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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Proposed Management Model and Policies Inspired by PMDG Administration for Private Islamic Schools in the Deep South of Thailand

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor (PMDG) is dedicated to becoming a leading center of Islamic learning and science, utilizing a dynamic and innovative management system grounded in school and Islamic values. This research aims to develop a management model and create policy proposals for private Islamic schools in the deep south of Thailand, inspired by PMDG's administration. Using qualitative methods, including evaluations by 22 experts and a seminar with 10 experts. The findings focus on three core principles: 1) Sincerity (Ikhlas)**:** Acting sincerely and in good faith for Allah, 2) Responsibility and Trust (Amaanah)**:** Fulfilling duties with trust and accountability, while promoting discussions and support (Tarbiyah), and 3) Justice (Adalah)**:** Ensuring fairness in tasks, compensation, promotions, welfare, and dispute resolution, and involving staff in decision-making (Shura). To further enhance student quality and positively impact communities, 12 strategies are recommended for implementation within the management framework of these schools. These include the establishment of shared values and the development of an integrated learning management process. Inspired by PMDG's practices, these strategies are tailored to meet specific administrative needs at various levels. For example, Educational Supervisor Allocation at the Ministry of Education level, Multilingual Communication Activities at the provincial private education office level, and a Waqf-Based Business Model at the educational institution level.

INTRODUCTION

Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor (PMDG) is an educational institution that integrates the Pesantren and Madrasah systems, based on K.H. Imam Zarkasyi's Modern Education System (Zarkasyi, 2020). The school's values, known as Panca Jiwa (Five Spirits), include sincerity, simplicity, independence, Islamic brotherhood, and freedom. PMDG uses the KMI curriculum, which combines religious and general sciences (Bahroni, 2012), and organizes activities that embody these values. The institution employs the

role model method (al-uswah al-hasanah) by exemplifying positive behavior, alongside punishments for offenders (Hardoyo, 2009), assignment-based strategies, and strict discipline training through the Habituation strategy (Saifulloh and Neoh, 2022). Currently, PMDG has expanded into higher education with the University of Darussalam Gontor (UNIDA Gontor), offering bachelor's degree programs across seven faculties: 1) Ushuluddin, 2) Education, 3) Syariah, 4) Economics and Management, 5) Humanities, 6) Health Sciences, and 7) Science and Technology. Additionally, it offers graduate programs in three fields: 1) Aqidah, 2) Arabic Language Teaching, and 3) Islamic Law (Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor, 2020).

The PMDG Best Practices report (Lateh et al., 2023) outlines ten key elements: 1) Effective school leadership, 2) Integration of religious and general sciences in the curriculum, 3) Student-designed extracurricular activities, 4) Mandatory high school training, 5) Exemplary social enterprise, 6) Waqf management, 7) Teacher development through mentoring, 8) Balanced life welfare arrangements, 9) Student support system with peer assistance, and 10) Supportive learning environment. These practices serve as guidelines under PMDG's Five Spirits for managing private Islamic schools in Thailand. Studies highlight aspects like instilling religious faith, environmental connection, lifelong learning (Wanichyakorn and Soontrayuth, 2012), goal-oriented work, dedication (Khamnurak and Wea-useng, 2015), and principles of morality, allegiance to Allah, and participation (Salaeharae, 2017). Additional principles include purity of heart, responsibility, truthfulness, consultative meetings, good manners, propagation of Islamic teachings, and justice (Nesaleah and Yeesunsong, 2020).

A management model for private Islamic schools based on PMDG (Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor) should integrate the core principles and successful strategies of this well-regarded Indonesian Islamic boarding school. The PMDG model focuses on a balanced approach to religious and secular education, character development, and holistic student growth. There were the key elements of such a management model based on Asadullah and Chaudhury (2016), Halstead (2004) and Hefner (2009) such as: 1) integrated curriculum, 2) character and moral development, 3) holistic student development, 4) teacher development, 5) community and stakeholder engagement, 6) student-centered learning environment, 7) technological integration, 8) administrative efficiency, 9) financial sustainability, and 10) quality assurance and continuous improvement.

The management of private Islamic schools in the southern border region faces several issues:

- Strategic Management: Unclear missions and directions, undefined work scope, outdated visions (Salae, 2015).
- Planning and Execution: Lack of planning, absence of work calendars, inexperienced and unprofessional management, lack of teamwork, and insufficient work monitoring (Wangli, 2013).
- Leadership Issues: Inconsistent use of Islamic teachings to enforce plans, mismatched personnel assignments, limited teacher autonomy, centralized authority, and unfair salary considerations (Chemee, 2015; Malee, 2017).
- Curriculum and Teaching: Misalignment between the curriculum and learning activities, excessive study time, inadequate life skills, insufficient teacher capability in diverse and learner-focused methods, lack of modern teaching media, and inadequate promotion of media technology (Jahwae, 2015).

In the context of school policy proposals, several principles are often emphasized in educational research and policy analysis. An example of the relevance to school policy development, such as: 1) Evidence-Based Decision Making: Policies should rely on empirical evidence and research for effective educational practice, 2) Stakeholder Involvement: Engaging diverse stakeholders ensures comprehensive perspectives in policy development, 3) Needs Assessment: Identifying challenges and priorities within the school community guides policy focus, 4) Alignment with Educational Goals: Policies should align with school or district objectives, 5) Feasibility Assessment: Evaluating resources and implementation challenges ensures practicality, 6) Equity and Inclusivity: Policies must promote fairness and accessibility for all students, and 7) Continuous Evaluation and Improvement: Policies should undergo

ongoing evaluation and adjustments for effectiveness. (Avison, 2010; Dynarski, 2015; Dennin et al., 2017; Burroughs et al., 2019)

Given the importance and challenges mentioned, this research aims to develop a model and create policy proposals for the administration of private Islamic schools in the deep south of Thailand. It draws on the administration practices of PMDG in Indonesia to provide concrete guidelines for the future implementation of private Islamic schools.

Objectives

1. To develop a management model for private Islamic schools in the deep south of Thailand inspired by the management practices of PMDG

2. To formulate a policy proposal for the administration of private Islamic schools in the deep south of Thailand based on the administrative strategies of PMDG

METHODS

The study was conducted following ethical standards and was certified for research ethics in human subjects by Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus (Code: psu.pn.2-078/66). Utilizing qualitative methods, the research aimed to develop a management model and formulate policy proposals for private Islamic schools in the deep south of Thailand, drawing on the administration practices of PMDG. The study was conducted in two phases:

Phase 1: Development of a management model for private Islamic schools in the deep south of Thailand based on the administration of PMDG. The steps are as follows.

1. **Draft Preparation**: Develop a draft management model by reviewing relevant documents, research, and preliminary studies (Lateh et al., 2023) on the administration of PMDG.

2. **Expert Evaluation**: Conduct seminars involving experts (Connoisseurship) to evaluate the draft model. Participants include 3 higher education teachers, 1 educational supervisor, 6 private religious school administrators, and 12 experts from PMDG, comprising executives and faculty members.

3. **Final Model Presentation**: Present the finalized management model for private Islamic schools in the deep south of Thailand, based on the administration practices of PMDG.

Phase 2: Preparation of a policy proposal for the management of private Islamic schools in the deep south of Thailand based on the administration of PMDG. The steps are as follows.

1. **Draft Policy Proposal**: Develop a draft policy proposal by studying relevant documents and research on the administration of PMDG.

2. **Expert Seminars**: Conduct seminars with 10 experts, including executives from private education offices, private Islamic school administrators, and higher education administrators from the Faculty of Education in the deep south of Thailand, to provide practical implementation suggestions.

3. **Final Policy Proposal**: Prepare and present a comprehensive policy proposal for the management of private Islamic schools in the southern border area, based on the administration practices of PMDG.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The outcomes of developing the management model for private Islamic schools in the deep south of Thailand, based on PMDG's administration, drawn from related documents and expert seminars, are depicted in Figure 1. The study results are oriented towards enhancing learner quality and fostering community impact to address the specific needs of private Islamic schools in the deep south of Thailand.

Learner quality is categorized into two skills:

1. **Integrative Learning Skills:** the capacity to apply, analyze, and synthesize knowledge acquired through school experiences. Integrative knowledge is highlighted for its applicability in daily life.

2. **Islamic Life Skills:** the ability to confront situations and resolve everyday issues pertinent to Muslim life.

Community impact is delineated into two facets:

1. **Professional Life Rooted in Islamic Principles:** encompasses occupations that adhere to Islamic precepts.

2. **Religious Leadership within the Muslim Community:** denotes proficiency in guiding religious practices and illuminating Islamic matters for the broader public.

The three core pillars of sincerity (Ikhlas), responsibility and trust (Amaanah), and justice (Adalah) can be defined as follows:

1. **The principles of sincerity (Ikhlas):** The school administrators must be sincere and act in good faith for Allah without exploiting others.

2. **The principles of responsibility and trust (Amaanah):** The school administrators must pay attention to the duties assigned to them, work with trust, and manage to facilitate so that the staff performs their duties at their full accountability and potential. The administrators must value mutual discussions, suggestions, and support, also known as "Tarbiyah."

3. **The principles of justice (Adalah):** The school administrators must maintain fairness when assigning tasks, allocating compensation, giving promotions, providing welfare, and settling disputes to ensure fair governance. They must further allow their staff to participate in every step of the operation, also known as "Shura."

Action must be taken to promote student quality and produce positive impacts for the communities. Below outlines 12 strategies suggested for implementation within the management framework of private Islamic schools located in the deep south of Thailand, taking cues from the administrative practices of PMDG.

1. **The strategy of the establishment of shared values:** Developing initiatives and practices that not only enhance the school's educational outcomes but also contribute positively to the broader societal and community needs, particularly within an Islamic framework. This strategy entails aligning the school's educational objectives with the principles of Islamic ethics, social responsibility, and community development.

2. **The strategy of executive potential development:** Creating and implementing plans to nurture and enhance the leadership capabilities and skills of individuals in executive positions within the institution. This strategy focuses on identifying individuals with high potential for leadership roles, providing them with targeted training, mentoring, and opportunities for growth, and empowering them to effectively lead and manage the school in alignment with Islamic values and principles.

3. **The strategy for developing teachers' competencies:** Teachers must receive development to be able to design learning activities that combine knowledge, skills, and attitudes while adjusting their role from teaching to facilitating learning. Teachers must assess the learning outcomes, emphasize post-learning development progress, and urge students to discover their potential. The teachers must be able to observe classes, take notes of the class observations, write a class reflection, and adopt and share best practices in the professional learning community.

4. **The strategy for developing an integrated learning management process:** A proactive learning management process must be developed to connect secular and Islamic subjects using thought-provoking questions, interactive activities, and tasks for autonomous knowledge summarization. The aim is for the students to use the knowledge in their daily lives. Note that it may be necessary to define an integrated learning unit by managing the overlapping time structure, subjects, standards, and indicators to reduce the learning burden.
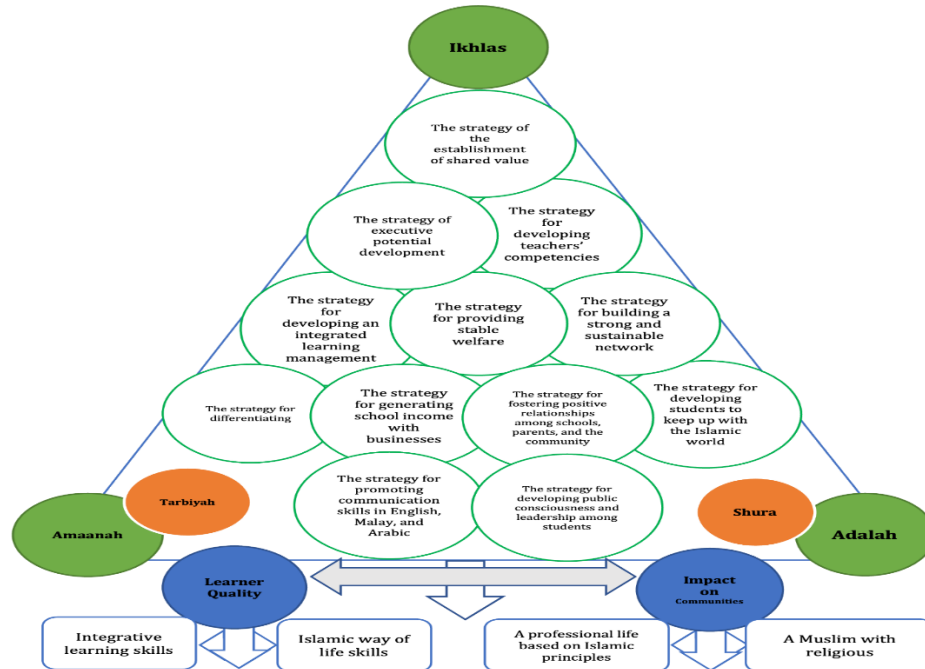

Figure 1. Proposed management model for Islamic private schools in the Deep South of Thailand

The strategy for providing stable welfare:

Work motivation must be boosted by fair compensation, promotion, housing welfare or subsidies, access to loans, rights to medical treatment, and accident insurance.

The strategy for building a strong and sustainable network:

Develop the capacity to connect groups of educational institutions with a similar goal to establish cooperation for continuously and systematically promoting teacher development, academic activities, student activities, and community outreach.

The strategy for differentiating:

Schools' public images must be differentiated and modernized using the administration that emphasizes learning management efficiency to attract students and parents. This process can start by analyzing the schools' strengths and unique elements that others would have difficulty imitating or copying. Note that communities and external organizations should be invited to collaborate in the development and management to maximize student benefits.

The strategy for generating school income with businesses:

Schools must find and select products, services, or venues to generate income. This could be through distributing products or providing across sales channels. Another possibility is to establish a sales channel for distributors who are students, teachers, parents, alumni, or interested third parties to utilize.

The strategy for fostering positive relationships among schools, parents, and the community:

Intentional efforts to strengthen and maintain collaborative partnerships between the school, parents, and the broader community. This strategy recognizes the importance of active engagement and mutual

support among these stakeholders in order to create a nurturing and supportive educational environment that promotes the holistic development of students while upholding Islamic values and principles.

The strategy for developing students to keep up with the Islamic world:

Students must develop self-direction, self-control, and social skills to be aware of changes by applying the knowledge of basic practices according to the Islamic way.

The strategy for promoting communication skills in English, Malay, and Arabic:

Deliberate efforts to enhance students' proficiency in these three languages, recognizing their importance for effective communication, academic success, and cultural understanding within the school community and beyond. This strategy aims to equip students with the linguistic skills and cultural awareness necessary to engage confidently and competently in diverse contexts, while also fostering a deeper appreciation for the linguistic and cultural heritage of Islam.

The strategy for developing public consciousness and leadership among students: Intentional efforts to cultivate students' awareness of social issues, their sense of responsibility towards their communities, and their capacity to lead positive change guided by Islamic principles and values. This strategy aims to empower students to become proactive agents of social justice, compassion, and service, grounded in a deep understanding of Islamic teachings and ethics.

The management model for private Islamic schools developed from this research focuses on student quality, emphasizing two key components: integrated learning skills and Islamic life skills. This approach aims to merge general and religious education, enabling students to apply their knowledge practically in daily life. The community expects graduates to pursue careers based on Islamic principles and exhibit religious leadership. This aligns with Wanichyakorn and Soontrayuth (2012), which emphasize the importance of ethical awareness, adaptability to social changes, and career readiness in accordance with local and societal needs. Similarly, Waehama et al. (2021) highlights the need for modern learners to develop a thought process, desirable characteristics, and adherence to faith principles.

The model developed emphasizes key characteristics for school administrators and department heads, centering on three principles: altruism (Ikhlas), duty and responsibility (Amaanah), and justice (Adalah). Administrators should work with pure intentions for the sake of Allah, free from exploitation, and with full dedication to their responsibilities. They must ensure fair management, equitable work assignments, remuneration, and welfare arrangements, as well as just resolution of disputes. This aligns with Salaeharae (2017), which identifies essential elements of good management in Islamic contexts: 1) Akhlaq (morality) following the example of Prophet Muhammad, 2) Ibadah (loyalty to Allah), working with the intention of pleasing Allah, and 3) Shura (participation), clearly defining roles and monitoring performance. Nesalaeh and Yeesunsong (2020) also support these principles, noting that justice (Adil) had the lowest performance among administrators, followed by responsibility (Amaanah) and participation (Shura), highlighting areas needing attention.

The findings align with the research of Wanichyakorn and Soontrayuth (2012), who proposed an Islamic school model suitable for Thai society with the main goal of instilling faith in Islam and developing student quality for continuous lifelong learning. This is also consistent with the research by Juhaeni et al. (2021), which proposed three strategies for school development in Indonesia: 1) Programming Aspect: Programs are a series of activities carried out by educational institutions to achieve their goals, 2) Budget Aspect: The use of the budget is directed towards implementing the planned strategies, 3) Procedural Aspect: Improving the quality of graduates through four stages including the work meeting stage at the beginning of the school year, the new student admission stage, the school curriculum implementation stage, and the student competency test stage. Additionally, Tabroni and Ismiati (2021) outlined three strategies for developing schools in Indonesia: 1) School Policy Strategy: Aiming to improve the quality of education, 2) Pesantren-Based Excellence Program: Focusing on enhancing religious and academic standards, and 3) Facilities and Infrastructure: Supporting the quality of education to achieve the following outcomes including foster good and correct exemplary religious

beliefs, implement a child-centered learning process, encourage innovative and creative learning based on the diverse, unique, and multi-talented abilities and interests of students, and build a creative and responsible learning process that promotes healthy learning habits.

The policy proposals for managing private Islamic schools in the deep south of Thailand, based on the administrative approach of PMDG, the issues were divided according to the level of administration as follows:

Ministry of Education level

1. **Teacher Staffing Criteria**: Implement criteria for teacher staffing that consider both general and religious qualifications to ensure suitability for the roles.

2. **Medical Care Fund**: Establish a fund for medical care, specifically for private religious school teachers who are not formally employed.

3. **Teacher Training Programs**: Encourage higher education institutions to produce graduates proficient in organizing teaching and learning activities for both general and religious subjects.

4. **Educational Supervisor Allocation**: Allocate educational supervisor positions to private education offices within the five southern border provinces to enhance oversight and support.

5. **Income Generation**: Amend regulations to permit educational institutions to engage in business activities, enabling them to generate income to support school operations under the foundation.

6. **Curriculum Adjustment**: Revise the curriculum structure or integrate subjects to streamline teaching schedules and allow more time for organizing integrated life skills and professional development activities.

7. **Evaluation Adaptation**: Adjust measurement and evaluation regulations in subjects emphasizing Islamic principles to include assessments of practical applications alongside theoretical knowledge.

The provincial private education office level

1. **Promoting Waqf Organizations**: Encourage schools to transition into authentic wakaf organizations, aligning with Islamic principles of endowment and philanthropy.

2. **Medical Care Fund**: Establish a dedicated fund to provide medical care for private religious school teachers who are not formally employed.

3. **Academic Development**: Develop private education academics capable of supervising teaching and learning activities in private religious schools across the five southern border provinces.

4. **Business Manual Preparation**: Create a comprehensive manual outlining procedures for income generation within educational institutions, ensuring compliance with regulations, and directing profits towards managing religious schools in the region.

5. **Curriculum Restructuring Manual**: Prepare a manual for restructuring the curriculum or integrating subjects to optimize teaching schedules and prioritize integrated life skills and professional development activities.

6. **Integrated Units Manual**: Develop a manual for creating integrated units along with evaluation criteria to enhance learning efficiency for students.

7. **Measurement and Evaluation Manual**: Prepare guidelines for measurement and evaluation in subjects emphasizing Islamic principles, focusing on assessing practical application alongside theoretical knowledge.

8. **Scholarship Agreements**: Advocate for agreements between universities and schools to provide scholarships for students, stipulating that recipients return to the sponsoring educational institution upon completion of their studies.

9. **Promoting Excellence**: Encourage schools to cultivate excellence rooted in their unique contexts, fostering acceptance and recognition within the community.

10. **Multilingual Communication Activities**: Promote the organization of activities utilizing five languages for communication, including exhibitions of student work, to enhance linguistic diversity and cultural exchange.

11. **Administrator Training Courses**: Organize training courses for administrators of advanced private educational institutions, providing professional development opportunities to enhance leadership and management skills.

The educational institution level

1. **Values Definition and Goal Setting**: Clearly define core values and establish a vision, mission, and goals, along with methods for their implementation to achieve tangible outcomes.

2. **Medical Care Fund**: Establish a fund for medical care, specifically catering to private religious school teachers who are not formally employed.

3. **Senior Teacher Mentorship System**: Develop a system wherein senior teachers provide guidance and mentorship to new teachers, facilitating their professional development in teaching and learning practices.

4. **Teaching and Learning Supervision System**: Implement a supervision system for teaching and learning, ensuring all teachers receive guidance in lesson planning and classroom observation.

5. **Waqf-Based Business Model**: Establish an educational institution business model based on the waqf principle, utilizing profits to enhance teaching and learning arrangements.

6. **Curriculum Adjustment**: Modify the curriculum structure to incorporate integrated units, reducing classroom teaching time and increasing hands-on learning opportunities for students.

7. **Integrated Unit Design**: Design integrated units with evaluation criteria emphasizing life skills, Islamic values, and professional competencies.

8. **Measurement and Evaluation Regulations**: Develop regulations for measurement and evaluation at the school level, integrating principles of practical application into assessment practices.

9. **Scholarship Allocation**: Allocate a budget for scholarships at the degree level, with funds contingent upon students returning to serve as teachers at the school upon completion of their studies.

10. **Student Teaching Program**: Implement a program where students teach young children, accumulating hours and creating portfolios to develop teaching skills and practical experience.

The above results are consistent with many proposals from research such as: Develop an integrated curriculum that combines religious education with secular subjects to ensure holistic education (Eissa and Khalid, 2018), democratize education by providing equal access to learning opportunities and catering to different learning styles and abilities (Tabrizi and Kabirnejat, 2017), implement continuous professional development programs for teachers in both Islamic pedagogy and modern educational practices (Juhaeni et al., 2021), develop Smart Schools by integrating technology into classrooms to enhance learning experiences and digital literacy (Che Noh et al., 2019), increase the participation of stakeholders, including parents and community members, in the educational process (Wanichyakorn and Soontrayuth, 2012), implement programs focused on the all-round development of students, including intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and physical growth (Tabroni and Ismiati, 2021), establish regular assessment and feedback mechanisms to ensure continuous improvement and transparent governance (Eissa and Khalid, 2018), create a safe and supportive learning environment and provide mental health resources and counseling services (Tabrizi and Kabirnejat, 2017).

In the future, private Islamic schools could be developed into Smart Schools similar to those successfully operated in Malaysia. These schools should adopt the following vision as outlined by Tabrizi and Kabirnejat (2017):

1. Democratizing Education: This involves two strategies. The first is to provide equal access to learning through equal opportunities within the curriculum. The second is to incorporate different abilities, paces of learning, and learning styles within the curriculum.
2. Enhancing Individual Strengths and Abilities: Providing opportunities for students to develop their unique strengths and abilities.
3. Increasing Stakeholder Participation: Encouraging active involvement of all stakeholders in the school and the educational process.
4. Producing a Thinking and Technologically Literate Workforce: Preparing students to be critical thinkers and proficient in technology.
5. All-Round Development: Fostering intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and physical growth in students.

CONCLUSION

The development of a management model for private Islamic schools in Thailand's deep south, drawing on PMDG's administrative practices and expert seminars, aims to enhance learner quality and foster community impact. This model focuses on three core principles: 1) Sincerity (Ikhlas): Acting sincerely and in good faith for Allah, 2) Responsibility and Trust (Amaanah): Fulfilling duties with trust and accountability, promoting discussions and support (Tarbiyah), and 3) Justice (Adalah): Ensuring fairness in tasks, compensation, promotions, welfare, and dispute resolution, involving staff in decision-making (Shura). To further enhance student quality and positively impact communities, 12 strategies are recommended for implementation within the management framework of these schools, inspired by PMDG's practices and tailored to the specific administrative needs at various levels.

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