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From the Editors	2
About The Authors.....	3
An Examination of Two Studies on Chinese Principalship: Implications for Educational Planning <i>Dehua Liu and Tak Cheung Chan</i>	5
Planning Strategies to Fill Principal Vacancies: The Issues and Some Choices <i>Pamela A. Lemoine, Thomas J. McCormack and Michael D. Richardson</i>	17
Inclusive Education Plans and Practices in China, Thailand, and Turkey <i>Tanyathorn Hauwadhanasuk, Mustafa Karnas and Min Zhuang</i>	29
Knowledge Management Issue: A Case Study of the Department of Educational Administration at a Saudi University <i>Fatemah Abdullah Alhazmi</i>	49
Invitation to Submit Manuscripts.....	61
Membership Application.....	63

FROM THE EDITORS

Educational planning articles in this issue relate to educational planning issues in both the K-12 and higher education programs. In the K-12 programs, school principals' roles, responsibilities and recruitment strategies are examined. Inclusive education as an essential component of K-12 program is explored. Knowledge management issues in higher education are discussed with reference to the educational planning perspectives.

The article by Liu and Chan reports on the findings of two studies on the roles and responsibilities of Chinese school principals. With similar approach, the two studies have shown the change of principals' roles and responsibilities over time. The authors draw on implications for educational planning particularly on the planning for school principal preparation programs.

The article by Lemoine, McCormack and Richardson draws the attention of the public on the issue of school principal shortage. The authors analyze the background of the entire problem and recommend planning strategies to help fill the critical principal vacancies.

This is followed by the article by Hauwadhanasuk, Karnas and Zhuang that reports the latest development of inclusive education in China, Thailand and Turkey. Similarities and challenges of the inclusive education issues among these countries are discussed. Through the authors' observation, planning strategies are proposed for future development of inclusive education in China, Thailand and Turkey.

Alhazmi's article on knowledge management (KM) outlines his qualitative approach to investigate knowledge management in higher education. The research seeks to establish an understanding of KM, including its implementation and challenges. Knowledge management generates significant implications for educational planning in higher education.

Articles selected for publication in this issue not only associate with an educational planning orientation, but they also display practical demonstration that the planning approach works in all educational settings. These articles also deliver a message that educational planning has an international understanding. With mutual sharing of experiences, countries of different culture could improve educational management by learning from one another through the educational planning process.

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February 2018

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AN EXAMINATION OF TWO STUDIES ON CHINESE PRINCIPALSHIP: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to critically review two studies conducted ten years apart to examine the roles and responsibilities of school principals in China. Data of one study were collected from seven provinces of south China while those of the other study were mainly from Changsha area, Hunan Province. Though the same survey instrument was used in both studies for data collection, because of time and location differences, direct comparison of findings tend to be inappropriate. Longitudinal approach of school leadership studies in the future is recommended. Results of this review showed that principals in these two studies had unbalanced workload in distributing their effort in dealing with daily school businesses. The research approaches and findings of these two studies have significant implications for planning of educational leadership programs, planning of daily school practices and planning for future research in school leadership.

INTRODUCTION

The traditional roles and responsibilities of principals in modern Chinese schools have been explicitly spelt out in Chinese education literature for years. Representative work of Jiang (1986) and Jiang and Chan (1990) specifically laid out the scope of principals' daily work to include school organization, school law, educational planning, personnel management, school financial operation, curriculum development, instructional supervision, educational evaluation, resource management and school-community relations. School principals are expected of possessing the knowledge and skills needed to work in all aspects of work that confront them every day.

However, educational development in China has undergone tremendous changes in recent years along with its national open policies in international connections. The announcement of the Outline of Basic Education Curriculum Reform (Ministry of Education, 2001) is to aim at a student-centered policy with innovative educational approaches to include creativity, collaboration, engagement, problem-solving skills and knowledge applications. In addition to following the curriculum guidelines of the Central Government, school leaders are allowed to generate supplementary programs to suit the needs of their students.

All these changes have been taking place and were described by Li Lanqing (2005), China's former Vice Premier in charge of Education as follows:

In raising educational quality, you must set your eyes on all the students, and do all you can to promote their all-round development, raise teaching standards, improve classroom buildings and the learning environment, buy more equipment and facilities, improve teaching methods and approaches, strengthen school leadership and tighten school supervision, and improve the social environment. (p. 398)

The delivery of the Basic Education Curriculum Reform was not at all smooth in the years following its announcement. A more stringent system of educational supervision and accountability was needed to ensure efficient and effective implementation of the educational reform. School principals had no preparation as curriculum leaders (Su, Adams & Mininberg

(2000) and were accused for poor curriculum leadership in curriculum implementation (Luo & Xue, 2010). As a result, the Professional Standards of Principals at the Compulsory Education Stage was released in 2013 (Ministry of Education, 2013). These standards specifically lay out the roles and responsibilities of school principals in the effective delivery of school curriculum. Principals as instructional leaders have added responsibilities of curriculum supervision and evaluation in addition to other miscellaneous work for school operation. The purpose of this paper is to review the findings of two studies of the roles and responsibilities of Chinese school principals in a time frame of ten years.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON CHINESE PRINCIPALSHIP

Types of School Leadership

Wang and Ren (2012) identified three types of principal leadership: the ‘performance-orientated’ principals, ‘performance and research orientated’ principals and the ‘expert-type’ principals. The ‘performance-orientated’ principals set their goals to improve student performance with established criteria to measure the extent of success. The ‘performance and research orientated’ principals also set student achievement goals but on top of that they also want to understand why and how such goals can be attained. The ‘expert-type’ principals adopt their school leadership styles based on theoretical models. They are interested in exploring how theoretical models are applied to daily school practices. All three types of principals work hard to create positive learning environments for student success.

Leadership Style

Chinese principals traditionally have been labeled as authoritative figures having supreme control of school administrative affairs (Lo, 2004). The Professional Standards of Principals (Ministry of Education, 2013) further add to the principals’ responsibilities as well as authorities. Kao’s study (2005) agreed that school administrators in China were simply acting on behalf of the Central Government policies with little individual characteristics. However, Zhang’s study (1998) concluded that Chinese school principals wanted to employ a leadership style more toward democracy. Yet, they still would like to maintain a substantial authority over certain areas of school administration.

In China, school principals are held to a high level of moral leadership (Li, 2011; Liu, 2008). Tao (2011) has developed areas to uphold principals’ moral standard to include setting up moral values, role modelling, and promoting moral values in school. The moral aspects of Professional Standards of Principals (Ministry of Education, 2013) have set stringent limitations on the expectations of personal and professional behaviors of school leaders.

In studying school principalship in China, Zhang (2010) collected her data through personal interviews and observations. She believed that school principals needed to exercise a shared leadership to be successful. Shared leadership is meant to build personal relationship with teachers and staffs in school. School principals need to learn to support teachers and staffs to share their responsibilities. Principals earn the respect of colleagues around them through personal integrity and influence.

Instructional Leadership

The study of Luo and Xue (2010) indicated the need for principal preparation in the area of curriculum leadership in school. In response to that, the Shanghai Municipal Education Commission (2010) initiated the Three-Year Action Plan to Promote Curriculum Leadership of Secondary and

Primary School (and Kindergarten) Principals to upgrade principals' capability in curriculum leadership.

Curriculum leadership of principals was the backbone to successful curriculum implementation (Shi, 2008). Principals needed to learn to implement and evaluate curriculum and facilitate its supporting resources (Xia, 2012; Zhou & Xia, 2009). Zheng (2012) also uttered that principals needed to be capable of setting instructional goals, developing instructional activities, seeking for resources and establishing procedures of instruction evaluation. Chu and Liu (2010) further recommended that principals should connect frequently with teachers and observe classes on a regular basis. In Wang's study (2009), participating principals expressed that they could not be curriculum leaders if the school culture was heavily focused on examination outcomes.

In an attempt to develop a Chinese instructional leadership model, Zhao and Liu (2010) employed a combined interview and survey method. Their initiated model shows that instructional leadership in Chinese schools consisted of four dimensions – leading instructional organizations, designing instructional activities, creating instructional conditions and supervising teaching.

Leadership Strategies

In their study of school principalship, Li, Li and Lu (2012) found some common strategies employed by principals in exercising leadership in their schools. These include inviting guest specialists to conduct workshops for teachers, supporting teachers by offering assistance after class observation, encouraging teachers to conduct action research in their classes to verify teaching and learning outcomes. However, principals in the study by Jiang, Chen and Lu (2010) were humble enough to identify factors that contribute mainly to school success: professional capacity of teachers, policy and resource support from local education entities, and the qualifications of the students enrolled in school. It is clear, anyway, that these contributing factors would not happen without strong leadership support from the principals.

Teacher Perception of Leadership

Ma, Wang and Xie (2008) studied the views of teachers and principals on school leadership in rural China. They found that teachers did not see things the same way as principals in many ways. In school operations, financial resources were not rated by teachers as a significant issue as the principals did. Many teachers complained that principals did not pay enough attention to school curriculum implementation and classroom learning activities. In Pang's study (2001) that surveys teachers in China, it was found that teachers would like to see principals create more opportunities for communication, participation, collaboration, and consensus among their fellow teachers in school.

CHAN AND DU STUDY 2008

Chan and Du (2008) studied the roles and responsibilities of school principals in China with both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Seventy-seven school principals from seven southern provinces in China---Guangdong, Zhejiang, Fujian, Shaanxi, Hubei, Henan, and Sichuan--- participated in the study. A thirty-item Likert-scale questionnaire was designed by the researchers to survey school principals in seven leadership areas: character, professional knowledge, professional skill, administrative style, administrative duties, personnel management, and student affairs management. The instrument was tested for validity in contents, language and format. The test and retest reliability coefficient was .885 and internal consistency of the instrument was tested by using Cronbach Alpha Test (Overall Alpha = .854). In addition, a questionnaire with three open-ended

questions was also constructed to solicit principals' perceptions on their major responsibilities, their challenges, and the fulfillment in their positions as school principals (See Appendix).

Demographic Data Analysis

Data analysis showed more male principals (71.6%) than female principals participating in the study. Over half of the principals were between the ages of 41 and 50 (55.6%). Most of the participating principals (73.9%) were from secondary schools.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Results of data analysis indicated that the average mean response of Chinese principals was 4.171 out of a 5-point scale of measurement. Seven profile areas of principalship were examined with analysis results of means as follows: character (4.512), professional knowledge (4.122), administrative skills (4.206), administrative style (4.202), administrative duties (4.111), personnel management (4.052), and student affairs management (3.989).

The impact of gender, age, and school level on school principals' roles and responsibilities was examined by using One-Way Analysis of Variance. When roles and responsibilities of male principals were compared with those of female principals in China, no significant difference was found. In age comparison, of the seven areas of principal profile, only *skills* was found to be significant at the .05 level ($F = 2.739$) in favor of the age group of 31 – 40 year old principals. No significant difference was found in any area of the principals' roles and responsibilities between elementary and secondary school principals in China.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Observation was made to the emerging patterns and consistencies in themes and patterns as prevailed among the principals' responses to the open-ended questions. Analysis of qualitative data indicated that major responsibilities as perceived by Chinese principals were goal setting, personnel issues, public relations and school culture. In response to the challenges they were facing, school principals in China agreed on personnel issues as their common challenges. Other unique challenges include community expectation of school outcome and pressure from local boards. In the fulfillment of a school principal's job, school principals in China highlighted their greatest fulfillment in seeing student achievement, working with professional faculty and staff, and gaining community support.

CHAN AND LIU STUDY 2017

The Chan and Liu study (2017) is actually a replication of the Chan and Du study of 2008. It also aimed at examining the roles and responsibilities of Chinese school principals. A total of 43 school principals from Changsha area, Hunan Province, participated in the study. The same thirty item survey instrument was used to solicit data from school principals. The instrument also included a set of three open-ended questions to review principals' perception of their major responsibilities, challenges and job fulfillment.

Demographic Data Analysis

Analysis of school principals' demographic data showed that 67.4% of participating principals were males and 32.6% were females. In school level, 51.2% of the principals were from elementary schools and 48.8% from secondary schools. More than half of the principals (51.2%) were in the age group of 41 to 50 years old.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Results of data analysis indicated that the average mean response of Chinese principals was 3.719 out of a 5-point scale survey. Seven profile areas of principalship were examined with results of means as follows: character (3.651), professional knowledge (3.623), administrative skills (3.823), administrative style (4.372), administrative duties (3.824), personnel management (3.442), and student affairs management (3.529).

The impact of gender, age, and school level on school principals' roles and responsibilities was examined by using One-Way Analysis of Variance. No significant difference was found in principals' roles and responsibilities between male and female principals. In school level comparison, no significant difference was detected in principals' responses between elementary and secondary school level either. In comparing principals' perceptions among principals' age groups, of the seven areas of principal profile, only *character* was found to be significant at the .05 level ($F = 7.577$) in favor of the age group of 31 – 40 year old principals.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Most Chinese school principals confirmed that their major responsibility was to create a safe and inductive environment to support teaching and learning in school. Improvement of instruction was the focus of their responsibility. with reference to challenge in work, many principals identified the development of future planning strategies of school as challenging. They also claimed that in such planning effort, coordinating all involved stakeholders was very challenging too. In their job fulfillment, principals almost unanimously agreed that instructional improvement resulting in enhanced student achievement gave them the greatest satisfaction. This was the attainment of their professional goal.

DISCUSSION

The two studies of principals' roles and responsibilities were conducted ten years apart, one in seven southern Chinese provinces and one focused in Central China, with the same survey instrument and the same analytical approach. The findings of these two studies have generated similarities and differences worthy of discussion in the following:

First, in demographic data comparison, both studies were dominated by male principal participation (71.6% in Chan and Du study and 67.4% in Chan and Liu study). Most of the principals in Chan and Du study (73.9%) were from secondary schools whereas, in Chan and Liu study, principal participation from elementary and secondary levels was about half and half (51.2% vs 48.8%). Interestingly, most principals participating in both studies came from the same 41 to 50 year old age group (55.6% in Chan and Du study and 51.2% in Chan and Liu study).

Second, in the impact of participants' demographics, both studies indicated no significant difference in principals' responses between male and female and between elementary and secondary school levels. However, in both studies, principals' self-perceived roles and responsibilities did indicate significant differences among different age groups in favor of those principals aging between 31 to 40 years old. This is showing that young school principals were displaying more excitement in their daily work as indicated in their comparatively higher rating responses.

Third, in general, school principals from the Chan and Du study (2008) were showing higher rating of responses to all the items in the survey than those from the Chan and Liu study (2017) except for *Style* (See Table 1). In the Chan and Du study, the highest rating was *Character* (4.512) and the lowest rating was *Student Affairs* (3.989) whereas, in the Chan and Liu study, the highest rating was *Style* (4.372) and the lowest rating was *Personnel Management* (3.442). Since the Chan and Du study was conducted in seven provinces in 2008 and the Chan and Liu study was

performed in Central China in 2017, because of the difference in time and geographical location, any direct comparison between corresponding subsets of the two studies is inappropriate.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics – School Principals’ Responses by Total and Subsets

Total Average and Subsets	Mean Chan and Du Study 2008	Mean Chan and Liu Study 2017
Total Average	4.171	3.719
Character	4.512	3.651
Knowledge	4.122	3.623
Skill	4.206	3.823
Style	4.202	4.372
Duties	4.111	3.824
Personnel Management	4.052	3.442
Student Affairs	3.989	3.529

Fourth, the subsets of Personnel Management and Student Affairs were rated low in both studies (See Table 1). This is an indication that much of the principals’ attention was paid to the instructional end of their daily work while personnel management and student affairs were given a low priority.

Fifth, principals’ answers to the open-ended question of challenges have disclosed that personnel management and coordination of stakeholders were challenging issues in both studies. This is directly reflecting the low personnel management self-rating by the principals in their quantitative responses.

Sixth, the findings of both studies indicated that school principals considered advancement in student achievement as their greatest job fulfillment. This is what they set their goals for and certainly goal attainment as shown in enhanced student achievement gave them the greatest satisfaction.

Seventh, Pang (2001) claimed that school principals were perceived by teachers for not paying enough attention to curriculum and instructional matters. However, the findings of these two studies (Chan and Du, 2008; Chan and Liu, 2017) disagreed with the findings of Pang’s study. The participating principals in these two studies made improvement of student achievement a top priority. This is in alignment with the findings of studies performed by Shi (2008), Xia (2012) and Zhou and Xia (2009) that promoted strong curriculum leadership of school principals.

Eighth, of the three types of principal leadership identified by Wang and Ren (2012): the ‘performance-orientated’ principals, ‘performance and research orientated’ principals and the ‘expert-type’ principals, the participating principals in these two studies were mostly practice focused. Their goal was to try their best to perform as expected of the standard practices of principalship. They certainly belonged to the ‘performance-orientated’ type.

Ninth, administrative style of school principals was rated relatively high as a result of these two studies. This is indicating that the participating principals were open to democratic styles of leadership and were ready to share school leadership with their colleagues. Zhang’s study (1998) also concluded that Chinese school principals were willing to employ a leadership style more toward democracy.

IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

The findings of these two studies of Chinese principalship have significant implications for the planning of educational leadership programs, the practice of school leadership and the planning for research in educational leadership. Even though these studies were conducted in China, the significance of their findings can be applied to any educational situation world-wide. International educators can learn from one another by sharing their unique experiences.

Planning for Leadership Preparation

Chinese school principals in these two studies were obviously strongly influenced by the western educational leadership philosophy of curriculum leadership. Most of the participating principals expressed their desire to focus their work on developing school curriculum and class instructional activities with the purpose of enhancing student achievement. However, the results of these studies also indicated that these principals were placing other important aspects of their work such as personnel management and student affairs direction in low priorities. In planning for educational leadership development programs, a strong message has to be delivered to all aspiring school leaders that successful principalship is not dependent on curriculum leadership alone. A school principal plays many roles and needs to undertake multiple responsibilities. The eventual goal is to achieve student success. Perhaps, consideration has to be given to initiating a strong school administrative internship program to demonstrate a good balance of a principal's daily work.

Planning for School Leadership Practices

The results of these two Chinese principal studies have indicated the need for balanced responsibilities of a school principal's daily work as mentioned in the last paragraph. Central to that, a network of strong communication has to be established between principals and their teachers and staffs in school. A successful school is a school of collaborative effort of all the stakeholders in the relationship building process. Among all the contributing factors to school success, the principal plays the key leadership role through goal setting and planning development of the school.

Planning for Research in Educational Leadership

The two Chinese principalship studies reviewed in this article (Chan & Du, 2008; Chan & Liu, 2017) were conducted almost ten years apart at different parts of China. Obviously, when the first study was performed, there was no plan for a longitudinal study to be followed. The second study was picked up incidentally with a new research partner. Even though the same survey instrument was used in both studies, time and location differences of the studies make it difficult for direct item by item comparison to be meaningful. In planning for future studies on educational leadership, it makes good sense that the researchers follow the same group of school principals for a period of time to allow change to happen before coming back for another survey with the same research instrument.

Additionally, we learn that in performing these two studies, current significant literature on Chinese school principalship was searched and presented. These supportive references serve as a solid conceptual background for the findings of these studies to rely on. The readers find it interesting to be able to compare and reference current studies with previous studies on school principal leadership. It is evident that future international studies of school leadership need to emphasize on citing and referencing school leadership literature of the countries where the studies are conducted.

Furthermore, it makes good sense for some kind of action research be conducted by school faculty to examine if certain new teaching initiatives work in the classrooms. The principal can take the leadership in the development of such research effort. A ‘performance and research-orientated’ principal as described by Wang and Ren (2012) can contribute to determining the effectiveness of instructional strategies in school.

CONCLUSION

The studies of Chinese school principalship by Chan and Du (2008) and Chan and Liu (2017) were critically reviewed in this paper with foci on methodologies and findings. It is recommended that a longitudinal approach of school principal study would certainly yield very meaningful results through direct comparison of principals’ responses through the time differences. The outcomes of these two studies have indicated an unbalanced distribution of time and effort principals spent on performing their daily duties. They serve to call the attention of school principals world-wide that their roles and responsibilities are multiple and the community has high expectation of principals’ performance in all aspects of school operation. It is obvious that increased international competitiveness today has made the work of school principals more difficult through pressure to enhance student success. Principals of different countries have much to share in their unique experiences in school leadership.

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5. () A school principal needs to have good knowledge of educational philosophies to fulfill the responsibility of fostering students' educational development.
6. () A school principal needs to have a good scientific and cultural background in general to that he/she can work with quality improvement of instruction.
7. () A school principal does not need to have knowledge of educational studies, psychology and school administration to lead a school.
8. () A school principal needs to constantly improve himself/herself by learning new leadership principles and skills.

PROFESSIONAL SKILL

9. () A school principal needs to have intellectual judgment to assign his/her faculty and staff to the corresponding positions compatible with their capabilities.
10. () A school principal does not need to coordinate the efforts of different departments in the school.
11. () A school principal needs to have excellent analytical skills to manage school business.
12. () A school principal needs to exercise his/her leadership by making wise decisions for the school.
13. () A school principal needs to manage his/her time wisely to enhance the work efficiency of the school.

ADMINISTRATIVE STYLE

14. () A school principal needs to encourage democracy in school. This will stimulate enthusiastic participation of the faculty, staff and parents toward decision making in school.
15. () A school principal needs to conduct a self-evaluation of his/her performance.

ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES

16. () A school principal needs to develop a plan for the school's future development with specific goals and objectives to be followed.
17. () A school principal needs to focus on his/her administrative work. Instructional activities are not the primarily concern.
18. () A school principal needs to continuously improve the quality of his/her school to meet the on-coming challenges.
19. () A school principal manages all the school resources to support instructional activities.
20. () A school principal needs to communicate well with his/her superiors to ensure proper implementation of the educational policies.
21. () A school principal needs to develop the instructional program by placing an appropriate balance between the moral, academic, aesthetic, social and physical development of school children.
22. () A school principal needs to develop an educational environment conducive to learning.

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

23. () It is not necessary for a school principal to encourage his/her faculty and staff to continue improvement in their areas of expertise.
24. () A school principal needs to closely supervise his/her faculty and staff to ensure the accomplishment of educational goals.

25. () A school principal needs to encourage his/her faculty and staff to actively participate in the management of school affairs.
26. () A school principal needs to assist in the professional development of his/her faculty and staff by formally and informally evaluating their performance.

STUDENT AFFAIRS MANAGEMENT

27. () A school principal needs to develop a counseling program to assist needy students with their academic problems and personal stress.
28. () A school principal does not need to maintain good school discipline to ensure a conducive learning environment.
29. () A school principal needs to help students understand the purpose of learning so that they can develop a positive attitude toward school work.
30. () A school principal needs to work with his/her faculty and staff to provide guidance to students concerning their political thinking orientation.

Part II. Please respond to the following questions about school principalship:

1. What do you perceive as the major responsibility of a school principal?
2. What are the major challenges of a school principal today?
3. What is fulfilling about the work of a school principal?
4. Other comments:

PLANNING STRATEGIES TO FILL PRINCIPAL VACANCIES: THE ISSUES AND SOME CHOICES

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ABSTRACT

Superintendents, personnel directors and school boards across the nation are faced with a growing problem of locating high caliber replacements for the exodus of school principals that began as we entered the decade of the 1990s. This departure, which began as natural attrition due to age and retirement, has been accelerated by several other factors including working conditions, educational reform and lack of funding for educators and educational programs. Since principals are critical to school success and student performance an examination of principal selection strategies is critical, particularly the planning needed to find the best applicants. There are several selection strategies that superintendents and school boards can use to recruit and employ the best candidates available, including “grow your own” prospective principals.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the United States, there is a demand for effective, qualified principals (Kwan, 2012). Applicants are available, but finding those candidates who can address the complex issues and demands faced by principals is becoming more and more difficult for school district officials (Doyle & Locke, 2014). The principal is ultimately responsible for the success of the school and student performance (Miller, 2013). Applicant pools are thinning; potential candidates see no real incentive to become school principals (Perkins, 2016). Finding high quality applicants who can increase the performance of students and teachers is daunting (Sincar, 2013). The process has become more complex when attempting to recruit and hire principals who have the desire for leadership and the capability to lead schools in today’s challenging environment (Tran & Bon, 2016).

With principal evaluations based on student and teacher performance, potential candidates see no incentive to move into the administrative ranks (Fuller, Hollingsworth & Young, 2015). Many schools opened recent school years without principals or with acting principals (School Leaders Network 2014). Candidates are often available for the positions, but finding those who can address today’s multifaceted issues and difficulties is becoming more and more difficult for local school officials (Ellis & Brown, 2015). Certified candidates are available, but hiring personnel are finding out there is a definite difference in “qualified” and “certified” (Stone-Johnson, 2014). Often thought of as the pool of candidates for these missing school principals is America’s public school teachers, but one half of today’s teachers will leave the profession over the next decade (Pilar, 2016). Many of these teachers are highly qualified and are certified in educational leadership but simply do not have the desire to be a principal (Simon, 2015).

PRINCIPAL SHORTAGE

Notwithstanding the importance of the school principal, a global crisis faces public schools: a distressing shortage of principals who are willing and qualified to meet the current and future

needs of public school students (Monroe, 2013). As the role of the principal continues to evolve, it is dramatically influenced by changing educational policies, governmental reform, increased accountability, current events, changing technology and the globalization of society (Hutton, 2014). The quality of education received by students is critically dependent upon the effectiveness of the school principal (Allen, Grigsby & Peters, 2015; Tran & Buckman, 2017). The principal as an instructional leader is the most influential factor in creating a successful school environment and a quality school. Principals are the architects who design and construct an environment conducive to learning (Day, Gu & Sammons, 2016; McCleary, Crow & Matthews, 2013; Yang, 2014).

Researchers indicate that more than 30 percent of all principal leave their current principalship each year due to retirement, movement outside education, transfer, or promotion (Perkins, 2016; Yan, 2016). At the same time many states are improving retirement benefits and including early retirement enticements which affect principals as well as teachers. These factors alone provide a gloomy picture, but when combined with many inflexible, state bound, retirement plans, the picture grows much darker for school superintendents as they attempt to replace departing principals (Bjork & Richardson, 1997; Goldring & Taie, 2014; Li, 2012).

As the principalship develops and the demands increase, principal turnover throughout the nation increases (Battle 2010). The pressures to meet state and federal standards may directly or indirectly influence why some principals leave their positions (Li, 2012; Reames, Kochan, & Linxiang, 2014). However, most leave willingly, with higher rates of turnover reported at schools with high minority, low-income, and low-achieving student populations (Beteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2012). The shortage of qualified applicants to fill principal vacancies across the United States has been well documented (Zepeda, Bengtson & Parylo, 2012). Principal turnover rates across the nation average approximately 30% annually, with schools serving high poverty, low-achieving, majority minority populations at the higher end of the range (Fuller, Young & Baker 2011). Poorly performing schools and those with a high concentration of poor students experience much higher principal turnover rates and are also unable to attract experienced new principals when vacancies arise (Beteille et al., 2012; Goldring & Taie, 2014).

Many experienced school leaders are retiring and school districts need to be able to replace these leaders and also “attract the best and the brightest school leaders to sustain high performing schools and turn-around low-performing schools” (Harchar & Campbell, 2010, pp. 93-94). As the average principal approaches retirement age and the number of principals needed continues to increase, there is concern that there may not be enough school leaders to fill position vacancies (Wells, 2013). The reluctance of some educators who complete principal preparation programs to apply for available principalships contributes to this concern about the adequacy of the supply of future principals (Mitchell-Austin, 2015). There are far more educators with administrative credentials than are applying for principal positions (Hewett, Denny & Pijanowski, 2011).

The current realities of the principalship, the numerous reasons for shortages, and the high turnover require a change to recruiting, development, and personnel practices for school districts (Pilar, 2016). Principal turnover can also have a detrimental impact on school improvement where rapid succession events occur (Spiro, 2013). Practitioners and researchers have offered many explanations for principal shortages and high turnover rates (Zepeda, Bengtson, & Parylo, 2012). Low retention rates can be attributed to increased responsibilities and accountability and lack of support (Zepeda et al., 2012). Many teachers and possible school leaders, even those who have credentials, are not interested in serving as principal (Kirsch, 2015). Principal salary and compensation are not always commensurate with the responsibilities (Stone-Johnson, 2014) and there may be only a small pay differential between administrators and teachers. New standards for

principal licensing also compound principal recruitment (Yan, 2016). The intensity of the job has changed and developed, requiring principals to spend more time fulfilling their myriad of duties and making the principalship much less desirable as a career choice (Perkins, 2016; Zepeda, 2013).

THE PRINCIPALSHIP IS NOT ATTRACTIVE

There are many reasons why educators pursue principal certification but do not pursue principal positions (Tyre, 2015). Principal applicants must weigh the cost for administrative positions, and decide if the compensation in the form of salary, benefits, and authority of the position is worth the time and responsibility involved (Cellini, 2016). Many factors, such as current job situation, family situation, and the support system in place, contribute to this decision (Hutton, 2014).

Alongside rising mandated reforms and responsibilities, school leaders also face increased demands of accountability for improved student achievement (Barnett, Soho & Oleszewski, 2012). Over the past two decades as a response to the managerial imperative and rising demands around student achievement, numerous scholars, philanthropists, policymakers, and educational supervisors have increasingly called on principals to better assume the role of instructional leader, and focus attention to instructional matters over managerial tasks (Coelli, & Green, 2012; Heck & Hallinger, 2014). Because the principalship is not as attractive as it once was, school districts are experiencing difficulty recruiting principal applicants of the quality needed to lead schools in this turbulent time of change (Molina & Claudet, 2015).

ISSUES FOR THE DISTRICTS

There is a crisis in principal selection due to demographic and personal issues fueled by a demanding environment that is forcing fundamental reconsideration about how to recruit and develop new principals (Grison, Loeb & Mitani, 2015). Growing concerns over perceived shortages of qualified and willing principal candidates in the near future have compelled district administrators to examine new alternative techniques that will increase the quality and quantity of school principal candidates who are willing and able to accept the increasing challenges (Ellis & Brown, 2015).

Numerous researchers have demonstrated a strong connection between high-quality principals and high-performing schools (Duhey & Smith, 2014; Spiro, 2013; Yang, 2014). Without adequate numbers of highly-qualified applicants to replace retiring principals, district leaders will have a difficult time succeeding with educational improvement activities, primarily increasing student achievement (Branch, Hanushek & Rivkin, 2013).

Local districts often do not have a sufficient pool of certified administrative personnel waiting in the wings, much less well qualified potential principals (Cray & Weiler, 2011). And, while neighboring districts may have a large certified applicant pool, the candidates may be immobile, or perceive no incentive to change districts. The university class is perhaps the poorest of all since most students in administration preparation programs are practicing educators and are currently employed (Hooker, 2000; Mascall & Leithwood, 2010).

The proportionally small number of minorities currently in administrative positions and an ever-decreasing number of minorities who are in preparation programs are adding to the replacement dilemma faced by many superintendents and school. This predicament should act as a catalyst to motivate superintendents to develop long range plans for meeting the administrator demands of the 21st century (Tran & Bon, 2016). One of the first questions which should be addressed is: Where to find future principals? Do future principals come from the ranks of the local school district, from outside the district, or from the graduate program at the university?

PRINCIPAL TURNOVER

Principal turnover often signals the end of not only existing formal leadership for school improvement but also the gains of previous success (Kabungaidze, Mahlatshana & Nigirande, 2013). A change of direction accompanying a change in the formal leadership of the school frequently results in growing cynicism on the part of teachers toward proposed school improvement initiatives (Lemoine, McCormack & Richardson, 2014). Additionally, principal turnover is increasing dramatically due to retirements, difficulties of principal retention in urban and challenging settings, the choice of principals to move before improvements are sustained, and the practice of rotation (Mascall & Leithwood, 2010; Miller, 2013). Decreased job satisfaction among principals has also had an impact (Kabungaidze et al, 2013; Tekleselassie & Villarreal, 2011). These changes have resulted in an untenable position for school districts who need qualified principals to implement school improvement initiatives but increased demands and accountability has led to fewer applicants and principal turnover (LeFevre & Robinson, 2014; Reames, Kochan & Zhu, 2014).

Principal turnover may create instability in schools and thwart improvement efforts (Wildy, Pepper & Guanzhong, 2011)). Frequency in principal turnover results in lower teacher retention, lower student achievement gains, and lower ability to attract experienced successors (Béteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2012).

PLANNING IS CRITICAL

The methods and processes for principal selection have not notably changed in many decades (Doyle & Locke, 2014). As the role of the principal has markedly increased in scope and responsibility, the methods school districts use must change to meet the demands for a different kind of principal candidate (Kottkamp, 2011; Palmer, 2016). Planning for principal selection is imperative to recruit skilled candidates and retain effective individuals who can lead a school on the path of success (Parylo & Zepeda, 2014). A shortage of certified and qualified candidates is a concern school district administrators confront to fill vacancies due to retirements, resignations, or promotions. The dual concerns about principal shortages and the quality of new principal hires remain an issue. Hine (2013), noted that “with large numbers of individuals already leaving school administration, districts are experiencing difficulty replacing those leaving, and finding that the replacements often lack the necessary skills required for school administration” (p. 275). It is also important to recognize that the increasing demands upon the work life of a school principal may contribute to the shortage of applicants resulting in fewer individuals attracted to the principalship (Escalante, 2016; LeFevre & Robinson, 2014).

Superintendents and school boards need a plan which provides some assurance of quality personnel. Therefore, planning for future principal selection should include the following strategies (Escalante, 2016; Palmer & Mullooly, 2015; Richardson, Petrie & Flanigan, 1994):

1. Anticipate the vacancies that are likely to occur over the short and long term. Surveys of administrative staff should help to some extent. These can be paper-pencil surveys for large districts or interviews for smaller districts or online surveys for all districts.

2. Plan for anticipated vacancies by encouraging prospective administrators to gain proper certification and by providing on-the-job training through committee work, learning opportunities such as conferences, and special assignments such as acting in temporary administrative vacancies.

3. Superintendents and local school boards should recognize that administrative preparation programs are growing more demanding and candidates may take two, three, or more years to complete a quality program. Consequently, the lag time between identification and certification must be anticipated and calculated.

4. Superintendents must also recognize that more rigorous preparation programs, including more STRINGENT entry and exit requirements, are producing a new breed of educational administrator. These new candidates have strong backgrounds in instructional preparation coupled with required evaluation and management skills. These candidates have different expectations of students, staff and superiors, and can be expected to operate successfully in a variety of administrative situations.

5. The new more exacting and demanding preparation programs will produce fewer candidates for administrative positions. There are fewer applicants for positions and many employment pools have very few applicants.

Whether the superintendent and local school board decide to “grow their own” applicants or import from another source, the need for a long range employment plan necessitates a systematic procedure for identifying, attracting, employing, and maintaining the highest quality principals (Alvoid & Black, 2014). Identification procedures designed to look beyond the district are different than for identifying local personnel. A pool of applicants is probably available for any principal vacancy. However, many of the applicants may have also applied for the last fifty administrative openings in the district. The key is to identify those candidates who are the best prospects for the local, individual school (English, Papa, Mullen & Creighton, 2012). Certainly a variety of selection techniques should be utilized, and the stereotypical “good-ole-boys” network should be discarded (Cohen-Vogel, 2011). Successful superintendents match the needs of the school with the perceived strengths of the applicants. However, superintendents should never forget that all roads lead to improvement of the “teaching-learning” act (McKinney, Lobat & Lobat, 2015; Strickland-Cohen, McIntosh & Horner, 2014), and should consequently examine their philosophy regarding equifinality of school administration (Russell & Sabina, 2014).

WHERE DO DISTRICTS FIND PRINCIPALS?

Where will school districts obtain future principals? Do future principals come from the ranks of the local school district, from outside the district, or from the graduate program at a university? The answers to these questions are critical to most school districts. Local districts often do not have a sufficient pool of certified administrative personnel waiting in the wings, much less well qualified potential principals (DeArmond, Denice & Campbell, 2014). And, while neighboring districts may have a large certified applicant pool, the candidates may be immobile, or perceive no incentive to change districts (Ash, Hodge & Connell, 2013). The university-based applicant pool is perhaps the poorest of all since most students in administration preparation programs are practicing educators and are currently employed (DeAngelis & O’Connor, 2011).

Some advocate the “Burger King” principal approach, meaning that administration is generic and the skills necessary to succeed as the manager of a Burger King would qualify one to become an administrator in a P-12 school. Obviously there are some serious problems with this approach, but it is indeed being used in some school districts. This concept is often fed by the success of one or two former military leaders who made the successful transition to the superintendency of a large city; however, it overlooks the massive number of other similar attempts that have proven far less successful (Lemoine, McCormack & Richardson, 2014).

Models of Principal Attraction

Catch as catch can

Some school districts simply wait like the Venus Fly Trap and attempt to ensnare the most viable principal candidates. The real problem here is a lack of selectivity and planning. Without

some job analysis, almost anyone who is certified would qualify as a principal (Myung, Loeb & Horng, 2011). Districts await the application of a candidate or small cadre of candidates that are “perfect for the job.” However, because little to no advanced planning has been done in order to ascertain what would make for “the perfect candidate,” the central office personnel either hire inappropriately or find virtually no candidates willing to submit an application for employment (Pijanowski, Hewitt & Brady, 2009).

Grow your own

Districts should and can create partnerships with local universities for the preparation and development of aspiring administrators (Bjork & Richardson, 1997). More urban schools have developed these partnerships than have other (i.e., rural and suburban schools). School districts should also actively seek out and encourage women and minorities to become principals. Some districts use Teacher Cadets as an incentive for the development of future teachers; a similar, more advanced program, would provide a useful model for the identification and selection of potential administrators. In addition, school districts should “socialize future administrators” (Gurley, Anast-May & Lee, 2015). into the positive aspects of administration. Many good teachers do not seek principal possibilities because they do not self-identify with the position of principal or assistant principal (Finneran, 2016). Active mentorship and recruitment strategies hold potential for significantly increasing this self-identification process (Corcoran, Schwartz & Weinstein, 2012).

Active recruitment

Some districts have decided that the best alternative is to go outside the local school district and attempt to locate administrators in other districts and attract them through financial and/or programmatic incentives (DeAngelis & O’Connor, 2012; Martinez, 2015). A few districts are using “headhunters” to help locate potential principals. Many are also using national advertising and the internet as a means of attracting applicants.

Selective succession

Some districts have developed long range plans for administrator vacancies and have, in turn, identified the “anointed” person to become the new administrator. Although this method has found disfavor in some locations, other systems use the method as a means of guaranteeing the availability of quality administrators. Here, the flaw in such appointment strategies can be twofold. First, in many districts, the “anointed” individual may not be the best candidate, but rather, a typical reproduction of what has always been the model for principalship behavior. Secondly, the selected candidate often only has been identified from a very small pool of internal candidates (Clifford, 2012). Using this strategy, teacher personnel often are heard saying, “Is this the best we can do for a new principal?” (Davis, Gooden & Bowers, 2017)

OTHER ALTERNATIVES

Beyond the basic employment problem are other approaches to the issue of principal losses. School district reorganization, to take advantage of fewer personnel, could be a possibility. Principals might serve more than a single school in some districts (Wood, Finch & Mirecki, 2013).

Another approach may be the use of differentiated staffing patterns among administrators. Differentiated staffing is not currently a well-accepted practice for teachers or principals, but it may prove especially effective for districts where outstanding and highly trained administrators are

scarce, or where inexperienced principals need the close supervision of an executive principal or mentor (Spillane & Kenney, 2012). Mentoring is an excellent training device for any new principal. While giving incentive to strong leadership, differentiated staffing could also serve as a vehicle to justify differentiated salaries, thereby permitting the superintendent and local school board to attract high quality leaders and encourage the less able principals to improve (Vogelm 2015).

The assistant principalship is the best training ground for future administrators (Davis, Gooden & Bowers, 2017), but many assistant principals are now choosing to become “career bound” and not aspire to the principalship (Clifford, 2012). The assistant principalship is currently viewed with more favor than ever before. If assistant principals choose to remain, for many years, if not for an entire career, as an assistant, the opportunity to “grow your own” will significantly be hampered (Fink, 2011; Retelle, 2010). Also, these men and women who know schools exceptionally well, will, in a more frequent manner, be working for principals who know far less about a school or school system (Tekleselassie & Villarreal, 2011).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

School districts must be proactive in the identification and selection of principals. The “grow your own” concept has worked in a number of school districts with great success. But to rely on one strategy, in a limited employment market, can prove extremely dangerous. New and different strategies must be investigated for the employment of outstanding school leaders. If proactive, non-traditional, employment strategies are not implemented, some districts will be forced to employ only the certified, not the truly qualified candidates for employment.

In conclusion, superintendents should begin planning for the impending administrative turnover and anticipate a “new breed” of administrators by developing plans to attract and retain the best and most capable administrators. The job of school leader has been transformed by unexpected economic, demographic, technological, and global change. Therefore, there is no doubt about why so much attention is given to school principal selection because leadership and professional knowledge serve as the guiding forces for the development and perseverance of a successful school.

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INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PLANS AND PRACTICES IN CHINA, THAILAND, AND TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

As the changing world becomes more globalized and diverse, people become more connected. It is beneficial educators to learn about the educational practices of every nation. Educational planning efforts promote inclusive education and practices in the three countries: China, Thailand, and Turkey. It is important to raise awareness of the ways that history, culture, social perceptions, and public policy influence special education. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the transitional process of special education programs, services, and public policy toward inclusive education in China, Thailand and Turkey. In addition, this paper aims to present the development of educational plans that promote inclusive education and practices in these countries. The results of this paper indicate that the special education development and its process in China, Thailand, and Turkey are challenging. China is anxious for special education reform. Thailand has progressive special education initiatives spreading throughout the country. The education policies in Thailand and Turkey have addressed issues regarding children with disabilities and appear to move toward inclusion for individuals with disabilities. Indeed, the prospects for individuals with disabilities in these three countries are improving.

INTRODUCTION

In response to the recognition of human rights, special education began gaining attention in China, Thailand, and Turkey in the mid-to-late 1900s. The governments of these countries have strengthened public policies to promote the development to meet the needs of special education services for children with disabilities. Although the Chinese government issued laws and regulations to protect educational rights for children with disabilities (China Disabled Persons' Federation [CDPF], 2008a), there was no consistency in policy implementation. This inconsistency resulted in serious consequences of discrimination in the educational system ("Human Rights Watch," 2013). Special education services were in need of improvement and making progress (Wang, 2009). According to Kritzer (2012), special education in China was quite similar to special education in the United States prior to the implementation of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act in 1975. The system was lacking consistency from school to school, city to city, and province to province. Social inclusion, educational support and interpersonal activities were neglected (Guo, 2016; Wang, 2009; Xu & Malinen, 2015).

Attitudes toward children with disabilities in Thailand may vary. Some parents of children with disability view themselves being punished by their actions in a previous life. But, some Chinese-Thai considered that having a child with Down Syndrome was a sign of good luck (Fulk, Swerdlik, & Kosuwan, 2002). Other factors that have impacted attitudes toward disability include level of education, socioeconomic status, and rural versus urban geographic location. Educational reform has struggled to keep pace with rapid change in demand for special education services that may require a cultural paradigm shift regarding perceptions of children with disabilities (Fullan, 1993; Hallinger, 1998a, 1998b). Children without disabilities have been integrated with children with

disabilities in the regular schools as much as possible. As a result, a mainstream class for children with disabilities has been included in at least one public school in each province (Chonlatanon, 1995).

In comparison to the United States, an emphasis on education of individuals with disabilities has started later in Turkey with the enactment of special education law, *Ozel Egitime Muhtac Cocuklar Kanunu* (1983), which is also known as “Law No. 2916,” and the legislative decree, *Kanun Hukmunde Kararname (KHK)* (573) in 1997 (Akcamete, 2010). However, application of these laws caused some issues such as lack of teachers to meet government needs, regular classroom teachers’ pessimistic approach on inclusive education, and insufficient collaboration between parents and teachers (Engelli ve Yasli, 2016; Karnas & Bayar, 2013a).

AN OVERVIEW OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS IN CHINA, THAILAND, AND TURKEY

Special education has been viewed through aspects of culture, religion, and history. The history of special education in China, Thailand, and Turkey has followed a similar path in several ways. The notion of individuals with disabilities in China was rooted in Confucian heritage, political ideology and contemporary social status (Campbell & Uren, 2011; Deng & Harris, 2008; Wang & Mu, 2014). Deng and Poon-McBrayer (2004) emphasized that Chinese culture has compassion for individuals with disabilities due to the influence of Confucian philosophy, which also has a strong influence in Chinese educational reform and school design.

Special education in Thailand was established in 1939 with the first establishment of the school for the blind (Sukbunpant, Shiraihi, & Kuroda, 2004). Children with visual and hearing impairment studied in the regular school first in 1962 and 1984 respectively. Three laws made progress to special education in Thailand: the National Law 1997, the Nation Educational Act of B.E. 2542 (1999), and the Rehabilitation Act of 1991. Individuals with disabilities were seen as a symbol that the family might have committed some sin in the past (Driedger, 1989). A majority of Thai people practice Buddhism (Vorapanya & Dunlap, 2014). In Thai tradition, the parents and their extended families have supported children with disabilities at home. School attendance may not be an option for them. Poor families or families who live in rural areas are less likely to know about special education programs being available for them (Fulk, Swerlik & Kosuwan, 2002). Families in higher socioeconomic status or educated people seek private services for their children with disabilities (Vorapanya & Diane, 2014).

In Turkey, the view of individuals with disabilities is rooted in Islamic religion. It is purported to promote a respect for individuals with disabilities. A child with disability is seen in Turkish region as a gift of the God (Karagoz, 2008).

Special Education in China

American and European missionaries started to build special educational institutions in China after the First Opium War (Deng & Harris, 2008). People in China were knowledgeable about special education at the foundation of the People’s Republic of China and began special education efforts after 1949 (Kritzer, 2014). Schools for individuals with blindness and deafness were founded at that time. In the Mao-era between the 1950s and 1970s, the primary aim of Chinese special education was to train people to be socialist laborers (Deng & Harris, 2008). Gu (1993) reported that there were 269 special schools with an enrollment of 28,519 students by the year of 1976 when the Cultural Revolution officially ended. Hearing and visual impairments were the two main categories in those schools. It was not until 1980 that training for special education teachers was

made available (Kritzer, 2012). After the 1980s, students with disabilities were able to attend regular classrooms (Deng & Zhu, 2007). In the 1990s, teacher institutions were required to offer training in special education courses (Kritzer, 2012). Meanwhile, Chinese special education has expanded to serve a variety of disabilities and proliferated at different levels.

The Chinese government passed the Law on Protection of Persons with Disabilities to provide general and constitutional protection (CDPF, 2008a). In 2008, China supported the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) by adopting the international human rights treaty that promotes inclusion and mainstream education accessible for children with disabilities (CRPD, 2012).

With the purpose of securing educational opportunities for individuals with disabilities, REPD was amended to protect the rights of students with nine-year compulsory education (CDPF, 2008a). Extra supports are provided for students based on their individual needs when attending the College Entrance Examination (“The State Council: The People’s Republic of China,” 2017). According to the 2017 legislative amendment, educational expenditures for students with disabilities were brought into government financial budget management in order to increase support for special education. The Chinese government rapidly increased financial support to special education from RMB 55 million in 2013 to RMB 410 million in year in 2014 (MOEPRC, 2015).

The Chinese Educational System for Children with Disabilities

Both the Compulsory Education Law of the People’s Republic of China and the Regulations on Education for People with Disabilities safeguard the lawful rights and interests of students with disabilities (China’s Leader in Online Legal Research [CLLR], 2017; CDPF, 2008b). Children at the age of six start their nine-year compulsory education (CLLR, 2017; CDPF, 2008b). Based on their actual conditions, school-age students with disabilities have four main ways of enrolling in school: 1) They can attend a nearby regular school; or 2) the county level government designated regular school if they are able to receive general education, but needs some special aids; 3) If they are not capable to adapt to general education and need special education support, they can attend special schools as their choice because there is insufficient support provided by regular schools; and 4) The county level government would provide support such as distance education and individual tutoring if they could not attend any types of schools (CDPF, 2008b). (See Figure 1.) Special education aims to meet the needs of students with severe problems or disabilities. Through education, students with disabilities can make a great effort for more equitable opportunities in society. In 2008, China had 1,640 schools with an enrollment of 417,400 students for special education (“Education in China,” 2010).

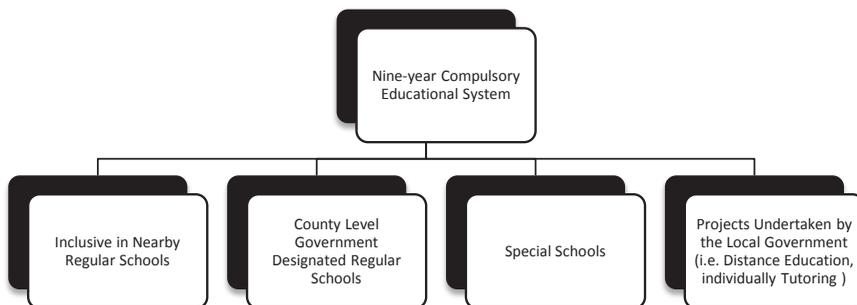


Figure 1. The nine-year compulsory education system has been implemented by the government authority in China. Adapted from Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China (2008); CDPF (2008a).

Special Education in Thailand

In Thailand, the first school for individuals with blindness was established in Bangkok in 1935 with the support of Ms. Genevieve Caulfield, an American lady with blindness (Vorapanya & Dunlap, 2014). Children with other disabilities beside blindness were refused admission. They did not have an opportunity to attend schools like other children without disabilities. Until the 1950's the government began to support special education for children with visual, hearing, physical, and intellectual impairments. Since then, children with disabilities have had an opportunity to attend special education schools (Kritzer, 2012). In 1975, the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was enacted to mandate free and appropriate public education to all children with disabilities. The first public special education school was established in 1951 at Sommanus Temple School to serve children with hearing impairment (Amatayakul, Tammasaeng, & Punong-ong, 1995).

The Rehabilitation of Disabled Person Act 1991 was the first law on disability. The law was not supported by government funding. Some schools do not include children with disabilities. General education teachers had insufficient knowledge, lacked training and feared of teaching children with disabilities. The National Education Act (NEA) of 1999 was passed and safeguarded the right of individuals with disabilities to education. The provision of education stated that individuals with disabilities shall be provided free of charge at birth or at first diagnosis. The persons shall have the right to access the facilities, media, services, and other forms of educational aid in conformity with the criteria and procedures specified in the ministerial regulations (Office of the Educational Council, the Ministry of Education Kingdom of Thailand, 2004).

In 2008, the Education Provision for People with Disabilities Act was enacted in Thailand which moved special education toward inclusivity. The law mandated that (1) inclusive education became one of the options for the education of students with disabilities; (2) individuals with disabilities had the right to be included at every level of the educational system ranging from early intervention and 12 years of fundamental education to college level; (3) it was unlawful for schools to deny admission to students with disabilities, and (4) students with disabilities should be provided with an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) at least on basis of yearly update (Rajkijjanubaksa, 2008). The Bureau of Special Education Administration (BSEA) oversees the education of students with disabilities. There are nine categories of disability under the law:

The administration recognizes nine types of disability: (1) hearing impairment, (2) mental impairment, (3) visual impairment, (4) physical or health-related impairment, (5) learning disabilities, (6) autism, (7) emotional and behavioral disorders, (8) speech and language disorders, and (9) multiple disabilities (Vorapanya & Dunlap, 2014). To receive special education services, each child with disabilities needed to be registered and assessed. The assessment is conducted by family physicians, as opposed to school personnel. The Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) has to be developed with the child's strengths and needs (Kritzer, 2012). After the IEP has been developed for individual students with disabilities, schools must allocate a budget for special education services and materials, establish teacher training providing effective instructions, provide assistive technology, and strengthen school policy for integrating children with disabilities into regular classroom (Kritzer, 2012).

The Ministry of Education is the major organization to ensure that education is provided to all children in Thailand. Its BSEA takes responsibility for providing services for children with special needs across the country, including special education centers, special schools, and regular integrated primary and secondary schools. Additionally, there are 76 Special Education Centers (SEC) across all provinces in Thailand. The SEC is in charge in all special education services that include identification of children with disabilities in the community, collaboration with parents,

child assessment, IEP development, school placement, early intervention at home or at the SEC, and appropriate services for children with disabilities who are out-of-school (Kritzer, 2012).

The Thai Educational System for Children with Disabilities

The following chart explains eligible school aged children with disabilities can be provided with related services such as hearing aids, wheelchairs and communicative electronic devices. There are seven education placement options for Thai children with disabilities that include (1) Inclusive education in regular classroom; (2) special schools; (3) home school; (4) community/private organization; (5) hospital; (6) special education centers, and (7) informal education centers (Hill & Sukbunpant, 2013). (See Figure 2.)

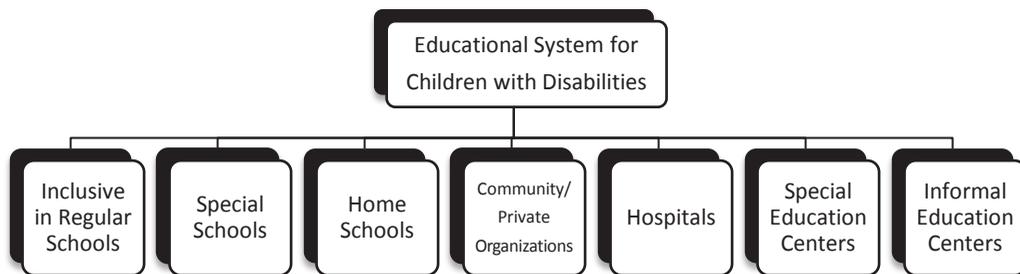


Figure 2. The structure of education placement options for children with disabilities in Thailand. Adapted from Hill & Sukbunpant (2013).

There are 43 special schools that provide services for specific disabilities from kindergarten to high school. These disabilities include intellectual disability, hearing, visual, and physical impairments. In practice, students with all types of disabilities are accepted in these schools. The BSEA, Office of Basic Education Commission (OBEC) is the main agency responsible for the provision of education for children with disabilities (Hill & Sukbunpant, 2013). The educational policy has expanded the incorporation of services for children with disabilities and has made efforts to include children with disabilities in regular classrooms (Carter, 2006).

Special Education in Turkey

In Turkey, services and principles of special education were first regulated in 1983. This law ensured that all individuals who were qualified to receive special education services were provided services based on needs and capabilities (Ozel Egitime Muhtac Cocuklar Kanunu, 1983). The principles of this law demonstrate that special education law in Turkey is similar to special education law in western countries, such as in the United States. Although the attitude toward individuals with disabilities was rooted in Islamic culture, which promoted respect for individuals with disabilities, there was no movement regarding the education of individuals with disabilities until the end of the 19th century (Gunduz, 2014). Looking at history, some institutions were developed to treat individuals with disabilities since the 8th century during the Ottoman Empire, the origin of modern Turkey (Gunduz, 2014). The movements for the education of individuals with disabilities started with the establishment of schools for individuals with blindness and deafness at the end of the 19th century (Demirbas & Tnariverdi, 2012). After the establishment of modern Turkey in 1923, a number of schools for individuals with visual and hearing impairments were established. However, until the 1950s, the treatment of individuals with disabilities was considered a health issue (Gunduz, 2014).

In the 1950s, the special education branch office was created at the Headquarters of Elementary Education in order to regulate special education services for people with disabilities. The special education services were organized and operated by this branch until 1980 (Akcamete, 2010). In 1983, the Headquarters of Special Education in the Ministry of National Education was replaced with the Special Education and Counseling Department which was then replaced by the current Headquarters of Special Education (Akcamete, 2010). Today’s special education system is mostly based on “Ozel Egitime Muhtac Cocuklar Kanunu,” and a legislative decree “Kanun Hukmunde Kararname (KHK) No 573.” Both of these laws and legislative decrees were milestones for the current special education system in Turkey. Furthermore, recent special education services were provided with the involvement of different ministries such as the Ministry of National Education, the Prime Minister’s Office, and Ministry of Family and Social Services (Demirbas & Tanriverdi, 2012).

The Turkish Educational System for Children with Disabilities

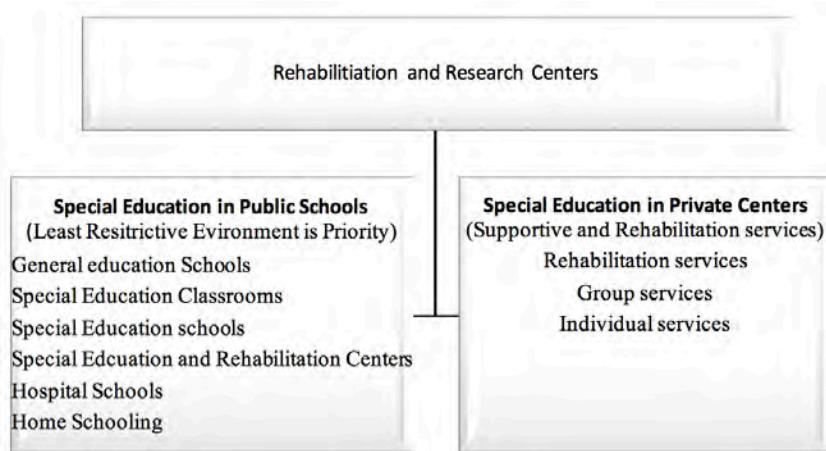


Figure 3. The special education in Turkey is organized by Rehabilitation and Research Centers (RAM) under National Ministry of Education. Each province in Turkey has at least one RAM that is responsible for diagnosis and placement of the child. These centers collaborate with the schools regarding the organization and implementation of special education services. There are public and private institutions for the placement. The public placement is conducted based on the least to the most restrictive environment. Private placements are owned by individuals and aim to provide supportive services and rehabilitation. The cost of services in the private placement is paid by the government (National Ministry of Education, 2017).

DISCUSSION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FROM POLICY TO PRACTICE

Policy and Practice in China

The data of the Sixth Nationwide Population Census and the Second National Sample Survey in China showed that the number of individuals with Disabilities was approximately 85 million by the end of 2010 (CDPF, 2012b). In order to protect the equal rights of individuals with disabilities, the Chinese government issued the Law on Protection of Persons with Disabilities on

Dec. 28th, 1990. It was implemented on May 15th, 1991, and amended on Apr. 24th, 2008. This law, which was general and constitutional, aimed at providing comprehensive protection in the areas of rehabilitation, education, employment, social security, and cultural life (CDPF, 2008a). In a provision of education, the Chinese government issued several regulations to enhance support to students with disabilities.

First, the REPD in 1994 and its Revision in 2011 had the purpose to secure educational opportunities and to protect the rights of students with nine-year compulsory education (CDPF, 2008a; China Education Center Ltd [CEC], 2012; Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2006). Besides, it emphasized the delivery of pre-school education and vocational education for students with disabilities. Chinese high schools, universities and colleges cannot deny a student's admission because of his or her disabilities (CDPF, 2008b). Duan (2015) reported that there were 9,542 students with disabilities entering universities and colleges by the year of 2014. Among them, 7,864 registered into regular universities or colleges. However, individuals with learning disabilities were not protected by these regulations (CDPF, 2008b). Second, the Chinese Ministry of Education announced the Regulations on College Entrance Exam for Students with Disabilities in the year of 2015. Based on this regulation, extra supports were provided for students based on their individual needs when attending the College Entrance Examination. For example, exam paper in Braille or in big font size would be available for students with visual impairment. Students with visual impairment or upper limb disabilities could prolong the time to taken on an exam up to 150% or 130% of the original time (CDPF, 2015).

Although related laws and regulations embodied the concern of the government for the individuals with disabilities, some scholars question the efforts of the implementation. Recently, uneven development in special education has existed among different regions and different categories of disabilities. Based on the Brief Summary on Development of the Work for Persons with Disabilities during the 12th Five-year Plan Period (2011-2015), statistics on the enrollment situation of students with disabilities only presented three categories of disabilities in both secondary education and higher education, including hearing impairments, visual impairments, and physical disabilities (CDPF, 2012a). On the other hand, learning disabilities were not recognized as a priority concern in China (Deng & Harris, 2008). Wang (2009) argued that the development of special education in China has been hampered by a prejudice against the students with disabilities and limited educational resources. Due to the lack of educational support, low level of social inclusion and infrequent interpersonal activities, the current educational system has hardly satisfied the social esteem needs of students with disabilities. Xu and Malinen (2015) addressed, "These policies often exist only as written documents and are not necessarily even known by the public" (p.151).

Policy and Practice in Thailand

Hill and Sukbunpant (2013) stated that the educational policy and the development of the act and its implementation in Thailand have been driven by global awareness leading to progress toward inclusive education. The National Educational Act 1999 and The Ministry of Education Designation of 1999 broadened educational opportunities for individuals with disabilities through the public relations on inclusive education in school settings. According to Vorapanya and Dunlap (2014), these educational opportunities improve the quality of life and increase social awareness of individuals with disabilities in Thai society. However, Thailand encounters barriers in relation to the provision of qualified educators, appropriate services and outdated practices. Regular schools are required to admit students with disabilities. The in-service training programs for general education teachers and preparation of prospective special education teachers are offered around the country.

Thailand has progressive movement towards acceptance and makes an effort to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Carter (2006) found that criticism about special education services are related to the effectiveness of special education services and the availability of these services. It is challenging for the country to move from special education policy development to practice. Studies have found that school leaders and most teachers in Thailand possessed limited knowledge about inclusive practices (Office of the Education, Religion, and Cultural Development Regional 11th, 2001). Vorapanya & Dunlap (2014) stated that it is critical for Thailand to develop the inclusive models that are appropriate for Thai school system. Thailand requires the infrastructure development in order to support teacher training to serve children with disabilities in the areas of identification for special education services and curriculum development. Nevertheless, teachers perceive that it is a work overload to employ the new methods in teaching children with disabilities. The importance of inclusive practices has been addressed to become a norm in Thailand (Umpanroung, 2004).

A study by Grime (2013) showed that teacher training is a key for inclusion. It is crucial for school leaders and teachers to understand the importance of inclusive teacher training in order to take ownership of their development and implement special education in the classroom. Regular classroom teachers need to open constructive and reflective conversation with special education teachers for instructional improvement.

Policy and Practice in Turkey

In Turkey, laws No. 2916 and KHK No. 573 serve as foundational documents for the development of special education in Turkey. The special education law No 2916 is composed of seven main principles of special education. These principles are: (1) Special Education cannot be separated from general education; (2) Every child who needs special education services has a right to get benefit from special education services regardless of type and the severity of their disability; (3) It is important to start special education earlier; (4) Special education services are planned and organized based on a child's characteristics (needs, strengths, weaknesses) and disability. Special education services should be provided close to the child at the most extent; (5) The precautions are taken to educate children with disabilities at educational institutions that are designed for education of children without disabilities (as long as special needs students are capable of being included in general education institutions based on their present level and characteristics); (6) It is important to continue the general vocational education and rehabilitation of students with disabilities; and (7) The education of children with disabilities is organized by the Ministry of Education and implemented by responsible institutions. Special education should be included in elementary education, secondary education, and vocational education (Ozel Egitime Muhtac Cocuklar Kanunu, 1983).

Although law No. 2916 promised big contributions to the education of children with disabilities, the implementation of this law was not very effective (Akcamete, 2010). A commission was created to regulate implementation of law on 2916. As a result of this commission's work, legislative decree KHK No 573 was enacted in 1997 (Kanun Hukmunde Kararname, 1997). KHK No 573 addressed the following principles to be considered in the education of children with special needs. Based on a child's educational performance, the development and the organization of the goals, content, and educational process of inclusive education are prioritized. Special education is implemented based on student's individualized educational plans. The active participation of parents is fundamental. Cooperation with special education organizations is needed regarding the development of special education policies. Special education services are planned with the

involvement of people with disabilities in the society. Along with the enactment of the legislative decree KHK 573 in 1997, the number of students involved in education has been increased quickly. In the school year 2001-2002, 53,306 students with disabilities received education. In seven years, this number has more than doubled with 114,371 in the school year of 2008-2009 (Engelli ve Yasli, 2016).

According to Coskun and Boldan (2014), this rapid increase in the number of students increased the needs for special education teachers as well. However, the number of institutions that train special education teachers was insufficient. In order to fulfill the demand for teachers, the state offered a training program within elementary schools that teachers could obtain a special education teaching certificate after one to six months training for special education. However, many of these certified special education teachers are usually not the most capable teachers to teach students with disabilities. Bahceci (2017) explained that special education programs at most universities in Turkey provide a curriculum with heavy special education coursework. In addition, a three-semester practicum is provided either in special education schools or in special education classrooms. A six-month training program is far less when it is compared to the intensive coursework with a three-semester practicum provided by special education departments. Coskun and Boldan (2014) conducted a study in order to find what teachers think about the sufficiency of the special education training program for certification. This study showed that 52.9% of teachers reported the need for more practicum to teach students with disabilities, and 16.9% of teachers reported the need for more coursework for them to be certified as a special education teacher.

IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN CHINA, THAILAND AND TURKEY

Practices and challenges for the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in these three countries vary to some extent because of perceptions in society on disability as well as issues associated with educational policies. Additionally, the relevant issues involve the provisions for inclusion, the implementation of the laws, funding, qualified educators, collaboration between teachers and parents, insufficiency of appropriate services, a lack of teacher training programs, a lack of knowledge of disability and awareness of inclusion for individuals with disabilities, and outdated practices.

Similarities

The impact of western culture plays an important role in promoting special education among China, Thailand and Turkey (CRPD, 2012; Hill & Sukbunpant, 2013). Some common traits in the development of special education are found by this comparative analysis of these three countries. All three countries have made compulsory education mandatory and move to positive directions in improving special service delivery to include individuals with disabilities in the education system. Turkey had compulsory special education law in 1983 (Akcamete, 2010), China began in 1986 (Worrell & Tabler, 2009), and Thailand enacted in 1991 (Kritzer, 2014).

Along with the need to develop, China, Thailand, and Turkey recognize that legal safeguard for educational rights of people with disabilities is the only first step, follow-up government support and supervision should be expanded and guaranteed. After the establishment of several regulations, the Chinese government is increasing budget to enhance support to students with disabilities (MOEPRC, 2015). According to Carter (2006), in Thailand, a few improvements in providing the opportunities for individuals with disabilities have been visible. For example, the government policy is progressing and addresses the requirements for the quality of special education services. The

improvement in government policy, the provision of funding and attitudinal changes can potentially augment special education services.

Strengthening social responsibility is another acclaimed fundamental component to promote special education in those three countries. China is determined to meet the parents' request to improve the environment and conditions for families of children with disabilities. Hu, Turnbull, Summers and Wang (2015) addressed the three essential needs to enhance the quality of life: survival needs, sufficiency needs, and enhancement needs. These three categories of needs were subsumed under the sufficiency needs, namely "higher quality education and therapy for the child; home-based education and information for parents; and social inclusion for both parents and the child" (Hu et al, 2015, p.64). Hence, the content of potential plan would focus on the themes of social inclusion and educational support.

In Turkey, teachers being members of the central state bureaucracy are required to disseminate the mandated republican ideology. With this aspect in mind, curriculum structures of teacher training included courses focusing on the basic social science structures of national identity and technical courses. This training empowered teachers with contemporary skills to contribute to the modernization of the country (Turan, 2008).

In conclusion, leaders China, Thailand and Turkey address support for inclusive education specifically for those with disabilities. All three countries' governments have been proactive and have taken steps to ensure that educational programs and support are implemented. In addition, government officials must establish more in-service professional training programs as well as research development program for teachers in general and special education.

Challenges

In China, although the number of special education teachers increased from 37,945 (2009) to 48,125 (2014) (Duan, 2015), the lack of special educators still exists in some categories such as learning disabilities and autism (Guo, 2016). In order to meet students' needs and strengthen the teacher team, Chinese educators have used western inclusive education teaching methods as a source of reference (Deng & Zhu, 2007). Wang (2009) also suggested that Chinese educators should refer to Western experience to create a special education curriculum to suit their own.

In Thailand, in spite of the fact that inclusive education has been introduced to the Thai education system over two decades, Thailand is in the early stages of implementation and encounters challenges (Vorapanya & Diane, 2014). The rapid pace of the policy implementation resulted in some difficulties associated with the provision of qualified educators and appropriate services to overcome outdated practices (Carter, 2006). Several studies found that Thai teachers in inclusive classrooms lack knowledge in special education and have insufficient training and behavioral management skills to teach children with disabilities (Meechalard, 2003; Onbun-uea & Morrison, 2008; Pisansombat, 2000; Sorathaworn, 2003; Sukkoon, 2003). Surawattananun (1999) found that school principals had insufficient knowledge and experience to develop inclusive programs although they recognized the benefit of inclusion to children with autism. Indusuta (2003) also found that the preschool teachers who had prior training or experience with children with autism in an inclusive school had incompetent skills to construct assessment tools. With these complications concerning the teaching skills competency in inclusive settings, Thailand will have to make effort in improving the quality of special education services and increasing service availability. The implementation of government policies is critical.

Currently, each region of Thailand has special schools for students with disabilities. Inclusive education has been promoted to include students with disabilities in the regular schools.

With this policy, at least one public school in each of the 76 provinces provides a mainstream class for students with disabilities. However, the country also struggles with limited facilities outside major cities, high poverty rates, and resistance to change in long-standing traditions. Environmental barriers, lack of accessible transportation, services, and accommodations for individuals with disabilities continue to exist. The barriers that impede positive changes are a low rate of compliance with the disability law, and negative attitudes of service providers and society toward individuals with disabilities (Cheausuwantavee & Cheausuwantavee, 2012). Societal perceptions interfere with law enforcement, resource distribution, family involvement, and program accessibility for students with disabilities (Hill & Sukbunpant, 2013). At present, the policy appears to create different levels of implementation depending on the evaluation processes used and the individuals reporting on progress. The enforcement of policies become challenging. A lack of teacher training programs and negative views on people with special needs are other obstacles. In addition, the majority of children with special needs are from families who are living at or below the poverty line, which makes it difficult for them to reach special education facilities in metropolitan areas. In mainstream schools, teachers lack training to deal with students with special needs.

Based on laws No. 2916 and KHK No. 573 in Turkey, it is supportive for inclusive education in Turkey. However, some studies demonstrate that implementation of inclusive education is not very effective in Turkey (Eres, 2010; Karnas & Bayar, 2013b). The problems of the implementation of special education services can be analyzed based on different domains such as appropriate evaluation and diagnosis of students, development of IEPs, implementation of inclusive education and so on. Regarding the special education law and legislative decree, the Turkish special education system fully supports the requirement of special education. However, when it comes to implementation of inclusive education there are some problems including scarcity of trained teachers, general education teachers' pessimistic perspective on inclusive education, and insufficient collaboration between parents and teachers (Karnas & Bayar, 2013a).

In conclusion, the three countries have made progresses and positive movements to improve inclusive education system in their countries. Nevertheless, they have encountered similar challenges: bureaucratization in planning and implementing social changes, societal perception of disability, distribution of resources, and special education service delivery. Importantly, all three countries are in need of teacher training programs in special education.

PLANNING FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN CHINA

Within the development of new technology, especially the development of Internet and smart phones, online delivery platforms have been developed quickly in recent years (Chen, 2014; Zancanaro, Nunes, & Domingues, 2017). For example, Lien and Cao (2014) mentioned that the usage of social media has increased sharply in China today. Social media has not only changed people's communication methods, but also brought a number of common trends to individuals' learning habits. Therefore, the potential plan for promoting inclusive education in China will be based on virtual environment. WeChat and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) will be employed in this plan. Above all, potential plans for promoting inclusive education in China will consist of two main components. First, WeChat Public Platform will be prepared for popularization of universal instructional design, and raising the public awareness of inclusive education and special education. Second, MOOCs will be used in teacher training programs.

WeChat is a "mobile instant text and voice messaging communication service developed by Tencent Holdings Ltd. in China on Jan. 21, 2011" (Lien & Cao, 2014, p.104). It has been widely used among Chinese people. According to the WeChat Consumer Report (2016), in 2016, nearly

10 million WeChat Public Platform accounts existed, and 0.7 million articles were published per day. Comparing with TV, newspapers or computer, WeChat was a better way for people to acquire new information (“WeChat Consumer Report,” 2016). On the other hand, WeChat has influenced Chinese people’s reading habits and helped them to increase the reading quantity. Over 41% of users shared valuable articles from WeChat Public Platform to WeChat Moments, where their WeChat friends could see it (“WeChat Consumer Report,” 2016).

WeChat has played a role in new plans since it has a strong mass base in China. Lien and Cao (2014) noted that “Chinese users see WeChat as a tool to receive and share important and timely information” (p. 109). Similar to other social medias (i.e. Facebook, twitter, etc.), WeChat is introduced into Chinese higher education as an educational technology tool to adapt to new social trends (Forgie, Duff & Ross, 2013; Zeng, Deng, Wang & Liu, 2016). Because of its user-generated data / content as well as the characteristics of convenience and promptness, WeChat becomes an important method in promoting teachers’ professional development (Zheng, Liu, Lin & Li, 2018). Both external factors (i.e. communication with peers or professors) and internal factors (i.e. self-consciousness or perseverance) make contribution to encourage teachers to go through the process (Zheng et al., 2018). The article-based summaries will be published via the WeChat Public Platform account as the potential plan. To promote inclusive education and to raise people’s awareness, the peer-reviewed articles will be translated from English into simple Chinese language so that people can read them regardless of their educational backgrounds. The articles translated into Chinese version must be interesting, valuable, and emotional touching (“WeChat Consumer Report,” 2016) in order to attract the WeChat users to share these articles to the public as well as to help promote inclusive education in China.

In recent years, online courses have been growing (Atchley, Wingenbach & Akers, 2013). The MOOC-based distance education is one of the online education models that have been developing rapidly in China. Many colleges and universities in China used it as a new teaching method as a virtual learning platform that offers free courses (Zou, 2016). With the characteristics of online education, the MOOCs could expand the teaching scale and lower teaching costs (Wainer & Ingersoll, 2013). Meanwhile, online courses could satisfy participants’ lifestyles by “allowing them to juggle personal commitments, to manage time conflicts, and to access course materials from a variety of locations” (Zhang & Kenny, 2010, p. 17).

Because special educators are too few in China (Guo, 2016), the implementation of MOOCs is recommended and proposed with two steps: to initiate partnerships between Chinese and American educational institutions; and to establish cooperative Online Teaching Training Programs (OTTP). With this proposal, faculty members from American institutions will perform their roles in the OTTP as the co-instructors with Chinese faculty. American faculty will share their knowledge and teaching skills by taking video clips and uploading them to the MOOCs platform. Chinese faculty and students can use those materials without limitations of locations and time difference as distance learning. However, the implementation of MOOCs must be in an alignment with the laws; special education laws, government funding and policies; responsive system of governance; and public relation campaigns on disability knowledge, awareness, and inclusion for people with disabilities. More in-service professional training programs for general and special educators and research development programs in special education are in need.

PLANNING FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN THAILAND

Bevan-Brown, Heung, Jelas and Phongaksorn (2014) reported that inclusion is important to Thailand for several reasons: having equal opportunities to access quality education without

discrimination; social cohesion; and promoting diversity and social acceptance for individuals with disabilities. Importantly, inclusion would respond to achieving the international mandated goal of education for all. With international perspectives and considerations in promoting inclusive education in Thailand, Hauwadhanasuk, Karnas, and Zhuang (2016) presented the international collaboration with strategic planning that are beneficial toward the improvement of special education services and gradually promote inclusive education in Thailand. (See Figure 4.) This plan is aimed to initiate international collaboration between the government sectors and educational institutions in Thailand and in the U.S. The international collaboration plan includes creating special education professional development programs; professional exchange programs; research collaboration and scholarship; international conferences and research symposium; and scholarships and grants for special education/disability education. In addition, Special Education Initiatives to promote special education and disability knowledge, awareness, and inclusion for people with disabilities are addressed in the plan.



Figure 4. International Collaboration Strategic Plan implemented at a higher education institute in the U.S. to promote professional development programs, scholarships and research collaboration. Adapted from An Educational Plan for Inclusive Education in Thailand presented in the 46th Annual Meeting of the International Society for Educational Planning (ISEP) by Hauwadhanasuk, Karnas, & Zhuang, 2016.

Recommendations for the next steps in service delivery in Thailand are addressed for the country to continue efforts in the following areas: (1) expanding availability of special education services, (2) ensuring implementation of governmental policies, (3) establishing more special education training programs, (4) incorporating more research with international educational institutions to improve quality of special education programs, and (5) launching public campaigns to promote disability knowledge, awareness, and inclusion for people with special needs. Thailand has made movements toward improving the quality of special education services. The implementation of special education and legal requirements are addressed. Along with this, there is a need for increased training for educators who will work with children with disabilities in inclusive settings so that they can provide the individualized education required for student success. Some general strategies that could be beneficial toward the improvement of special education services could involve the development of financial incentives for special educators to be willing to provide services within rural/disadvantaged areas of the country. These incentives would also need to be

supported by funding to improve on the facilities within these rural areas where textbooks and teaching and learning materials are extremely limited.

Furthermore, international collaborative teaching programs should be created to provide opportunities for special education teachers with professional development programs. This innovative international collaborative teaching program could involve increasing in-service for all teachers and training on collaborative techniques between special and regular education teachers domestically and globally. The level and quality of special education services in Thailand have been well addressed in government policy and make progress toward the actualization of these policies. Progress in development will continue to be slow towards improving special education services within the country until government policy, provision of funding, and attitudinal change can take place. Finally, it is essential to acknowledge people in Thailand to be aware that individuals with disabilities have abilities to learn and succeed in their lives with the support of the people in the communities. Disability awareness must be promoted through government and private sectors as well as local communities across the country.

PLANNING FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN TURKEY

In Turkey, the rate of students with special needs who participate in inclusive education has been increasing. In 2001, only 54% of students with special need were included in general education classrooms. This rate was 61% in 2008 and 70% in 2016 (Engelli ve Yasli, 2016). These data indicated that general education teachers have more students with disabilities in their classrooms. These teachers do not have enough training in special education unless they have taken some special education courses during their college. One study interviewed general education and special education teachers regarding their perspectives on inclusive education, and found Turkish general education teachers thought that self-contained classroom would be better for special needs students. It was because general education teachers did not have enough training on how to teach students with special needs in the inclusive classroom (Karnas & Bayar, 2013b).

Collaboration between teachers and parents is critical when it involves special education services. Teachers do not have effective communication among themselves and with families. Even though some general education and special education teachers believe that collaboration is important, in fact, they do not often collaborate with each other (Karnas & Bayar, 2013a). Furthermore, parents of children with disabilities in Turkey lack knowledge and education. They are not familiar with special education policy to get involved in their children's education. Therefore, these parents are not aware of the importance of their involvement in their child's education. They believe that teachers always make the better decisions. With these reasons, parents rarely involve or make any change in the education of their children. Lack of collaboration between teachers and parents could result in ineffective inclusive education for the children.

In the last two decades, the number of universities/colleges that have special education programs has been increasing (Yuksekogretim Kurulu, 2017). As a result, there have been more teachers graduated from special education programs are extremely limited. Therefore, the state may encourage general education teachers, who obtained a short-term training in special education and currently teach students with special needs, to switch back to their teaching in general education classroom. The state should then provide the teaching placement in inclusive classroom for teachers who graduated special education major.

The curricula of university programs such as elementary education, science education, math education, and social sciences education are not developed to support inclusive education. Many universities do not offer any special education courses (e.g. Dogu Akdeniz University). As

the number of students with special needs has been increasing in general education classrooms, teachers who graduated from these universities were not equipped with special education knowledge and strategies to teach students with special needs (Karnas & Bayar, 2013b). It is critical that the education departments of the universities should enrich the curriculum to support inclusive education. Collaboration is one of the most important factors that are necessary for effective inclusive education (Fisher, Frey, & Thousand, 2003). Due to insufficient collaboration among teachers as well as between teachers and families (Karnas & Bayar, 2013a), school districts should develop training programs that emphasize the importance of collaboration among teachers and between teachers and parents.

CONCLUSION

Understanding special education in China, Thailand and Turkey can help educators from other countries to value the culture of people helping one another to strengthen support for students of special needs, as well as the move towards reform of the special education system. Although the development processes of Chinese, Thai, and Turkish special education are challenging, China is at the early stage of awareness of the educational needs of individuals with disabilities so that educational system hardly satisfies the special needs of children. However, the prospects for the future are promising. On the other hand, Thailand is farther along as there are examples of progressive special education programs throughout the country (Kritzer, 2012). In comparison to the United States, Turkey has insufficient special education. Therefore, it is problematic for some principles to be implemented. For example, the law ensures active parent participation in education; however, many parents do not have sufficient knowledge and education to make contributions to their children's education. However, Turkey has shown a rapid increase in special education in the last decade. The number of certified teachers and special education classrooms in public schools has increased rapidly. The educational policies in Thailand and in Turkey have addressed issues regarding children with disabilities. The prospects for individuals with disabilities to promote inclusive education in these three countries are in progress. While China, Thailand, and Turkey are addressing the issues of inclusive education, this education topic is a global issue. Educators and governmental officials from all over the world must collaborate to promote and support educational plans that deal with the positive aspects of inclusive education.

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KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT ISSUE: A CASE STUDY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AT A SAUDI UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

This research employs a qualitative methodology to investigate Knowledge Management (KM) in the department of educational administration at a Saudi university. The research seeks to establish an understanding of KM, including its implementation and challenges. The findings from the participants are grouped into three major themes, each of which contains a number of sub-themes: (1) Understanding KM; (2) applying KM; and (3) the challenges of applying KM. The study is divided according to the participants' understanding of KM into five sub-themes: (1) the process of knowledge creation, socialisation, externalisation, combination and internalisation; (2) sharing tacit knowledge; (3) finding data electronically; (4) transferring tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge; and (5) sharing information. The results reveal the majority of interviewees view the implementation of KM as straightforward in the area of research and weak in the area of administration. All the interviewees stated that the main challenges when implementing KM in their department relate to issues of administration and culture.

INTRODUCTION

All organisations, in both the public and private sectors, aim to both fulfil their goals and objectives and to be competitive. However, this cannot be achieved without sharing ideas and knowledge between members within the organisation. Knowledge has previously been viewed from several perspectives, i.e. abstract, philosophical, religious and practical (Asoh, Belardo, & Neilson, 2002). Its history stretches back over several thousand years, during which there has been a consideration of the meaning of knowledge, along with how it can be created and shared in an effective manner. Organisations have since become increasingly aware of the importance of knowledge as a primary resource, including in both the commercial sphere and the public sector. However, knowledge itself is insufficient to reach effective decisions concerning some issues within an organisation, and there is also a need to manage knowledge in order to compete successfully in the marketplace.

The concept of KM has several benefits, including:

- To identify required knowledge;
- To encourage innovation throughout an organisation;
- To reduce cost;
- To create technical knowledge;
- To increase the value of knowledge;
- To invest intellectual capital; and
- To increase awareness among workers concerning events within an organisation (Alzyadat & Alqutawi, 2010).

The researcher recognized from the literature that KM is a relatively new field of study, it has recently received considerable attention in the academic field. Higher Education Institutions in any educational system have aims to be achieved such as prepare new generations with the skills, cultural and scientific literacy, flexibility, and capacity for critical inquiry and moral choice

necessary to make their own contribution to society (Birgeneau, 2005, p. ix). However, all these and other objectives are based on knowledge that need to be managed.

This paper therefore focuses on the practical issues of KM in a department of educational administration in a Saudi university. It focuses on the following research questions:

1. To what extent do members understand the concept of KM?
2. In what way is the concept of KM applied within the department?
3. What are challenges of implementing KM in the department?

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to understand the concept of 'Knowledge Management', it is first necessary to understand the concept of knowledge, i.e. what it is, and to identify the differences between knowledge and information, and the differences between knowledge and data. Data consists of numbers, words, letters, facts or figures without any context, i.e. it is not organised in any way, and provides no further information. Thierauf (1999) states that it is: the facts and figures that unstructured and then have least impact on the typical manager. Information consists of data processed to be useful, providing answers to the questions of 'who', 'what', 'when' and 'where'. Thus, information consists of the relationships between pieces of data, or between the collection of data and further information. In terms of the meaning of knowledge management, Empson (1999) states that:

Knowledge is a combination of information, experience and insight that may benefit the individual or the organisation. It is the appropriate collection of information, such that its intent is to be useful. Knowledge is derived from classified data that becomes valued as information when placed in a specific context to contribute to decisions or actions. (Empson, 1999, p. 12)

Additionally, knowledge in all its forms can be classified as either explicit or tacit. Explicit knowledge is capable of being codified into words, while tacit knowledge, in order to be shared, needs to be externalised from individual experience (Davenport, Jarvenpaa, & Beers, 1996; De Long & Fahey, 2000; Grant, 1996; Nonaka, 1994; Sunassee & Sewry, 2002; Varun & Thomas, 2000).

Explicit knowledge is systematic, formal and documented, enabling it to be easily distributed, shared and communicated in clear manner. Explicit knowledge is stated and recorded as words, codes, mathematical numbers, scientific procedures, and music. It can be found on the Internet, and in books, documents, emails and other resources, both oral and visual (Polanyi, 1997).

On the other hand, tacit knowledge is not easily expressed, captured, recorded, formalised and articulated. It is personal, being stored within the minds of individuals, and developed through social interactions, and it is therefore challenging to identify which elements of tacit knowledge can be taken and made explicit. Uriarte (2008) states that:

Once relevant tacit knowledge is identified, it becomes extremely valuable to the organisation possessing it, because it is a unique asset that is difficult for other organisations to replicate. In any organisation, tacit knowledge is the essential prerequisite for making good decisions. (Uriarte, 2008, p. 5)

Coakes (2003) opines that tacit knowledge includes a variety of knowledge dimensions (e.g. mental models, beliefs, and intuition) and thus has been created from experiences and should be included in new knowledge, according to the needs of the environment. Approximately 80% of organisational information is tacit knowledge, leading to the potential for an employee's retirement or resignation to play a considerable role in the loss of knowledge, thus leading to the need to take KM into consideration (Oakes, Franke, Quartz, & Rogers, 2002).

Hislop (2005) employs the following characteristics to distinguish the differences between explicit and tacit knowledge: (see Table 1)

Table 1
The Characteristics of Tacit and Explicit Knowledge

Tacit knowledge	Explicit knowledge
Inexpressible	Codifiable
Subjective	Objective
Personal	Impersonal
Context-specific	Context independent
Difficult to share	Easy to share

Finally, it appears that it is impossible to separate explicit and tacit knowledge, and it is also impossible to understand explicit knowledge without being in possession of tacit knowledge. Therefore, all organisations need to focus on both forms of knowledge (Hislop, 2005). There are a considerable number of definitions in the literature concerning the concept of KM; however, there is still a lack of clarity and agreement concerning its definition, although all highlight the uniqueness of information management.

In general, definitions of KM are linked to those ‘processes’ attributable to knowledge. Scarbrough, Swan, & Preston (1999, p. 160) note that it is: “any process or practice of creating, acquiring, capturing, sharing and using knowledge, wherever it resides, to enhance learning and performance in organisations”. KM consists of ‘leveraging intellectual assets to enhance organisational performance’ (Stankosky, 2008), while Duhon (1998) states:

It is a discipline that promotes an integrated approach to identifying, capturing, evaluating, retrieving, and sharing all of an enterprise’s information assets. These assets may include databases, documents, policies, procedures, and previously un-captured expertise and experience in individual workers. (Duhon, 1998, pp. 23-36)

KM has also been defined as a process, or practice, of creating, acquiring, capturing, sharing and re-using organisational knowledge (i.e. know-how) to improve performance and achieve the goals and objectives of an organisation (Abell & Oxbrow, 2001; Townley, 2001; White, 2004). Finally, KM can be simply defined as making available, and organising, significant knowledge, wherever, and whenever, it is needed.

It can be seen from the literature that KM is complex and multifaceted. However, the literature also identifies several means of simplifying the different steps within the KM process. Some researchers state that the KM process can be divided into three, while others divide it into four. Hislop (2013) states that the KM process can be divided into three main stages: (1) identifying and clarifying important knowledge; (2) gathering all the collected knowledge together into a central source; and (3) structuring it in a systematic way to make it available to others. Finally, information and communication technologies play a leading role in KM processes (Durcikova & Gray, 2009).

Alqahtani (2014) states that KM can be divided into four main processes, capable of being further classified into seven sub-processes: (1) knowledge identification; (2) knowledge acquisition; (3) knowledge generation; (4) knowledge storage; (5) knowledge improvement; (6) knowledge distribution; and (7) knowledge application.

Despite the growing interest in KM in a number of different fields, it is agreed that some challenges can influence the implementation of this concept. Some researchers indicate that the

challenges in KM consist of: (1) weakness in knowledge sharing culture; (2) lack of cohesion between portal and organisational structure; (3) lack of commitment and support from senior management; (4) organisational strategy weakness; (5) information overload; (6) content management weakness; and (7) organisational strategy weakness (Remus, 2007; Sage & Rose, 1999; Uden & Naaranoja, 2007).

A number of researchers, including Davenport (2000), state that one of the greatest challenges in implementing KM is to address issues of cultural change. Huang (1998) suggests four major processes in forming a culture of KM: (1) making knowledge visible; (2) increasing knowledge intensity; (3) building knowledge infrastructure; and (4) developing a knowledge culture.

Wilson (2002) states that ambiguity between tacit and explicit knowledge within an organisation is a challenge, in addition to the difficulty of identifying information and knowledge necessary to incorporating knowledge into a management programme. Coakes (2003) adds that the current organisational culture (i.e. a lack of coordination between all activities within the organisation and lack of support from senior management) presents challenges for the application of KM.

Many researchers note the benefits of implementing KM in an organisation, including: (1) support of innovation within the organisation; (2) increasing productivity; (3) improving performance; (4) improving decision-making processes; increasing staff awareness of events taking place within the organisation; and (5) promoting the principle of cooperation (Wickham, 2001; Wiig, 1994).

HEIs currently recognise the value of KM in improving their changing role in society. Higher Education (HE) is not isolated from the remainder of the field, leading to HEIs being able to benefit from KM in the achievement of their objectives. Successful KM depends on processes that improve academic and administrative services at a university. It is widely believed that supporting educational administration through the use of KM will, in turn, support learning and teaching (Petrides & Guiney, 2002).

The most recognised strategies of KM in HE and other fields, include: culture, leadership, technology and measurement (American Productivity and Quality Center and Arthur Andersen Consulting, 1997). The five key areas of KM that can be applied at universities are: (1) research; (2) curriculum development; (3) alumni administrative services; and (4) strategic planning (Kidwell, Linde, & Johnson, 2000). Mikulecka & Mikulecky (2005) conclude that the university environment is the most appropriate for the application of the principles and methods of KM. Researchers have identified the following reasons: (1) universities generally have a modern information infrastructure; (2) they are accustomed to sharing knowledge with others, including between teaching staff lecturers and students; (3) faculty members do not hesitate, and are not afraid, to publish and share their knowledge; and universities offer many activities, including educational, research, and advisory services, all of which are organised by means of KM.

A large number of companies also apply a KM system. However, the literature reveals the limitations of the application of KM in universities. The researcher has identified five universities that apply KM in their system: (1) The Yung Ta Institute of Technology and Commerce (YTIT); (2) The University of Plymouth (UPC); (3) The Multimedia University (MMU); (4) The University Purta Malaysia (UPM); and (5) The University of Malaya.

Rodrigues and Pai (2005) identify the key factors (or variables) of KM as: (1) leadership and support; (2) technology and infrastructure; (3) knowledge creation; (4) acquisition and learning; (5) dissemination and transfer; (6) application and exploitation; (7) competency of personnel; and (8) a culture of sharing.

The researcher will focus on the areas identified by Kidwell et al. (2000), and will include a number of factors from Rodrigues & Pai (2005), e.g. technology and infrastructure; competency of personnel; a culture of sharing; and leadership and support.

Only a limited number of studies have been undertaken concerning the concept of KM. The majority have been conducted in a business and marketing field, and few have been conducted in the field of HE. Mahjoub (2004), Abu Khudair (2009), Al-Otaibi (2007) and Audi (2010) have conducted research on KM; however, they have all employed quantitative methods, while the current study will use qualitative research, as described below.

The current research does not aim to apply a module or strategy of this concept, but rather to explore the existence and issues of KM in a department of educational administration at a Saudi university, in order to answer the research questions, as previously noted:

1. To what extent do members understand the concept of KM?
2. In what way is the concept of KM applied within the department?
3. What are challenges of implementing KM in the department?

METHODOLOGY

The research method used for this current research, is the case study, a method well suited to an exploratory study (Yin, 1994). The research approach employs interviews as the primary source of evidence. Yin (1994, p. 84) believes that: 'Interviews are one of the most important sources of case study information'.

Smith, Harre & Langenhove (1999) are of the opinion that interviews can be divided into three main types: (1) structured; (2) semi-structured; and (3) unstructured. Semi-structured interviews appear to be the most appropriate for use by a researcher wishing to explore perceptions and experiences, understandings and interpretations. Semi-structured interviews carry greater flexibility than other methods (e.g. structured interviews and questionnaires) (Smith et al., 1999).

The interview questions are designed according to the framework adopted from Kidwell et al. (2000), with the five key areas suitable for application for universities: research, curriculum development, alumni services, administrative services and strategic planning.

To gain a complete picture of the issues related to KM covered in the current study, the researcher interviewed the Head of Department of educational administration and all thirty faculty members. The interview guide for this study contains themes related to the study objectives. The relationship between the interview questions, research questions and framework are listed in the Table 2.

Table 2: *The Interview Guide*

Interview questions	Research questions	Relations to the framework
Have you heard of the concept of Knowledge?	To what extent do members understand the concept of KM?	Member understanding of KM.
Have you heard about the concept of Knowledge Management?		First: The differences between data, information and knowledge, in addition to the differences between tacit and explicit knowledge.
If yes: What do you know about it?		Second: Are participants aware of the components of implementing KM, i.e. creating, acquiring, capturing, sharing and using knowledge.
If no: Do you think it is important to know about it, and why?		

In order to apply KM at the department, there are a number of factors that can be applied. To which factors do you consider it important to apply KM in your department?	How are concepts of KM applied in the department?	Participant's point of view concerning the areas of KM that can be applied in the department, e.g. research; curriculum development; alumni services; administrative services and strategic planning; technology and infrastructure; competency of personnel; and sharing culture.
Are there any challenges of applying KM in your department?	What are challenges of implementing KM in the department?	How participants express their opinion about the challenges that may affect the implementation of this concept, i.e. weakness in knowledge sharing culture; organisational strategy weakness; information overcrowding; and other factors that can be raised from the participants.

RESULTS

The responses to the interviews identified a number of common patterns for analysis. The collected data from the semi-structured interviews were analysed manually to answer the research questions. Based on the research questions, the findings from the participants were grouped under three major themes, each with a number of sub-themes. (See Table 3)

Table 3:
Understanding KM - Applying KM – Challenges

Understanding KM	Applying KM	Challenges of applying KM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process of knowledge creation, socialisation, externalisation, combination and internalisation. • Sharing tacit knowledge. • Finding data electronically. • Transferring tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge. • Sharing information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partial implementation and tacit knowledge. • Research. • Curriculum development. • Administrative services. • Technology and infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration • Culture

The First Major Theme: Understanding Km

This major theme can be divided based on interviewee response into five sub-themes: (1) a process of knowledge creation, socialisation, externalisation, combination and internalisation;

(2) sharing tacit knowledge; (3) finding data electronically; (4) transferring tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge; and (5) sharing information. (see Table 4)

Table 4: *Frequencies of Understanding Km*

Mentioned points	Frequencies
1. Process of knowledge creation, socialisation, externalisation, combination and internalisation.	4
2. Sharing tacit knowledge.	5
3. Finding data electronically.	11
4. Transferring tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge.	4
5. Sharing information.	7

Table 4 reveals that interviewees understand KM in a number of different ways. It appears that they have little understanding of its components, but they note some aspects of the concept. The majority of interviewees regarded the most important function of KM as obtaining data electronically, or sharing information, while only three perceived KM as model of knowledge creation, as proposed by Nonaka (1994). A further small number of interviewees viewed KM as sharing tacit knowledge and transferring tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge. It appears from these points of view that participants have little understanding of KM and they relate it to the sharing of basic data and information rather than a process of managing knowledge on a higher level.

The Second Major Theme: Applying Km

This major them can be divided into five sub-themes: (1) partial implementation and tacit knowledge; (2) research; (3) curriculum development; (4) administrative services; and (5) strategic leadership, support, technology and infrastructure. (see Table 5)

Table 5: *Frequencies of Applying Km*

Mentioned points	Frequencies
Partial implementation and tacit knowledge	13
Research	15
Administration	7
Technology and infrastructure	14
Curriculum development	10

The majority of the interviewees emphasised that KM is applied in some areas within the department, but that the majority of knowledge is tacit and does not transfer to explicit knowledge. They also stated that most knowledge (and even some information) is not available systematically, but needs to be obtained verbally from faculty members. The majority of interviewees emphasised that the implementation of KM can be seen clearly in the area of research, in which many resources are available both manually and electronically. However, the majority of interviewees confirmed that the implementation of KM is weak in the area of administrative services, i.e. students are given insufficient information concerning their rights, including the availability of research services. Faculty members also experience difficulties in obtaining knowledge related to administrative services. In addition, some interviewees highlighted the area of technology and infrastructure, stating that they spend much of their time at home, due to the lack of facilities such as computers

and printers. They also noted that there is a lack of knowledge available in electronic form, and that they believe this is important for the implementation of KM. When it comes to curriculum development, interviewees stated that the department is still in the process of generating knowledge. Each member has his/her own knowledge concerning the development of courses, but fails to share such knowledge. The board of the department has raised this issue, including creating a commission to transfer all tacit knowledge in this area to be explicit to faculty members.

The Third Major Theme: The Challenges Of Implementing Km

This theme can be divided into two clear sub-themes: (1) administration and (2) culture. (see Table 6)

Table 6: *Frequencies of the Challengers of Implementing Km*

Mentioned points	Frequencies
Administration	15
Culture	13

Some interviewees (particularly those with a background in understanding the concept of KM) emphasised that the majority of challenges of implementing KM in the department concern administration and culture. All interviewees noted some obstacles in relation to administration originating from the current leadership method: 1. The lack of training programmes for both students and faculty members concerning the concept of KM and its affect and importance. 2. The lack of recognition, i.e. faculty members stated that the department administration does not pay sufficient attention to what they possess in terms of knowledge and do not organise the means of benefiting from such knowledge, including how to manage it. A faculty member experienced in this topic stated that she has been asked to apply KM for the department, but when she commenced this procedure, and had managed to overcome its challenges, the Head of Department replaced her, and moved her to a new position. Interviewees thus emphasised that knowledge cannot be managed with uncertain decisions. 3. The large number of tasks given to faculty members. All interviewees stated that they are given large numbers of tasks that distract them from applying KM, and, as a result, tacit knowledge is increased, but then disappears when faculty members retire or move to another university.

The majority of interviewees noted that culture was the second sub-them that influenced or enabled KM. They claimed that faculty members demonstrate little enthusiasm for sharing knowledge: (1) due to a lack of trust; and (2) their lack of confidence concerning their knowledge. A number of interviewees stated that members of the department (including students) are unwilling to search for knowledge themselves, but prefer to obtain it rapidly and verbally. During the time the researcher was talking to a faculty member, a large number of students arrived to ask about knowledge that the researcher assumes was freely available in hard or soft copy. However, the students gained this knowledge verbally, including taking notes. Then, the researcher took an action to shed light on the concept KM with some faculty members. The researcher meet with faculty members to discuss some points in both sides academic and administrative sides. Academic side: The importance of providing students with a clear course description and its impact on students when starting their courses clearly, and its impact on reducing continuous questions and concerns about the course. At the end of the discussion, the main points to be included in any course description were summarised as: General information about the course in both Arabic and English (course title, code and number), course objectives, Teaching methods and activities, The

procedural requirements of decision making, Distributing a scheduled plan, Method of assessment, Course evaluation, References, Methods to contact faculty members for additional details, from the Professor scheduled, and providing available office hours to faculty members. Create a club for students in the department of educational administration.

In terms of the academic side, the researcher achieved the following points:

- Creating procedural operations to support communication throughout the university, especially with regard to matters affecting students under the deanship of graduate studies.
- Creating a report about the department, including a brief history of the department, program specifications, the vision, mission and objectives of the department, details of faculty members and finally the number of students in the department.
- Collecting some information, data and knowledge from some college, centers, deanships, vice presidencies, institutes, and committees.
- Establishing several files for administrative purposes, such as an achievements file for the department generally and files for faculty members and students particularly.

CONCLUSION

As noted in the literature, there are a limited number of studies concerning the concept of KM. The majority have been undertaken in the fields of business and marketing and little has been conducted in relation to higher education. In addition, all previous studies have employed quantitative research.

The current study has investigated issues and practices relating to KM in a department of educational administration at a Saudi university, based on a qualitative approach, and using semi-structured interviews. The aim has been to answer three main points:

1. To what extent do members understand the concept of KM?
2. In what way is the concept of KM applied within the department?
3. What are challenges of implementing KM in the department?

Even though some researchers have concluded that the university environment is the most appropriate for the application of the principles and methods of KM (Mikulecka & Mikulecky, 2005), this current study reveals a number of weaknesses in the understanding and implementation of this important concept within the department. Participants understand the central meaning of KM as referring to keeping data available electronically, while only those interested in reading about this concept note the true meaning of KM. Thus, this result may draw attention to the importance of the concept of KM at the university. The results reveal that KM is clearly implemented in the area of research in the department, with less use being made in areas such as administration and curriculum development. The literature demonstrates that there is currently a process of implementing KM, but due to a lack of understanding of KM in the department, participants did not mention any clear process of its implementation, only their right to find data about the department online, while the concept of KM goes deeper than this view. It also appears that tacit knowledge does not transfer to explicit knowledge. During the process of interviewing, the researcher observed that the majority of knowledge passed between students and faculty members (and between faculty members) was undertaken verbally. Thus, knowledge is not undergoing a clear process that may assist in it being managed and made available. Therefore, it appears that implementing KM inside this department has taken the form of a puzzle, with all those involved attempting to collect basic information in his/her own way, rather than managing knowledge for the whole department.

From the results, it appears that a number of challenges play a leading role in the implementation of KM. The current study has established that the greatest challenge in the

implementation of KM in the department consists of administration and culture. This accords with the findings of Sage and Rose (1999), Remus (2007), and Uden & Naaranoja (2007). In the current study, the lack of recognition and training programmes, along with the large number of tasks, form the clearest area of administrative challenge to the implementation of KM. As noted in the results, culture also plays a considerable role in the implementation of KM. This has led the current researcher to conclude that culture influences the entire work of the department, including a style of leadership that may not support the concept of KM, and potentially other concepts as well.

Finally, individuals spend most of their lives at work, and therefore it is essential to pay attention to the importance of KM, as it can play a considerable role in: (1) ensuring the most effective culture; (2) supporting innovation; (3) saving time; (3) reducing cost and awareness among workers concerning their department. The aim of this current study is to draw the attention of policy makers and decision makers to the department, and to concerns about KM both locally and nationally. In addition, this study aims to promote future researchers to consider this concept in depth, particularly in relation to Saudi culture. Thus, further investigation by researchers may include additional cases within KM, in order to obtain a full picture concerning this concept and its importance in improving the higher education sector.

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