership with the components proposed in this study. Still, there is another essential element that can make the ethical leadership more effective and sustainable, namely, establishing written ethical codes for school administrators. This may help them to make decisions with integrity, fairness, and in a more ethical manner, especially regarding personnel issues.

An ethical leader is capable of balancing levels of management and leading followers towards better attitudes and behaviors. In other words, the soul of an ethical leader is bound not only by managing mindfully but also by leading people with the heart.

Ethical leaders can be observed to be kind-hearted, people-focused, civic-minded, honest communicators who guide others to be ethical (Brown & Trevino, 2006).

In relation to responsibility as one of the key components of ethical leadership for school administrators, it was found that increasing leaders' levels of responsibility to support and motivate teachers would enhance their willingness and positive attitude and, consequently, strengthen their sense of social responsibility, thus increasing the likelihood that the school's goals will be attained. This is in tune with Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016), who stated that the application of ethical leadership in educational organizations emphasizes the responsibility assumed by the leader's role and ranks high in the hierarchy of tools that contribute to school effectiveness.

6. Conclusion

As found in this study, the concept of justice is directly related to the educational process. Based on the results, the ethical dimension of justice is statistically significant with a positive sign in moral decision making for school leaders in the Northeastern region of Thailand.

The statistically positive significance of this study shows that increased recognition of the ethical dimension of justice increases the chances of making moral decisions. In other words, Thai culture recognizes the significance of ethical justice. This indicates that the role of a fair and equitable policy towards human resources and the ethical dimension of leadership provide a basis for a positive school climate that will enhance commitment and confidence levels between members, bring convergence in perceptions, and strengthen ethical decisions.

However, ethical leadership and a sense of justice are not a panacea or recipe for dealing with ethical dilemmas. This is because there is no single ethical framework on which even an ethical leader can rely for ethical decision making (Sergiovanni, 2007). Individuals' experiences, perceptions, and attitudes differ from person to person and from culture to culture.

This world is not perfect. No study is without limitations, this study included. Nevertheless, this study will help to understand that ethical leadership should be based on at least five key ingredients asserted in this study, namely, trust, responsibility, respect, citizenship and fairness. Still, other elements such as community, care, and kindness are also crucial elements that should be taken into account and should be keenly observed, as in this era of complexity, uncertainty, and drastic change with the critical condition of the COVID-19 pandemic, many scholars in ethical leadership indicate that ethics of care, compassion, community, kindness, and service are essential. The researcher realizes this concept and the need for these values and places high emphasis on these essential elements. Flexibility, a sense of community, and kindness must be enhanced and applied in case of necessity, emergency, and illness, granting personal leave for urgent personal matters. Kindness, empathy, and gratitude are badly needed, now more than ever. A supportive and vital school environment of care, compassion, community, and kindness can inspire teachers, students, and personnel to go the extra mile. They also will encourage the confrontation of ethical dilemmas on the basis of these values while the collaborative process creates a sustainable positive climate. This is ethical leadership in this era for school administrators.

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