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The EDFR approach to developing guidelines for Islamic education provision in public schools in southern provinces of Thailand

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Article Info

Abstract

This study was conducted based on system approach framework to delineate developmental guidelines for Islamic education provision of public schools in southern provinces of Thailand. The study applied part of the Ethnographic Delphi Futures Research (EDFR) approach through which in the first round the synthesis of both qualitative and quantitative data was performed to have a draft of developmental guidelines. Then in the second and third rounds the guidelines were verified and confirmed by 20 experts. Data analysis was conducted with content analysis, descriptive statistics, and congruence was considered from the differences between mode, median and interquartile range. The study found that the guidelines involved various sub-factors of the educational provision. They are environment, input, educational management process, and educational output. These sub-factors took place inside and outside the school and affected each other. Therefore, moving successfully towards the goal of developing Islamic educational provision for public schools effectively and efficiently requires a clear development direction with an efficient system of monitoring and evaluation, appropriate support that meets the actual needs from the public sector, and cooperation from all stakeholders.

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Introduction

Islamic educational provision in the three southern border provinces of Thailand which are Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat has specific characteristics that are different from other parts of the country. These differences in social context, identity and religious beliefs of most people whose belief is Islam influence the curriculums of educational provision in this area. This can be seen from the fact that public schools in the area have adapted their educational provision to better meet the needs of the community and learners.

It is worth mentioning that Islamic education provision in public schools in the context of three southernmost provinces of Thailand is implemented by choice either in modes of intensive or hour-basis Islamic Studies curriculum through which Islamic study courses can be provided more extensively or not more than 1 to 2 hours. However, in other areas only an hour-basis mode is applicable. Though it has given confidence to parents and the community, there are problems concerning operation and management, especially in terms of curriculum, teachers' competence and educational resources. These problems have been obstacles to development of Islamic educational provision in this area (Morlor, 2011; Samah, 2009; Wae-u-seng, 2011). As a result, learning and teaching performance of Islamic studies in public schools has not been as successful as it should have been.

Nevertheless, most of the aforementioned studies were conducted in different parts of Islamic educational provision with emphasis on surveying problems, and only a limited number of studies were on systematically holistic Islamic education provision and indicated relationships of its sub-dimensions, especially studies applying future research techniques known

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as "Ethnographic Delphi Futures Research (EDFR)" to compile views from experts for suitable development. EDFR is suitable for the present study due to its flexibility and integration between Ethnographic Futures Research (EFR) and Delphi Future Research (DFR) (Poonpatrachiwin, 2005). Thus, this study is to propose developmental guidelines for Islamic education provision for public schools in the three southern border provinces because this area has its specific identity and most of its context is in the Islamic way of life. Such guidelines will be beneficial to forming policies and plans for development of Islamic education provision in public schools which will be a way of contribution to making a peaceful society and to sustainable development.

Literature Review

System Approach: A Framework of the Present Education Provision

The system approach is often used in studying educational management based on its complex system consisting of related sub-components and continuous activities to achieve the goals and vision that have been defined (Cusick, 1992; Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Lunenberg & Ornstein, 2012). This study employs the open system approach as a theoretical framework consisting of environment, input, process, and output. The environment is the energy and conditions with potential to have impact on operation of the organization in terms of its success or failure. The emphasis is placed on external environments related to the community, government policy on education, economic and political conditions. Regarding the input which is the contextual environment where educational institutions are located, the emphasis is placed on object resources which are the curriculums of Islamic education provision, teaching and learning media and other learning resources. For the education provision process, the emphasis is placed on the management process in schools which are school administrative structure, defining a vision statement of the school, administrative system management, and creating Islamic education networks. For the output which is achievement of the operation, the emphasis is placed on learner achievement in subjects in the learning area of Islamic studies, and desired characteristics of learners, and effectiveness of educational management taking into account congruence with the context of Islamic education provision in public schools in the three southern border provinces of Thailand.

Ethnographic Delphi Futures Research (EDFR) and The Study of Developmental Guidelines

EDFR is a future research method developed to systematically survey and investigate suitable and feasible trends using existing data (Poonpatrachiwin, 2005). It is a technique with good points or advantages of Ethnographic Futures Research (EFR) integrated with those of the Delphi Future Research (DFR) technique.

EDFR begins with determining a group of experts with whom the first-round interview is conducted; it is flexible because issues can be added and data can be verified before being analyzed and synthesized to devise a data collecting tool

for the second round. This tool is a questionnaire with rating scales or with blanks to be filled with percentages or sequences of possibilities, or opinions on positive and negative future scenarios. Data collected from the second round are analyzed to report opinions of each expert based on mode, median and interquartile range of each question item in order to know similarities and differences of answers when compared with the group. Then they are used in collecting data in the third round. Respondents can confirm or change their answers. For answers that are not in the interquartile range, justification is required. After that, analysis is performed, conclusions are drawn, and future scenarios are written according to the study issues (Poonpatrachiwin, 2005).

This study applied part of EDFR approach with a main objective of proposing developmental guidelines for Islamic education provision only in the three southern border provinces of Thailand. Therefore, trends that are either positive or negative future scenarios are not included because this study aims to obtain data that can be used in forming policy and planning for development of Islamic education provision in the three southern border provinces.

Methodology

Experts

In the first round, 10 experts were purposively selected and solicited to deliberate drafting developmental guidelines. They consisted of school administrators, school supervisors and educators in both basic and higher education institutions. Other 20 experts who were purposively selected were respondents of the questionnaires in the second and third rounds. They comprised educators, school supervisors, school directors, director of Office of the Private Education Commission, and director of Educational Service Area.

Research Instrument

The instrument employed in the first round was the drafted developmental guidelines according to system view framework which were synthesized and constructed based on quantitative data gained from questionnaires. This instrument was used with the aim of getting the draft refined through experts' reflection prior to constructing the successive questionnaire to be used in the second and third rounds. In the second round, the closed-ended questionnaire with a five-level rating scale consisted of 4 guidelines and 22 measures for environmental development, 5 guidelines and 29 measures for input development, 3 guidelines and 10 measures for educational management process development, and 3 guidelines and 10 measures for output development. The meanings of each score level for opinions on suitability of the development guidelines range from most suitable (5) to least suitable (1). The instrument used to collect data in the third round was also a closed-ended questionnaire as that in the second round but with a median score of suitability, interquartile range, and weight of the answers given by each expert in the second round. Each of the experts reviewed their own answers before answering the questionnaire, so that they could either confirm or change the answers that were not in the interquartile range

for which justifications were required and filled in the form. Reliability and validity of the research instrument were considered from "the answers that the experts gave repeatedly several times; adequate time was spent in examining whether the answers in each round remained the same, and if they did, then the instrument was considered to have high reliability and validity". In this study, most answers were confirmed, and thus, the instruments had reliability and validity.

Data Collection

The first round of data collection started with the quantitative data collected from 538 school administrators and teachers whom were equally randomly selected based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table of sample size determination. Two-thirds of school administrators were males with master degree and a half spanned a range of 1–10 years managing experiences. The teachers were females, half with bachelor degree, and most had 6 to 10 years of teaching experience. Survey questionnaires were used to gain views on development of Islamic education provision. Then qualitative data was collected from focus group discussions by 24 key informants purposely selected from a group of school administrators, teachers and parents. The data from these two types were used to draft the developmental guidelines. In addition, a meeting attended by 10 experts was held to screen and draft the guidelines that were used in writing a questionnaire with a rating scale, to be used in the second and third rounds, to ask and confirm the answers about the guidelines and measures proposed by 20 experts. The questionnaires for the second and third rounds were mailed together with a cover letter and a self-addressed stamped envelope for the experts to mail the complete questionnaire back to the researchers. One month was allowed for each round of data collection.

Data Analysis

In the first round, content analysis was performed with data collected from focus group discussions and verified by 10 experts to form guidelines and measures to be used in the questionnaire of the second round. Each of the question items was analyzed with median, mode, and interquartile range. In the analysis of the third round, the mean was determined for the appropriate level of the guideline for development of Islamic education provision in public schools. The criteria are as follows: 1.00–1.49 (Least Suitable); 1.50–2.49 (Slightly Suitable); 2.50–3.49 (Moderately Suitable); 3.50–4.49 (Very Suitable); 4.50–5.00 (Most Suitable) (Siljaru, 2006). Only the first three statements with the highest mean at the levels Very Suitable and Most Suitable were considered. In addition, the differences between the median and mode, and interquartile ranges were found out to determine congruence of the guidelines. The criteria were that if any statement was with an interquartile range not over 1.50, and the difference between the median and mode was not over 1.00, then, experts' opinions on it were in congruence; if any statement was with an interquartile range, and difference between the median and mode was different from the criteria, then, experts' opinions on it were not in congruence.

Results

The results of guidelines and measures for operation in environmental, input, management process, and educational output aspects are shown in table 1–4 as follows.

Table 1 depicts four feasible developmental guidelines. Understanding of the nature of public schools offering courses in Islamic Studies becomes the cornerstones of the first guideline which requires those concerned to publicize schools' operation in regard to Islamic studies provision (1) through appropriate media (3) and prescribed manuals for schools to follow (4). Cooperation with the community functions as the second guideline which allows the community to participate in organizing schools' activities (1), to cooperate with parents in developing learners' personality to be good Muslims (2) and to make the schools as part of the community (5). Formulating policy for development is the guideline which requires public sector to formulate clear policy for continuous development (1), to issue rules and regulations that accommodate efficient and effective development (2), and to establish a special unit responsible for monitoring program operation (3). Moving through economic and political activities becomes the last guideline under the environmental aspect which takes the measures of financial support from local political organizations (1), security of personnel and sustainable development through political channels (2), and schools' development of the economic system of the community through academic service activities (3).

Table 1 Statistics, appropriate level and experts' congruence towards environmental aspect

Guideline		Mode	Mdn	[Mo-Mdn]	Q3	Q1	IR	Mean	Appropriate Level	Experts' Congruence
1	1)	4.77	4.49	0.18	5.04	3.93	1.11	4.45	Very Suitable	Congruence
	3)	4.90	4.67	0.23	5.08	3.75	1.33	4.40	Very Suitable	Congruence
	4)	4.87	4.67	0.20	5.08	3.90	1.18	4.40	Very Suitable	Congruence
2	1)	4.82	4.73	0.09	5.12	4.21	0.91	4.65	Most Suitable	Congruence
	2)	4.95	4.91	0.04	5.21	4.62	0.59	4.85	Most Suitable	Congruence
	5)	4.85	4.73	0.12	5.12	4.17	0.95	4.60	Most Suitable	Congruence
3	1)	4.99	4.97	0.02	5.24	4.71	0.53	4.85	Most Suitable	Congruence
	2)	4.94	4.83	0.11	5.17	4.50	0.67	4.65	Most Suitable	Congruence
	3)	4.94	4.83	0.11	5.17	4.50	0.67	4.60	Most Suitable	Congruence
4	1)	4.59	4.50	0.09	5.00	3.94	1.06	4.40	Very Suitable	Congruence
	2)	4.87	4.67	0.20	5.08	3.90	1.18	4.40	Very Suitable	Congruence
	3)	4.30	4.13	0.17	4.79	3.50	1.29	4.05	Very Suitable	Congruence

Table 2 shows five viable developmental guidelines and measures in relation to input. With regard to object resources, schools should provide theoretical and practical knowledge for learners (3) in addition to religious practice rooms (8), and Islamic studies libraries (9). Concerning financial resource, the state should allocate short-term and long-term budget for Islamic Studies programs (1) that are sufficient according to the actual conditions (2). The state should also allocate salaries for teachers of Islamic studies through the regular budget administration system of the schools. In relation to teachers input, they should implement Islamic studies learning and teaching management in line with the teaching standards and indicators (1). Enabling teachers to be a role model for learners in translating religious teachings into practice (4) and making some changes in requirements for teacher qualifications to suit for the current condition (5) are promising measures. Regarding administrator input, there should be organizing of training courses to develop administrators' knowledge and understanding in principles of Islamic teaching and learning management (1) as well as encouraging administrators to participate in knowledge management activities to have attitudes towards Islamic educational management. Finally, as for learner input, there should be organizing activities to promote learners' good attitudes towards learning Islamic studies courses (1), encouraging learners to put knowledge into practice (4), and nurturing learners to have personality and Aklaq (ethics) in accordance with Islam (5).

Table 3 shows three workable developmental guidelines and measures in relation to educational management aspect. In regard to administration development, there should be clearly formulating the vision of Islamic educational management for each educational level (2), implementing decentralization to allow teachers to design Islamic educational management (4), and establishing an educational supervision system and utilizing supervision results for development of Islamic educational management (5). Concerning learning and teaching process development, learning process should be managed in a way to enable learners to incorporate knowledge into their everyday life (2). Extra-curriculum activities should be designed to develop learners' personality according to Islamic way of life (3) and religious principles should be incorporated into learning and teaching (4). As for learner quality promotion process development, a system of *Nasihat* (advice with sincerity for Allah) and *Halaqah* (group study) activities should be established (1)(2) to promote putting knowledge into practice (3).

Table 4 shows three feasible developmental guidelines and measures in relation to educational outputs. Pertaining to learner achievement development, there should be improving learner achievement in courses according to the learning area of Islamic studies (1), implementing assessment for desirable characteristics of learners according to required educational standards (2), and preparing learners to participate in national evaluation. Concerning desirable characteristics, learners are expected to be able to conduct oneself correctly according to Islamic principles (2), conduct oneself as a good Muslim with morals and ethics by taking the Prophet Muhammad as the role model (3), and to possess developed spirit and soul, intelligence, emotion, body, and social life skills. As for development of effective educational management, it is imperative that I-Net results be used to improve effectiveness of Islamic educational management in public schools (1). Establishing a unit to be responsible for certifying educational qualifications of graduates in Islamic education from public schools (2) and implementing a measurement and assessment system for academic performance and desirable characteristics of learners (3) are advisable.

Table 2 Statistics, appropriate level and experts' congruence in input aspect

Guideline		Mode	Mdn	[Mo-Mdn]	Q3	Q1	IR	Mean	Appropriate Level	Experts' Congruence
1	3)	4.94	4.83	0.11	5.17	4.50	0.67	4.65	Most Suitable	Congruence
	8)	4.99	4.97	0.02	5.24	4.71	0.53	4.95	Most Suitable	Congruence
	9)	4.93	4.73	0.20	5.12	3.83	1.29	4.45	Very Suitable	Congruence
2	1)	4.92	4.83	0.09	5.17	4.25	0.92	4.65	Most Suitable	Congruence
	2)	4.99	4.94	0.05	5.22	4.67	0.55	4.75	Most Suitable	Congruence
	4)	4.88	4.83	0.05	5.17	4.50	0.67	4.60	Most Suitable	Congruence
3	1)	4.99	4.97	0.02	5.24	4.71	0.53	4.90	Most Suitable	Congruence
	4)	4.99	4.97	0.02	5.23	4.71	0.52	4.90	Most Suitable	Congruence
	5)	4.97	4.91	0.06	5.20	4.61	0.59	4.80	Most Suitable	Congruence
4	1)	4.98	4.88	0.10	5.19	4.56	0.63	4.55	Most Suitable	Congruence
	2)	4.85	4.73	0.12	5.12	4.17	0.95	4.55	Most Suitable	Congruence
5	1)	4.95	4.91	0.04	5.20	4.62	0.58	4.85	Most Suitable	Congruence
	4)	4.95	4.91	0.04	5.20	4.61	0.59	4.85	Most Suitable	Congruence
	5)	4.99	4.94	0.05	5.22	4.67	0.55	4.85	Most Suitable	Congruence

Table 3 Statistics, appropriate level and experts' congruence in educational management aspect

Guideline		Mode	Mdn	[Mo-Mdn]	Q3	Q1	IR	Mean	Appropriate Level	Experts' Congruence
1	2)	4.92	4.79	0.13	5.14	4.25	0.89	4.55	Most Suitable	Congruence
	4)	4.85	4.73	0.12	5.11	4.17	0.94	4.55	Most Suitable	Congruence
	5)	4.95	4.88	0.07	5.19	4.56	0.63	4.75	Most Suitable	Congruence
2	2)	4.97	4.91	0.06	5.21	4.62	0.59	4.80	Most Suitable	Congruence
	3)	4.97	4.91	0.06	5.21	4.62	0.59	4.80	Most Suitable	Congruence
	4)	4.97	4.94	0.03	5.22	4.67	0.55	4.90	Most Suitable	Congruence
3	1)	4.97	4.91	0.06	5.20	4.61	0.59	4.75	Most Suitable	Congruence
	2)	4.95	4.88	0.07	5.19	4.50	0.69	4.70	Most Suitable	Congruence
	3)	4.99	4.94	0.05	5.22	4.67	0.55	4.85	Most Suitable	Congruence

Table 4 Statistics, appropriate level and experts' congruence in educational outputs

Guideline		Mode	Mdn	[Mo-Mdn]	Q3	Q1	IR	Mean	Appropriate Level	Experts' Congruence
1	1)	4.95	4.91	0.04	5.20	4.62	0.58	4.85	Most Suitable	Congruence
	2)	4.97	4.91	0.06	5.20	4.62	0.58	4.80	Most Suitable	Congruence
	3)	4.81	4.59	0.22	5.05	3.83	1.22	4.35	Very Suitable	Congruence
2	2)	4.99	4.94	0.05	5.22	4.67	0.55	4.85	Most Suitable	Congruence
	3)	4.97	4.94	0.03	5.22	4.67	0.55	4.90	Most Suitable	Congruence
	4)	4.97	4.94	0.03	5.22	4.67	0.55	4.90	Most Suitable	Congruence
3	1)	4.13	4.19	0.06	5.14	3.80	1.34	4.25	Very Suitable	Congruence
	2)	4.82	4.73	0.09	5.12	4.21	0.91	4.65	Most Suitable	Congruence
	3)	4.92	4.83	0.09	5.17	4.50	0.67	4.70	Most Suitable	Congruence

Discussion

Development of Islamic education provision in public schools in the three southern border provinces of Thailand requires an environment where all parties concerned need to be informed correctly about the nature of Islamic education provision in public schools. The parties concerned must understand that in addition to being one type of educational service that corresponds with needs and identity of the community, it needs stakeholders to become instrumental in enhancing Islamic education provision. Ignoring such may result in taking away from its ultimate achievement and less involvement as noted by Chalatyaem, Narot, and Netthanornsak (2011), "When the community does not have clear knowledge and understanding about the curriculums, its participative role in development of educational institutions will be limited".

Moreover, cooperation with the community in Islamic education provision in public schools can help solve problems in limitation of educational resources, especially budgets used in management or administration of Islamic education. If schools can use learning resources in the community, it will help alleviate the financial burden of the government, and help make "the school part of the community". This is congruent with the National Education Guidelines, Section 29 which specifies "Educational institutions in cooperation with individuals, families, community, etc. shall contribute to search for support for exchange of experiences in development between communities and educational institutions" (Ministry of Education, 1999). Therefore, participation of community and local administration organizations is important to the process of quality development.

Quality development of Islamic education provision in public schools must move forward along with operation according to the National Educational Plan and the Educational Reform in the Second Phase B.E. 2552–2561 (2009–2018) which are to develop quality of education and learning (Office of the Education Council, 2009). Nevertheless, in respect of Islamic education provision in public schools, integrated educational management should be employed, that is, to arrange common educational programs along with religious ones. This is in agreement with a study by Wanityakorn and Suntharayut (2012) on suitable styles of Islamic schools for Thai society proposed in terms of curriculum content in which suitable proportions of curriculum content of religious and common subjects depend on importance of utilization by learners.

Therefore, moving towards success in the goals to efficiently and effectively develop Islamic education provision in public schools requires clear development directions with efficient mechanism system for monitoring and evaluation.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The findings indicate that suitable guidelines for development of Islamic educational management in public schools are related to four guidelines for environmental factor, five for inputs, three for educational management process, and three for educational outputs that occur inside and outside school, and they all affect each other. Based on the given guidelines, recommendations can be made as follows:

For use of the study, there should be a program to publicize among organizations and those concerned to obtain information about Islamic education provision in public schools in this particular area to understand the nature of educational management according to the concepts and philosophy of Islamic studies. The government's educational policy should promote and develop Islamic education provision in public schools to attain certain standards. All parties concerned should promote and support the development of Islamic education provision to be ably effective in public schools. Regarding recommendations for further research, studies should be conducted to develop causal models for development of Islamic education provision in public schools in the three southern border provinces of Thailand. The studies should be conducted on policies, strategies, operations and indicators for Islamic education provision in public schools in the three southern border provinces of Thailand.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgments

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