

Buddhist Leadership for the Local Leaders in Suratthani, Thailand

Chaiwat Phuakkhong

Abstract--- This article focuses on analyzing Buddhist leadership for the local leaders in Suratthani province, Thailand by trying to demonstrate perspectives through a 14 years' observation of the administration of local administrative organizations in Suratthani towards the good governance with the principles of leadership theory and Buddhist leadership, a critical factor for success of local leaders to develop the concepts and theory of participation to enhance the good governance. The results found that the guidelines for the good governance of Buddhist leadership for local leaders in Suratthani consisted of (1) Cognitive intelligence, having foresight and wide vision to understanding the condition of event, and advance with knowledge and initiative to solve problems logically. (2) Having faith, leaders must have public mind and paying attention to the benefits of public. (3) Adheres to the rule of law in decision making as a tool to analyze the situation precisely to be reliable in work and not against the law. (4) Honesty, good quality of leaders must be honest and having a good conscience as a guideline for good conduct. (5) Transparency, leaders must be transparent and honest to the people. (6) Observe the 5 precepts and behave as a good role example for subordinates to follow to nourish the mind and career advancement under the concept of using economical and worthwhile resources for administration.

Keywords---Buddhist leadership, local leaders, Suratthani Province Thailand

I. INTRODUCTION

Thailand has developed the governing system from absolute monarchy since 1932. Thus, the administration has changed to a democratic system. The government has been organized into a central administration, regional administration, and local administration. Various local agencies that perform the duty of public administration, each department must achieve the primary duty of coordination to solve problems for people with close relations [1]. Local government administration began in the reign of King Chulalongkorn since 1905, the first sanitary districts were established, namely Tha-Chalom Sanitation in Samut-Sakhon province. Thailand has continuously developed the governance system that causing expansion of the city and infrastructure. Due to the increasing of population, economic, social and political development at the local level for greater prosperity until 1997, the concept of local government was used as a guideline by deciding the principle of decentralization. In this regard, there are 5 types of local government agencies, namely Bangkok, Pattaya, Provincial Administrative Organization, Municipality and Subdistrict Administrative Organization [2], which the state has assigned the locality to have the opportunity to govern and administrating the local by themselves, able to meet the needs of the people, and being the main agency that can solve the problems effectively [3].

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The administration of the local administrative organization has become more important respectively since the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand 1997 and 2007 have been enforced by requiring the state to have a decentralized administration, and allowing the local administrative organization to become independent and able to make decisions in their affairs. The government has encouraged local administrative organizations to participate in the operation according to the basic state policy by taking into consideration the intention of the people of each village in Suratthani province. And the latest constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand 2017 requires local people to participate in supervising the administration of local administrative organizations for the benefit of local people and the nation [4]. Besides, public sector systems have been developed, focusing on the development of quality and ethics of government officials along with the improvement of working methods for the administration effectiveness of state affairs. Besides, making public service faster and more convenient as well as being efficient and transparent that can be examined with due regard for public participation to bring benefits to local people.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Perspective through 14-year observation of the administration of local government organizations in Suratthani province

From the Local Performance Assessment (LPA) for the year 2018 of Suratthani province regarding the good governance aspect, a total of 138 local administrative organizations in Suratthani found that only 21 local administrative organizations received the budget and winning award of the Good Governance within 14 years by the Department of Local Administration Ministry of the Interior, King Prajadhipok Award and the Golden King Prajadhipok Award from King Prajadhipok's Institute. It is, therefore, considered that the administrative system of the local government is lacking development. (Operations Center of the Department of Local Administration, information of local administrative organizations that received good governance awards for the year 2003-2019) [5].

When observed through The Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand since the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand 1997 and 2007 has been enforced by requiring the state to decentralize the administration to local. The constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand 2017, the most recent was seriously imposed on the people participation in conducting and supervising the administration of the local administrative organizations for their benefit including the benefit of the country [4]. In addition, government systems have been developed with focusing on quality development, government official's ethics along with the upgrading of development paradigm, and working methods for the effective administration of the State affairs in order to establish and provide public services effectively and transparently, and able to be examined with the primary participation of the public.

A weakness of local government organizations, if people do not participate, they will not be able to solve the problems or do not meet the needs of the people. The problem that is currently encountered is the lack of public participation in the management of local administrative organizations. Most of the people who participate are the people that the municipality has allocated the proportionally by delegating the power to the village headman. Each village was allocated to the public to participate within the municipality. Resulting in development or the services management do not meet the needs of the people, including the problem of corruption in the policies decision process, because the public does not pay attention to these effects. It is noteworthy that people who cooperate with the executive want to participate with the organizations more than those with the opposition who do not want to participate in the administration of local administrative organizations. Besides, regulations and laws are not conducive to the promotion of public participation.

And more importantly, the executives or civil servants do not understand or do not focusing on public participation, discrimination against people under unfair supervision. Thus, empirical resulting in 14 years can find only 21 good governance of the local administrative organizations existing in Suratthani province [6].

III. DATA COLLECTION

Field survey for specific in-depth interviews with leaders of 10 local administrative organizations that received good governance awards in Suratthani Province consisting of the leaders from Suratthani Provincial Administrative Organization, Tha -Thong Mai Municipality, Tha- Chang Subdistrict Municipality, Lamet Subdistrict Administrative Organization, Makham -Tia Subdistrict Administrative Organization, Ton- Yuan Subdistrict Administrative Organization, Takhian- Thong Subdistrict Administrative Organization, Khao- Tok Subdistrict Administrative Organization, Takrob Subdistrict Administrative Organization, Thung-Tao-Mai Subdistrict Administrative Organization.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

This study is a documentary and field study using in-depth interviews with the leaders from 10 award-winning of good governance of local administrative organizations in Surat Thani from 2011 – 2016. Data analysis used content analysis techniques to present the results by descriptive analysis method.

V. STUDY RESULTS

Perspective through concepts, theories, principles of leadership and Buddhist leaders. The study of document and data, together with the theory and concepts to connect to the relationships of the main data providers for processing, analysis and synthesis of the results, can be summarized into 2 issues as follows:

1. Concepts, theories, and principles of leadership are a very important factor for the success of leaders by using "function structure theory" that can explain the results of interview with expertise people who have experiences with working in the local administrative organizations that can explain to the model as follows

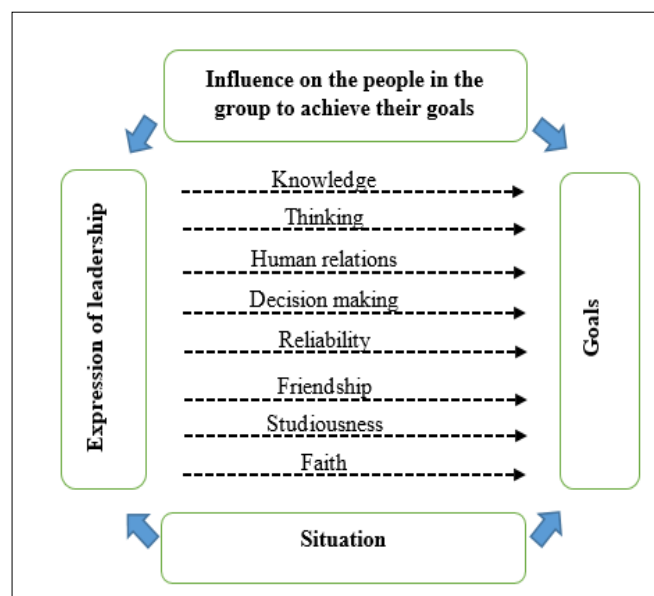


Figure 1: Leadership Theory

From the conceptual model of figure 1, the theory of leadership can be explained in detail as follows

1.1 Knowledge

From the interviews with leaders of local administrative organizations in Suratthani found that the policies that not violating rules and regulations, the organization management and problems analyzes must matching the difficulties of people. Leaders must have knowledge and understand the rules and regulations that can solve the problems logically [7].

1.2 Thinking

From interviews with leaders of local administrative organizations in Suratthani found that morals, attitudes, and creative values are an important component for good leaders. They must have a profound experience, far and wide knowledge including understanding local areas. Good leaders need initiative and innovating for the benefit of the local people [8].

1.3 Human Relations

From interviews with leaders of local administrative organizations in Suratthani found that self-confidence, gentle, good relationship, able to control emotions, dress appropriately, speak politely with appropriate postures, good health, and credibility [9].

1.4 Decision making

From interviews with leaders of local administrative organizations in Suratthani found that local leaders have the power to allocate budgets, think carefully before making a decision, analyze reason and result before making decision, having a sense of responsibility for what is happening together, having courage in making decision to solve problems systematically [10].

1.5 Reliability

From interviews with leader of local administrative organizations in Suratthani found that leaders must have ethics, and reward for those who do good in society, professional organization management, persistence in administration for the benefit of the public more than one's own, public minds, good leaders must not be discriminatory, not biased, show kindness to colleagues and assistants, circular analysis of problems [11].

1.6 Friendship

From interviews with leaders of local administrative organizations in Suratthani found that employees in the organization are incorporated, using appropriate authority, promote ethics and accommodating, sincerity for colleagues, having an art to win people's heart, self-possession and occupation [12].

1.7 Studiosness

From interviews with leaders of local administrative organizations in Suratthani found that leaders can make decisions quickly because of innovation, self-development, create work motivation, perform as a good role, do not interfere in the duties of others, having deep knowledge, wide and far knowledge, being a coordinator of understanding of all parties and aiming at achieving quality work [13].

1.8 Faith

From interviews with leaders of local administrative organizations in Suratthani found that leaders must have public morals, public mind, attach importance to uphold the common interest, providing an exemplary role for good behavior, and leaders must perform well, adhering to Buddhism, praising the ethical leader [14].

2. The concept of ethical tree theory is mainly applied in the analysis the results of the interviews with expertise and experience in working in the local administrative organizations can be summarized as a model as follows.

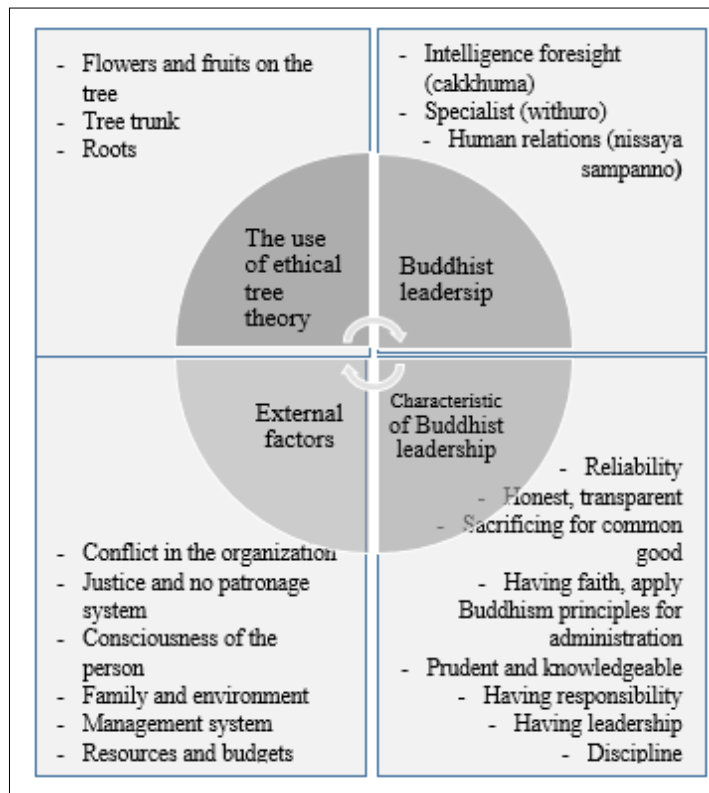


Figure 2: Principles of Buddhist leadership

From the figure 2, the principles of Buddhist leadership can be explained in detail as follows

2.1. Flowers and fruit on the tree

From interviews with leaders of local administrative organizations in Suratthani, according to the theory of flower and fruit on the trees, found that (1) Leaders perform as good role models [11] (2) Leaders work diligently for the public [10] (3) Public minded leaders [7] (4) Leaders must possess the qualities of self-possession, personnel-possession, and work- possession [15].

2.2 The trunk of the tree

From interviews with the leaders of local administrative organizations in Suratthani regarding the leadership of local administrative organization in Suratthani, according to the trunk of the tree theory, it was found that (1) leaders must have morals and ethics to their assistants [16], (2) leaders must strive to work for the future and self-controllers [12](3) leaders exercise power with morality [13] (4) leaders must create work motivation [8] (5) leaders must have a moral attitude and creative values [17].

2.3 The root of the tree

From interviews with the leaders of local administrative organizations in Suratthani regarding the leadership of local administrative organization leaders in Suratthani, according to the root of the tree theory, it was found that (1) leaders practice their intelligence and having social experiences [8] (2) leaders are professional in administration [11] (3) leaders can use social capital to apply in organizational management [7] (4) leaders must have an entrepreneurial spirit [9]. (5) Leaders must have risk and conflict management [15].

VI. SUMMARY AND CONTRIBUTION

Integration through the process of concept and theory of development for the guideline of participation to reinforce good governance

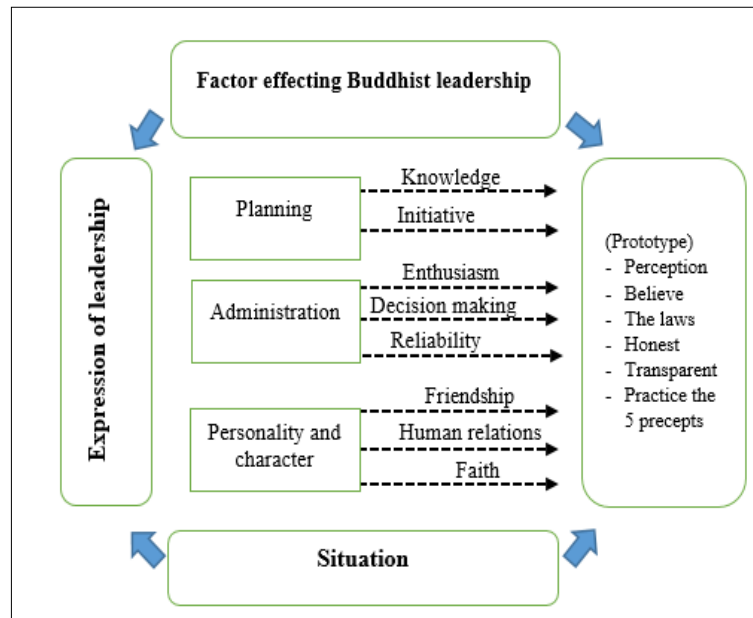


Figure 3: Good Governance of Buddhist Leadership for Local Leader

The general plan mostly based on contribution or sharing that is not the participation process, in other words listening and sharing opinions are not the participation in the decision making. Thus, participation must follow the process of creation and justice through the legal process only, and finally, the development plan is not transparency. Because it is unable to verify or requesting the disclosure of information honestly. But the information must be disclosed according to the Official Information Act. When this happens, the governance system for the development plan of Suratthani cannot be realized. More importantly, it leads to more sophisticated and complex corruption in Thai society which can observe the said problems occurring with the local administrative organizations, especially the issue of public participation in order to strengthen the implementation of the good governance of the local administrative organizations in Suratthani, therefore, from the figure 3 can study the ways to put into practice successfully. The state's mission is to create jobs with transparency, local standards, and progress. The result will continue to benefit local people that can lead to better management and presented as follows: 1) Cognitive intelligence has farsighted intelligence, wide vision, understanding the situation in order to prepare a defensive or proactive plan for development with knowledge and creative initiatives, which enable leaders to be knowledgeable about legal regulations, policies compliance, and not violate regulations. Thinking about the new organization management that requires more exchanges, analysis of cause and effect. Leaders are knowledgeable and understanding in resource management, maximize benefits, accuracy in regulations and solving problems logically. 2) Having a spirit of faith, leaders have public minds under the knowledge and initiatives to create enthusiasm in working by paying attention to the benefit of the public. Supplying exemplary persons who can be good models, perform in a good manner, having faith in Buddhism, glorify leaders with morals and develop a moral network.

Having behavior that is not only legitimate but also must behave correctly within the framework of morality. 3) The law, adheres to the rule of law for decision making as a tool for management to analysis the situation precisely to create credibility in working and take advantage of the public interests that are not against the rule of law, honesty to oneself.

Leaders must show good examples of honesty. 4) Honesty, leaders must show good examples of integrity and honesty, a good conscience, good behavior or practice responsible for duty, sincere and patient with hardships for the well-being of the people, living with sufficiency under the philosophy of King Rama IX. 5) transparency, Leaders must show transparency, honest to the people, should not set up various projects to benefit the party. Leaders must adhere to the good governance principles in working, must manage people, manage money, manage time, and operate with honesty. In the managing of people, money, and work that is limited, leaders must use these resources to be economical, cost-effective, and efficient to be effective and worthwhile for real local benefits. 6) Practice the 5 precepts as good examples. Having good human relations and faith, acting as a good example for subordinates to follow. Contemplating before making a decision, analyze causes and results before making decisions, having a sense of responsibility, having courage in making decisions that can solve problems systematically, showing kindness to colleagues and subordinates to continually nourish the mind and career advancement under the concept of managing resources economically and worthily.

Buddhist leadership for local leaders is a sensitive process and there is a relationship between the agencies responsible for organizing the public participation process, which is considered an important dimension in successful participation management. Government agencies that own the project or have the approval authority must organize the participation process sincerely, openly, honestly, without prejudice, honor each other, having two-way communication all the time. Especially providing accurate and enough information to respond to the suspicions of all stakeholders, including reporting progress or changes of the project continuously. Explain the various processes clearly to reduce the doubts that may cause rumors. Encourage people to participate in the initial stages. At the same time, study the information and various opinions and using them for decision making as the basis for mutual trust, which leads to better cooperation, understanding, and communication, leading to sustainable solutions and local development continuously.

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