Development of the Program to Enhance Creative Leadership Soft Skills of Teachers under Buriram Secondary Educational Service Area Office

Piyapat Klumgen[1]

Abstract

This research aims to: 1) investigate the current situation, desired state, and necessary requirements for the development of creative leadership soft skills among teachers, and 2) develop a program to enhance these skills for teachers under the Buriram Secondary Educational Service Area Office. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, divided into two phases. Phase 1 examines the current and desired states, and the necessary requirements for the development of creative leadership soft skills among 345 teachers, selected through simple random sampling. Data were collected using a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire, and analyzed using frequency, mean, standard deviation, and need index statistics. Phase 2 involves developing a program to enhance these skills by conducting interviews with three purposively selected teachers using semi-structured interviews and analyzing the data using content analysis. Additionally, the program's feasibility and appropriateness were assessed by five experts through a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire, with data analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The results indicate that: 1) the current state of creative leadership soft skills among teachers was at a moderate level, while the desired state was at the highest level, and 2) the developed program included principles, objectives, content across five modules, development activities, and evaluation measures. The overall evaluation of the program's feasibility and appropriateness was rated at the highest level.

Keywords: *soft skills, creative leadership, soft skills enhancement program*

Introduction

Education is crucial for developing high-quality human resources with the skills, knowledge, and competencies to adapt to the changing global landscape (Independent Committee for Educational Reform, 2018: 25). The development of human skills focuses on aligning with labor market demands and essential life skills for the 21st century (National Economic and Social Development Board, 2015: 15). Educational institutions aim to develop Thai citizens into well-rounded individuals in body, mind, intellect, knowledge, virtue, and culture, capable of living harmoniously with others (Office of the Basic Education Commission, 2018: 5). Leadership plays a significant role in influencing organizational personnel, serving as the central force within groups or units. Effective leadership is crucial for guiding organizational operations and achieving goals (Mongkolwanich, 2013: 176).

Leadership significantly impacts the effectiveness and success of educational institutions. It is a critical factor in determining the success or failure of schools, prompting extensive research into effective leadership theories and practices (Chongvisal, 2013: 57). Leadership roles within schools are not limited to administrators but also include teacher leadership fostered by

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[1] Faculty of Education, Buriram Rajabhat University, Thailand, ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0009-0007-0012-9903 Email: Piyapat.kl@bru.ac.th

opportunities for professional development provided by administrators (Pongsriwattana, 2005: 3). Sinlarat (2017: 20) emphasized that modern teachers must exhibit creative leadership, which is progressive, innovative, and responsive to societal changes, linking education with the Thai social context. This aligns with Stoll and Tempered's (2009: 13) concept of creative leadership as behavior driven by imaginative responses and thoughtful consideration of various challenges.

Teachers must possess both soft and hard skills, which are essential for successful work performance. Soft skills, in particular, are crucial for effective collaboration, interaction, and communication with colleagues (Tang, 2012: 3). Creative leadership is a vital soft skill for modern teachers, supporting efficient and creative work towards achieving organizational goals. This aligns with research by Basadur (2004: 120), which found that the most effective 21st-century leaders are those who integrate creativity in problem-solving and team management. Sararatana (2010: 21) highlighted the importance of fostering creative thinking for future leadership, emphasizing innovative and out-of-the-box thinking within an open organizational culture.

Developing creative leadership among teachers is essential for promoting visionary thinking, motivational skills, problem-solving abilities, and effective communication. These competencies enable teachers to achieve educational goals and adapt to diverse situations, enhancing organizational success. As Panich (2012: 25) noted, the ability to think creatively and outside the box is a critical skill that can be cultivated through learning and practice. Teachers must therefore seek methods to develop their creative skills to inspire and lead effectively.

Given the critical role of teachers in shaping future generations, it is imperative that they possess creative leadership soft skills. This study aims to develop a program to enhance these skills among teachers under the Buriram Secondary Educational Service Area Office, providing a framework for effective and efficient work performance and organizational advancement.

Literature Review

Ash and Persall (1970) developed a theory of constructive leadership by observing that numerous persons within a school setting can exhibit leadership attributes. Consequently, it contests the notion that the leadership function is solely designated for administrators. Administrators are responsible for providing learning opportunities for teachers and staff, serving as guides in their development as effective leaders. This theory underscores the concept that teachers function as leaders (termed teachers as leaders), whereas principals fulfill the job of leaders (leaders of leaders). Consequently, administrators are pivotal in both enhancing student learning and promoting the professional development of teachers and other staff of the educational institutions. This aligns with Sararatana (2010: 195 - 196), who authored "School Administrators: Three Dimensions of Professional Development for Effective Administrators," which explores theoretical frameworks of teacher development and underscores the necessity for administrators to comprehend the needs of their teaching personnel, as such comprehension is essential for acknowledging teachers' readiness, maturity, and varying levels of experience. Moreover, teachers are regarded as "adult learners," necessitating alignment with the tenets of adult learning psychology. The principles encompass: 1) granting adults autonomy in formulating their own learning plans and styles; 2) emphasizing problem-based learning over content-centered methodologies; 3) maintaining coherence with previous learning experiences; and 4) incorporating past experiences into new learning initiatives to enhance the efficacy of teacher

development efforts. Constructive leadership is defined by leaders' capacity to produce novel ideas and implement innovations in suitable circumstances, hence promoting the attainment of constructive goals within their work environments. This involves the capacity to motivate others, comprehend intricate circumstances, adapt to change, display inquisitiveness, pose insightful inquiries, show adaptability, sustain enthusiasm, and use creative analysis to address specific requirements. Effective leaders possess foresight and cultivate an atmosphere that promotes productive dialogue, particularly during a period of swift societal transformation as global cultures and enterprises advance. Consequently, leaders must employ constructive leadership strategies to manage these changes and advance their enterprises.

Research Objectives

1. To investigate the current situation, desired state, and necessary requirements for developing creative leadership soft skills among teachers under the Buriram Secondary Educational Service Area Office

2. To develop a program to enhance creative leadership soft skills among teachers under the Buriram Secondary Educational Service Area Office

Research Methodology

This research employs a mixed-methods approach, consisting of the following steps:

Phase 1: Investigating the current situation, desired state, and necessary requirements for developing creative leadership soft skills among teachers

Population and Sample: The population includes 3,089 teachers under the Buriram Secondary Educational Service Area Office. A sample of 345 teachers was selected using simple random sampling, based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size table.

Research Instruments: The research instruments comprised 1) a questionnaire assessing the current state of soft skills in creative leadership among teachers of the Buriram Secondary Educational Service Area Office, featuring 52 questions, an index of consistency (IOC) ranging from .80 to 1.00, a discriminant power between .39 and .90, and a reliability coefficient of .98, and 2) a questionnaire evaluating the desired state of soft skills in creative leadership for the same cohort, which exhibited an index of consistency between .80 and 1.00, a discriminant power ranging from .46 to .84, and a reliability of .97.

Data Collection: The researcher solicited a letter from the Faculty of Education at Buriram Rajabhat University to seek collaboration from the units and sample groups for data collection. The data was manually gathered and mailed to the sample teachers, amounting to 345 copies, with the questionnaires returned as per the objective, also totaling 345 copies, or 100 percent.

Data Analysis: In this phase, data analysis employed fundamental statistics, encompassing frequency distribution, mean, standard deviation, need index, congruence index, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Phase 2: Developing a program to enhance creative leadership soft skills among teachers.
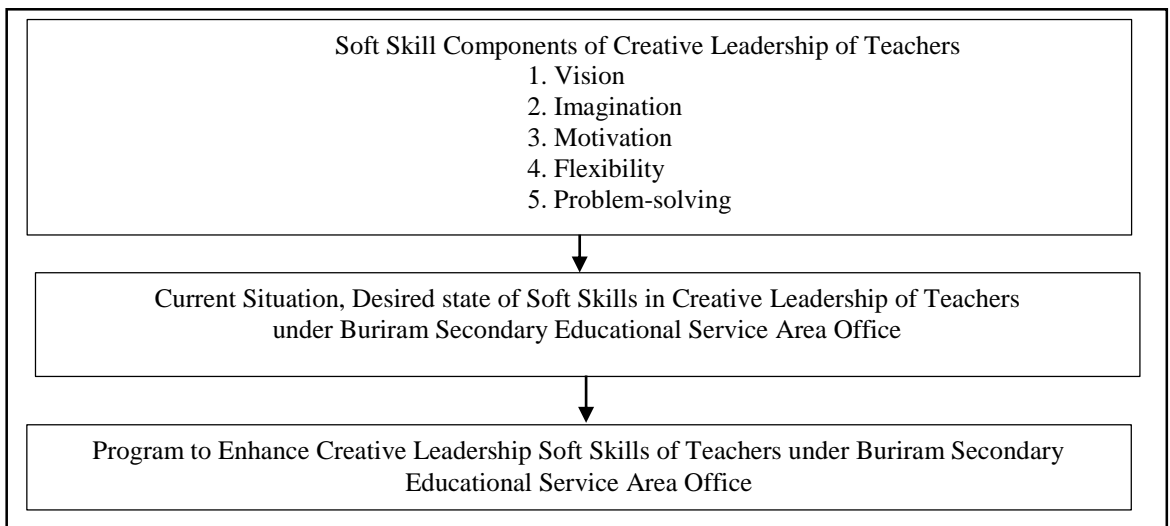
Information Sources

Population and Sample: 1) Examine the exemplary practices of soft skills in the creative leadership of teachers across three locations. The interview cohort comprised three teachers selected through a purposive sampling method. And 2) assess the suitability and viability of the creative leadership development program for teachers of the Buriram Secondary Education Area Office, conducted by five qualified individuals via a purposeful selection approach.

Research Instruments: This phase employed two research instruments: 1) A semi-structured interview form designed around the elements of soft skills in creative leadership for teachers, featuring questions with a consistency index (ICO) of .06 or higher. And 2) an evaluation form assessing the suitability and viability of a program aimed at enhancing teachers' soft skills in creative leadership within the Buriram Secondary Educational Service Area Office, presented as a rating scale questionnaire.

Data Collection: 1) The researcher collaborated with the teachers and solicited a letter seeking authorization to gather data from the Faculty of Education, Buriram Rajabhat University. The researcher gathered data by conducting interviews with teachers using a structured interview form and recording equipment. And 2) he engaged with specialists to solicit authorization for assessing the suitability and viability of the program aimed at improving soft skills in creative leadership for teachers of the Buriram Secondary Education Area Office.

Data Analysis: The second step of data analysis encompassed the examination of interview data through content analysis methods and the evaluation of outcomes utilizing basic statistical measures, including mean and standard deviation.

Conceptual Framework: The study identified five components of creative leadership soft skills: vision, imagination, motivation, flexibility, and problem-solving. The conceptual framework was illustrated in Figure 1.

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│  │      Soft Skill Components of Creative Leadership of Teachers │
│  │                      1. Vision                            │  │
│  │                      2. Imagination                       │  │
│  │                      3. Motivation                        │  │
│  │                      4. Flexibility                       │  │
│  │                      5. Problem-solving                   │  │
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│  │  Current Situation, Desired state of Soft Skills in Creative │
│  │  Leadership of Teachers under Buriram Secondary Educational  │
│  │            Service Area Office                            │  │
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│  │  Program to Enhance Creative Leadership Soft Skills of     │
│  │  Teachers under Buriram Secondary Educational Service     │
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Figure 1. Conceptual Flamework

Research Results

For the current situation, desired state, and necessary requirements of creative leadership soft skills among teachers in Buriram Secondary Educational Service Area Office, it was found that:

The analysis of the respondents' general demographic data revealed that the majority were women, comprising 201 individuals or 58.3 percent. Among them, 169 individuals, or 49.0 percent, were aged between 31 and 40 years, 208 individuals, or 60.3 percent, held a bachelor's degree, and 195 individuals, or 56.5 percent, possessed 5-10 years of teaching experience.
 The results of the study of the current and desired conditions of soft skills in creative leadership of teachers under the Buriram Secondary Education Area Office were presented in the tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Mean and Standard Deviation of Current Situation and Desired States of Creative Leadership Soft Skills among Teachers in Buriram Secondary Educational Service Area Office

Creative Leadership Skills	Current State			Desired State		
	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Interpretation	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Interpretation
Vision	3.29	0.53	Moderate	4.36	0.53	High
Imagination	3.33	0.42	Moderate	4.55	0.44	Very high
Motivation	3.58	0.45	High	4.64	0.43	Very high
Flexibility	3.45	0.57	Moderate	4.60	0.40	Very high
Problem-solving	3.51	0.50	High	4.52	0.43	Very high
Total	3.43	0.25	Moderate	4.53	0.34	Very high

From Table 1, the overall current state of creative leadership soft skills among teachers is moderate (Mean = 3.43, S.D. = 0.25). The highest rated component is motivation (Mean = 3.58, S.D. = 0.45), followed by problem-solving (Mean = 3.51, S.D. = 0.50), flexibility (Mean = 3.45, S.D. = 0.57), and imagination (Mean = 3.33, S.D. = 0.42). Vision received the lowest rating (Mean = 3.29, S.D. = 0.53). The desired state is very high overall (Mean = 4.53, S.D. = 0.34), with the highest rated component being motivation (Mean = 4.64, S.D. = 0.43), followed by flexibility (Mean = 4.60, S.D. = 0.40), imagination (Mean = 4.55, S.D. = 0.44), and problem-solving (Mean = 4.52, S.D. = 0.43). Vision again received the lowest rating (Mean = 4.36, S.D. = 0.53).

Table 2. Mean of Current State, Desired State, PNIModified, and Rank of Necessary Requirements for Creative Leadership Soft Skills among Teachers in Buriram Secondary Educational Service Area Office

Creative Leadership Skills	Current State (D)	Desired State (I)	PNIModified	Rank
Vision	3.29	4.36	0.325	3
Imagination	3.33	4.55	0.366	1
Motivation	3.58	4.64	0.296	4
Flexibility	3.45	4.60	0.333	2
Problem-solving	3.51	4.52	0.288	5
Total	3.43	4.53	0.322	-

From Table 2, the PNIModified index for creative leadership soft skills among teachers ranges from 0.288 to 0.366. The top three necessary requirements are imagination (PNIModified = 0.366), flexibility (PNIModified = 0.333), and vision (PNIModified = 0.325).

The findings from the construction of a program aimed at improving the soft skills in creative leadership among teachers under the Buriram Secondary Education Area Office revealed that:

The program to enhance soft skills in creative leadership among educators under the Buriram Secondary Educational Service Area Office has the following elements: 1) Principle, 2) Objectives, 3) Content, 4) Development Activities, and 5) Measurement and Evaluation. Regarding content, there are five modules: Module 1: Vision, Module 2: Imagination, Module 3: Motivation, Module 4: Flexibility, Module 5: Problem-Solving Ability. The deployment of soft skills in the creative leadership of educators comprises four stages as follows: Stage 1: Preparation prior to development, Stage 2: Workshop, Stage 3: Practical instruction, and Stage 4: Evaluation.

The findings regarding the suitability and viability of the program aimed at enhancing teachers' soft skills in creative leadership under the Buriram Secondary Educational Service Area Office were displayed in Table 3.

Table 3. Mean and Standard Deviation of Appropriateness and Feasibility of the Creative Leadership Soft Skills Enhancement Program for Teachers in Buriram Secondary Educational Service Area Office

Creative Leadership Skills	Appropriateness			Feasibility		
	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Interpretation	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Interpretation
Vision	4.60	0.55	Very high	4.20	0.84	High
Imagination	4.60	0.55	Very high	4.20	0.84	High
Motivation	4.60	0.55	Very high	4.60	0.55	Very high
Flexibility	4.60	0.55	Very high	4.60	0.55	Very high

| Problem-solving | 5.00 | 0.00 | Very high | 5.00 | 0.00 | Very high |
| Overall | 4.68 | 0.48 | Very high | 4.52 | 0.65 | Very high |

Table 3 indicates that the soft skill development program for creative leadership of teachers, implemented by the Buriram Secondary Education Area Office, achieved an overall high rating ($\bar{x}$ = 4.68, S.D. = 0.48). Upon evaluation of each item, it was determined that all facets were at the highest level. When considering the feasibility of the soft skill development program for creative leadership of teachers under the Buriram Secondary Education Area Office, it was found that the program achieved the overall highest rating ($\bar{x}$ = 4.52, S.D. = 0.65). Upon evaluation of each item, it was determined that the majority of elements were at the highest level, with the exceptions of vision and motivation, which were rated at a high level ($\bar{x}$ = 4.20, S.D. = 0.84).

Discussion

1. The current state of creative leadership soft skills of teachers under the Buriram Secondary Education Area Office indicate that the current level of creative leadership among these teachers is moderate ($\bar{x}$ = 3.43, S.D. = 0.25), while the overall desired level is at the highest level ($\bar{x}$ = 4.53, S.D. = 0.34). This may be attributed to the novelty of creative leadership for teachers, necessitating adjustments in leadership to align with the evolving context, as noted by Sinlarat (2011: 10), who asserted that the world and society have transformed. Teachers must adapt to contemporary educational trends to ensure that education serves as a catalyst for creativity, fostering the development of innovative goods derived from the intellectual insights of leaders. Leaders must consistently exhibit responsible creative leadership and, crucially, adapt their paradigms to attain success in both production and work outcomes. This aligns with Wanichwasin's research (2017: 77), which asserts that leadership development is challenging without an understanding of change trends, technical advancements, management complexities, innovation generation, or evolving work styles. Furthermore, the findings of this study align with those of Thammatasananon (2019: 156), who examined the model of creative leadership development among basic education administrators. His research indicated that the current level of creative leadership development among these administrators was high ($\bar{x}$ = 3.50, S.D. = 0.98), while the overall desired state was at the highest level ($\bar{x}$ = 4.03, S.D. = 0.89). The paramount necessary need was imagination, succeeded by vision and adaptability. This study aligns with the findings of Chanthawong and Chanawong (2018: 65), who investigated the formulation of guidelines to enhance creative leadership among educators. The present state of creative leadership among teachers in the Kalasin Primary Educational Service Area Office 2 is assessed to be high, while the ideal state is evaluated to be at the highest level.

2. The program aimed at augmenting teachers' soft abilities in creative leadership at the Buriram Secondary Educational Service Area Office has the following elements: 1) principles, 2) Objectives, 3) Content, 4) Development Activities, and 5) Measurement and Evaluation. Regarding content, there are five modules: Module 1: Vision, Module 2: Imagination, Module 3:

Motivation, Module 4: Flexibility, Module 5: Problem-Solving Ability. The development of teachers' soft abilities in creative leadership comprises four phases: Phase 1: Preparation prior to development, Phase 2: Workshop, Phase 3: Practical training, Phase 4: Assessment. The outcomes of the assessment of the program's appropriateness and viability indicated that the

overall fit was at the highest level ($\bar{x}$ = 4.68, S.D. = 0.48), and the feasibility was also at the highest level ($\bar{x}$ = 4.52, S.D. = 0.65). This research findings align with the study conducted by Phuchomchit and Namwan (2020: 113), which examined the development of a program aimed at enhancing creative leadership among elementary school teachers. The program comprised five components. 1) Principles, 2) Objectives, 3) Content, 4) Methods, and 5) Evaluation. The components of creative leadership comprise four modules: Module 1: Vision; Module 2: Imagination; Module 3: Flexibility; Module 4: Critical Thinking. The assessment outcomes of the program aimed at improving soft skills in creative leadership for educators indicated that it achieved the highest levels of applicability, feasibility, and benefit. This research findings align with the study conducted by Iamla-o et al. (2022: 68), which examined the formulation of a creative leadership development program for educators in private general education institutions under the Office of the Basic Education Commission Region 1. Their study identified that the program comprised six components: 1) Principles and Concepts, 2) Objectives, 3) Program Content, 4) Activities, 5) Media/Equipment, and 6) Measurement and Evaluation. The curriculum comprises two modules: Module 1: Creative Leadership, which includes leadership, creative leadership, vision, and imagination; and Module 2: Flexibility, which addresses the significance and attributes of flexibility. This study aligns with the findings of Boonkuea et al. (2022: 191), who investigated the formulation of a creative leadership development program for school administrators. The program for creative leadership development for school administrators, under the Office of the Primary Education Area, has 1) program components, 2) content of program development activities consisting of 5 modules, 3) development methodologies, and 4) evaluation. Expert evaluation determined that the program was appropriate, practicable, and highly useful overall.

Recommendations

Implementation Recommendations

The soft skill development program on creative leadership of teachers under the Buriram Secondary Education Area Office should be used to develop teachers in order to study the efficiency and effectiveness of the program.

The program to the specific context of the Buriram Secondary Educational Service Area Office to promote creative leadership among teachers should be adapted and applied.

Future Research Recommendations

Both direct and indirect factors influencing creative leadership among teachers should be investigated.

Other aspects of teacher leadership related to educational management to further enhance educational quality should be explored.

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Declaration of Conflicting Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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Ethical Approval and Informed Consent Statements

The Informed consent was obtained. Moreover, the author claims that he has no recognized competing financial interests or personal affiliations that may have influenced the work provided in this study.

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