

Received: 15 November 2024 Revised: 5 December 2024 Accepted: 14 December 2024

SPECIFIC LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS WITHIN THE RUNG ARUN SONG KWAE SCHOOL NETWORK

Ntapat WORAPONGPAT¹

¹ Eastern Institute of Technology Suvarnabhumi, Thailand; dr.thiwat@gmail.com

Handling Editor:

Professor Dr.ABDURRAHMAN

Universitas Lampung, Indonesia

(This article belongs to the Theme 1: Education for Sustainability)

Reviewers:

1) Professor Dr.Oytun SÖZÜDOĞRU

University of City Island, Cyprus

2) Associate Professor Dr.Hj.Dewi KURNIASIH

UNIKOM, Indonesia

3) Dr.Kisman KARINDA

UMLB, Indonesia

Abstract

The objectives of this research were 1) to study the level of teachers' participation in the educational administration and 2) to compare teachers' participation in the educational administration according to the assessment of teachers, classified by education level and work experience. A sample comprised 165 teachers in academic institutions under the Taling Chan District Office in Bangkok, Thailand. The data collected from the questionnaire were then analyzed using descriptive statistics, consisting of percentage, mean, standard deviation, and t-test. The research results showed the following: 1) The level of teachers' participation in the educational administration included four aspects: participation in decision-making, participation in operations, participation in responsibility and receiving benefits, and participation in evaluation. All aspects are at a high level. 2) The level of participation of teachers in the educational administration, according to the assessment of teachers classified by education level, was different. In contrast, when classified by work experience, it was found that teachers' participation in educational administration levels was not different.

Keywords: Leadership Characteristics, School Administrators, Special Education, Teacher Participation

Citation Information: Worapongpat, N. (2025). Specific Leadership Attributes of School Administrators in Special Education Schools within the Rung Arun Song Kwae School Network. *Asian Education and Learning Review*, 3(1), Article 3. <https://doi.org/10.14456/aclr.2025.3>

Introduction

In the current context, society, economy, politics, and technology are rapidly changing, necessitating continuous development in Thailand's education system. The National Education Act emphasizes the vital role of education in the development of individuals and society (Bass, 1990). Education aims to advance human progress through knowledge dissemination, cultural preservation, and innovative creation (Pramathikul & Worapongpat, 2023). The overarching goal is to make education a tool for holistic human development, fostering physical, mental, and intellectual well-being, as well as social harmony and happiness (Deepimay & Worapongpat, 2023).

Attention must be given to the unique leadership qualities required of school administrators in special education (Dongling & Worapongpat, 2023). Special education schools face distinct challenges that differ from mainstream educational institutions, including managing resources, addressing the specific needs of students with learning or developmental disabilities, and supporting teachers and staff to work effectively in complex environments (Baojanraya et al., 2023).

School administrators within the Rung Arun Song Kwae network of special education schools must possess adequate leadership qualities (Liu & Worapongpat, 2024). They must inspire, build positive relationships, and encourage staff collaboration to achieve institutional goals (Min & Worapongpat, 2023). Effective leadership traits include a charismatic personality, administrative expertise, and strong social skills that foster trust and create a supportive team-oriented work environment (Ning et al., 2023). This, in turn, enhances operational effectiveness and staff satisfaction (Li & Worapongpat, 2023).

Therefore, This research is essential as it aims to deepen our understanding of the leadership attributes required for administrators within special education schools in the Rung Arun Song Kwae network. The findings will provide insights to guide administrators and stakeholders in developing the leadership qualities and skills needed to support effective school management and promote growth in special education institutions.

Literature Review

Leadership theory discusses various leadership forms that impact management and learning development within educational institutions, especially in special education schools. For instance, positive leadership emphasizes building strong relationships and enhancing staff potential (Promwong et al., 2023). Transformational leadership fosters positive changes within the school while caring leadership highlights the importance of addressing the specific needs of students, particularly in special education settings, where multidimensional support is essential to unlocking each child's full potential (Promwong et al., 2023).

Management in special education schools is crucial as it must account for the unique needs of students with special requirements (Phakamach et al., 2023). Effective management involves adapting the learning environment, providing adequate resources, and supporting skilled staff who can facilitate appropriate development and learning for special needs students (Phunahha & Worapongpat, 2023). Leaders in special education should understand these particular needs and implement management practices tailored to the unique context of these schools (Pitsapoh & Worapongpat, 2024; Rungrojana & Worapongpat, 2023).

A substantial body of research has investigated leadership characteristics in schools with special education needs. For example, TianShu and Worapongpat (2022) found that positive leadership fosters staff commitment to developing specialized skills for appropriate student care. Similarly, Worapongpat's (2022b) analysis revealed that leaders with a student-centered approach to care and development could effectively support comprehensive development in special education schools. Additionally, Worapongpat (2022a) underscored the importance of leadership that focuses on collaboration and adaptive problem-solving.

Concepts and Characteristics of School Administrators

Worapongpat and Phakamach (2022) identified four key characteristics of effective administrators: personality, leadership qualities, knowledge and management abilities, and professional skills, all of which facilitate successful administrative outcomes. Leaders should exhibit a stable personality and diligence to instill confidence among subordinates, fostering workplace cooperation (Worapongpat, 2022). Rungrachana and Worapongpat (2023) emphasized that a leader's behavior directly contributes to achieving organizational goals. Furthermore, Thammajai and Worapongpat (2024) concluded that respected and credible leaders are more capable of guiding their teams toward success. Lastly, the National Education Act of 1999, Section 53, mandates that school administrators hold a professional license to ensure high standards in management and administration.

Research Gap and Position

Although prior research has extensively explored leadership traits, management strategies, and educational development in general contexts, there needs to be more focus on leadership tailored to the unique challenges of special education schools. Most studies address mainstream education or discuss special education leadership without examining specific networks, such as the Rung Arun Song Kwae network. This research bridges the gap by focusing on the leadership attributes required to manage these unique institutions effectively. By addressing how leadership influences operational effectiveness and staff collaboration in this specific network, this study positions itself as a critical step toward developing specialized frameworks for leadership in special education schools, thus filling a crucial void in the existing literature.

Research Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework derives from synthesizing existing leadership theories and empirical research studies, including Positive Leadership, Transformational Leadership, and Caring Leadership. These theories are complemented by management principles tailored to the unique needs of special education schools, as highlighted in the studies by Worapongpat et al. (2022b), Phunahha & Worapongpat (2023), and TianShu and Worapongpat (2022).

Independent Variable

- 1) Work experience
 - 1.1) Little experience
 - 1.2) A lot of experience
- 2) Provincial area
 - 2.1) Sukhothai
 - 2.2) Phitsanulok
 - 2.3) Rayong



Dependent Variable

- Leadership characteristics of educational institution administrators Under the Office of the Commission basic education Rung Arun Song Kwae Hi School Network Group in 3 areas consists of
- 1) Personality
 - 2) Ability
 - 3) Social skills

Figure 1 Research conceptual framework

Research Methodology

Population and Sample

This study's population comprised 458 administrators and teachers from special education schools within the Ruang Arun Song Khwae school network, which is distributed across Sukhothai, Phitsanulok, and Rayong provinces.

School Administrators: 10 administrators were purposively selected to ensure diverse perspectives—six from Sukhothai, one from Phitsanulok, and three from Rayong.

Teachers: Stratified random sampling was employed to select 108 teachers, proportionally representing the provincial distribution: 49 from Sukhothai, 19 from Phitsanulok, and 30 from Rayong.

Data Collection

The research employed the following tools for investigation.

Questionnaire: The survey consists of two parts: Part 1: Personal Demographic Information. This part gathers information regarding individual demographics and professional backgrounds, such as years of experience and job location. Part 2: Leadership Characteristics. This section evaluates three aspects of leadership: personality, skill level, and interpersonal abilities, utilizing a 5-point Likert scale based on Best's framework.

Section 1: Demographic Information - Gathered data on demographics and professional background, such as years of experience and location of employment.

Section 2: Leadership Traits - Evaluated three aspects of leadership: personality, competence, and social abilities, utilizing a 5-point Likert scale based on Best's framework.

A panel of three experts in educational leadership reviewed the questionnaire for content validity and conducted a pilot test to determine reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.87).

In-depth Interviews: Performed with school administrators and teachers to gain deeper insights into leadership traits and practices.

Observations: Centered on administrators' management behaviors and practices in actual settings to enhance the quantitative data.

The data collection process was carried out as follows.

Questionnaire Distribution: Administered to 108 teachers and ten administrators from the Ruang Arun Song Khwae network, ensuring high response rates by scheduling follow-ups.

Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with administrators and teachers to gather qualitative data on leadership traits and practices.

Observations: Direct observations were conducted in real-time settings to evaluate administrators' skills, management styles, and interactions with staff and students.

Data Analysis

The examination of quantitative data included applying descriptive statistics such as percentages, means, and standard deviations to encapsulate demographic details and leadership qualities. For inferential statistics, a t-test was performed to assess leadership traits based on experience, while a one-way ANOVA with Scheffé's post-hoc analysis was applied to investigate variations across different provinces. Furthermore, the qualitative data analysis utilized content analysis, in which transcribed interviews and notes from observations were systematically coded to identify recurring themes, providing a deeper understanding of the leadership traits among school administrators.

Research Results

Table 1 Number and Percentage of School Administrators and Teachers in Special Education Schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission within the Ruang Arun Song Khwae School Network, Classified by Work Experience and Province

Item	Number (n = 108)	Percentage
Work Experience		
Minimal	65	60%
Extensive	43	40%
Province		
Sukhothai	42	38%
Phitsanulok	13	12%
Rayong	53	50%

Table 2 Mean and Standard Deviation of Leadership Characteristics of School Administrators in Special Education Schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission within the Ruang Arun Song Khwae School Network

Leadership Characteristic	Mean (\bar{x})	Standard Deviation (SD)	Level
Personality	4.22	0.41	High
Competence	3.81	0.40	High
Social Skills	4.14	0.47	High
Overall Mean	4.06	0.41	High

The findings show that the "personality" characteristic scored the highest among the leadership traits, followed closely by "social skills," with "competence" ranked third. The overall mean score indicates high leadership characteristics among the school administrators.

Table 3 Results of the Comparative Analysis of Leadership Characteristics of School Administrators in Special Education Schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission within the Ruang Arun Song Khwae School Network, Classified by Work Experience

Leadership Characteristic	Work Experience	Mean (\bar{x})	(SD)	t	p
Personality	Minimal	4.29	0.44	2.88	.00**
	Extensive	4.12	0.51		
Competence	Minimal	3.87	0.38	3.06	.07
	Extensive	3.72	0.41		
Social Skills	Minimal	4.19	0.45	2.57	.08
	Extensive	4.05	0.49		
Overall Mean	Minimal	4.12	0.39	3.01	.01**
	Extensive	3.96	0.44		

Note: $p \leq .01$ indicates statistical significance.

The comparison of leadership characteristics among school administrators in special education schools within the Ruang Arun Song Khwae School Network, classified by work experience, reveals a statistically significant difference at the .01 level overall. Specifically, "personality" shows a statistically significant difference at the .01 level, while "competence" and "social skills" do not show statistically significant differences.

Table 4 Results of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Leadership Characteristics of School Administrators in Special Education Schools under the Ruang Arun Song Khwae School Network, Classified by Province

Leadership Characteristic	SS	df	MS	F	p
Personality	2.217	2	1.108	4.965	.01**
Competence	1.059	2	0.530	3.299	.04*
Social Skills	1.519	2	0.759	3.455	.03*
Overall	1.359	2	0.680	3.942	.02*

Note: * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) for leadership characteristics among school administrators in special education schools within the Rung Arun Song Khwae School Network, classified by province, reveals statistically significant differences at the .05 level for "competence" and "social skills" and at the .01 level for "personality."

Suggestions for Improvement.

- 1) Clarify statistical significance: Ensure that statistical significance is clearly explained and discussed, particularly about specific values of "p," to help readers understand the importance of the findings.
- 2) Expand on findings: After each table, provide a more detailed analysis of what the numbers indicate and how they relate to the research questions. For example, after discussing the results of Table 3 and Table 4, explain how the differences in leadership characteristics by work experience or province impact the leadership effectiveness in special education schools.
- 3) Ensure consistency in formatting: Keep the formatting of tables consistent, especially in the presentation of data and statistical significance symbols.

Conclusion and Discussion

The discussion of the results in this study focuses on the leadership characteristics of school administrators in special education schools within the Rung Arun Song Khwae network. Key findings are as follows.

Leadership Characteristics of School Administrators in Special Education Schools

The leadership characteristics of the administrators in this network of schools were found to be high. This is due to the rigorous selection process based on criteria set by the Ministry of Education, which ensures that administrators possess the necessary knowledge, experience, and qualifications. Moreover, they undergo leadership training as prescribed by the Office of the Basic Education Commission. This results in administrators having the requisite skills in educational management, including social skills and personal traits that are both socially acceptable and beneficial for public governance. The leadership characteristics were rated highly across all areas, particularly in personality, social skills, and ability. This finding aligns with Worapongpat et al.'s (2022b) work, which emphasizes the importance of these three key leadership characteristics—personality, ability, and social skills—in effective leadership.

In addition, Worapongpat et al. (2023) research highlights the necessity for school administrators to possess strong leadership qualities to manage institutions and achieve their goals effectively. Effective leadership requires technical competence, strong interpersonal skills, and fostering good relationships with colleagues and staff. School administrators must also possess vision, creativity, and the courage to navigate challenges while using their leadership qualities to influence positive change and achieve collective goals.

Leadership Characteristics by Work Experience

The leadership characteristics of administrators in the Rung Arun Song Khwae Network differed significantly based on work experience, with personality differences being statistically significant at the .01 level. However, ability and social skills did not exhibit significant differences based on work experience. This is likely because administrators with more experience have had more opportunities to develop their leadership traits, especially their personality, which evolves through years of practice and interaction. This aligns with the findings of Worapongpat et al. (2023), who also observed significant differences in leadership characteristics based on work experience in the Nakhon Phanom Educational Service Area.

Leadership Characteristics by Province

Significant differences were found in the leadership characteristics of school administrators in the Rung Arun Song Khwae Network, based on province. Differences were observed in overall leadership characteristics and the areas of ability and social skills at the .05 level and personality at the .01 level. Notably, Phitsanulok province, with fewer teachers and

administrators, exhibited more substantial leadership characteristics. This can be attributed to the more efficient school management in smaller districts, which fosters better relationships and higher trust within the community. Conversely, with larger schools and workforces, Sukhothai and Rayong provinces face more significant challenges in managing such a scale, impacting leadership development. These findings are consistent with research by Worapongpat et al. (2023), which highlights the role of school directors in managing resources, planning, and promoting workforce development in line with the National Education Act.

Implications for Practice and Future Research

This study highlights the importance of leadership characteristics in managing special education schools and provides valuable insights into how administrators' work experience, as well as provincial contexts, can influence leadership effectiveness. Future research could explore further the impact of specific leadership training programs and management strategies on developing leadership qualities among school administrators. Additionally, research could examine the influence of community and organizational factors on leadership outcomes, particularly in more extensive and more complex school networks.

Suggestions

Development of the School Administrator's Personality: The Office of the Basic Education Commission should support the development of school administrators by promoting good personality traits, friendliness, and fairness toward all colleagues. The focus should be on enhancing their skills in building positive relationships and their ability to handle various situations effectively in decision-making and performing duties under challenging circumstances.

Development of Knowledge and Skills in Research and Development: The Office of the Basic Education Commission should encourage school administrators to acquire knowledge and skills in research and development to enhance their ability to apply research findings for improving school management. This will also enable them to manage personnel effectively by aligning their capabilities with the roles and responsibilities of subordinates.

Development of Social Skills: The Office of the Basic Education Commission should promote the development of social skills in school administrators by encouraging them to foster collaboration and motivate everyone within the school to engage in discussions and various activities. This will help strengthen relationships within the school and the community.

Future Research

Study of Factors Influencing Leadership Characteristics: Further study should be conducted on the factors affecting the development of leadership characteristics in school administrators within the Rung Arun Song Khae School Network, focusing on personality traits, social skills, and managerial capabilities. This will provide a deeper understanding of the factors influencing the development of these characteristics.

Study of the Components of Leadership Characteristics: Further research should examine the various components of leadership characteristics in school administrators. This will contribute to building a database that can be used for training and developing administrators to possess the leadership qualities required to manage schools effectively in the current era.

References

- Baojanraya, K., Chotiwan, B., Saikham, S., & Worapongpat, N. (2023). Leadership development of educational institution administrators in the 21st century according to the 4 principles of Iddhipada under the Khon Kaen Primary Educational Service Area Office, Area 2. *Journal of the Pimoltham Research Institute*, 10(1), 73-85.
- Bass, B. (1990). *Bass and Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership: Theory, Research, and Managerial Applications*. 3rd ed. New York: Free Press.

- Deepimay, C., & Worapongpat, N. (2023). Participation of Parents in Organising Activities for The Development of Students With Disabilities: Case Study of The Saraburi Special Education Center. *Bua Bundit Educational Administration Journal*, 23(2), 79-98.
- Dongling, Z., & Worapongpat, N. (2023). Academic Leadership of Administrator Influence Learning Organization of Case Study of The University, Hong Kong. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary in Educational & Cultures Studies*, 1(2), 12-20.
- Li, X., & Worapongpat, N. (2023). The transformation leadership administration of Fit Middle School in Anhui Province. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary in Educational & Cultures Studies*, 1(1), 14-27.
- Liu, J., & Worapongpat, N. (2024). Rural head teachers' leadership in local education curriculum under the perspective of educational modernization in Xi'an Province. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Development*, 2(3), 1-25.
- Min, Y., & Worapongpat, N. (2023). Creative Leadership and School of Zhonghar Vocational and Technical College. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary in Educational & Cultures Studies*, 1(1), 1-13.
- Ning, L., Worapongpat, N., Wongkumchai, T., Zidi, X., Jiewei, W., & Mingyu, Z. (2023). Administration Music Courses for Sustainable Success Case Study Jiangling Town Central High School Dazhou City. *UBRU International Journal Ubon Ratchathani Rajabhat University*, 3(2), 21-39.
- Phakamach, P., Phomdee, R., Worapongpat, N., & Phakamach, V. (2023). Characteristics, Components and Guidelines for Transformational Leadership Development to Create Educational Innovative Organization of College of Nursing Administrators in Thailand. *Journal of Education and Innovative Learning*, 3(3), 207-255.
- Phunahha, R., & Worapongpat, N. (2023). Creative academic leadership with vision and school administration. *Kalasin Secondary Educational Service Area Office. Kho Phayom Journal*, 34(1), 67-85.
- Pitsapoh, M., & Worapongpat, N. (2024). Innovative leadership of school administrators under the Nakhon Ratchasima Primary Educational Service Area Office 3. *Valaya Alongkorn Rajabhat University Journal of Education*, 2(1), 22-33.
- Pramathikul, A., & Worapongpat, N. (2023). Ethical leadership of educational institution administrators in Bo Rai District under the Trat Primary Educational Service Area Office. *Bua Bundit Educational Administration Journal*, 23(2), 65-78.
- Promwong, T., Chotivam So, B., Saengkham, T., & Worapongpat, N. (2023). Leadership according to the principles of the Second Papanika, the Sutta of the Administer Phrapariyattidhamma School General Education Department Kalasin Province. *Journal of Pimontham Research Institute*, 10(1), 43-55.
- Rungrachana, V., & Worapongpat, N. (2023). Leadership of educational institution administrators. Under the jurisdiction of the Kanchanaburi Secondary Educational Service Area Office. *Journal of Future Education Innovation*, 2(2), 90-103.
- Rungrojana, W., & Worapongpat, N. (2023). Leadership of educational institution administrators under the Kanchanaburi Secondary Educational Service Area Office. *Future Education Innovation Journal*, 2(2), 90-103.
- Thammajai, S., & Worapongpat, N. (2024). Participation of teachers in the administration of educational institution administrators under the Taling Chan District Office, Bangkok. *Mekong Basin Arts and Science Research Journal*, 32(1), 67-80.
- TianShu, M., & Worapongpat, N. (2022). The Hybrid Teaching Management System on Art Education Subjects in Haizhou Senior Middle School of Fuxin City. *UBRU International Journal Ubon Ratchathani Rajabhat University*, 3(1), 25-37.
- Worapongphat, N. (2022). Development of a learning management platform using the constructivist concept on educational administration theory and innovation for graduate

- students. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, Suratthani Rajabhat University*, 14(2), 81-106.
- Worapongpat, N., Juthawan, N., & Wuttisuwanan, C. (2023). Transformational leadership of administrators and teachers' performance motivation in educational institutions in Trang, Surat, and Kanchanaburi provinces. *ASEAN Buddhist Studies Journal*, 8(2), 9-20.
- Worapongpat, N., Nirundon, J., Attasara, N., Supunna, P., & Suphanat, J. (2022a). Innovation and technology in education: A study of academic achievement and the use of online social media on behavior according to norms and culture of students in Grade 5 at Wat Phra Khao School (Prachanukroh). *Journal of MCU Philosophy Review*, 5(2), 22-32.
- Worapongpat, N., & Phakamach, P. (2022). The Development of Learning Management Platforms Using Constructivist Concepts on the Topic of Educational Administration Theory and Innovation for Graduate Students. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Suratthani Rajabhat University*, 14(2), 81-106.
- Worapongpat, N., Ruangphaisan, S., Phakamach, P., & Lamyong, J. (2022b). Guidelines for developing adaptive leadership of executives of professional vocational education institutions Under the situation of the new normal and the next normal in the eastern region of Thailand. *Buddha Thammakha Journal*, 7(1), 193-207.

Data Availability Statement: The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Publisher's Note: All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers. Any product that may be evaluated in this article, or claim that may be made by its manufacturer, is not guaranteed or endorsed by the publisher.



Copyright: © 2025 by the authors. This is a fully open-access article distributed under the terms of the Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0).