Dealing with curriculum management during education reform was inefficient and did not achieve the goals of being smart, good and happy persons. It was probably because the instructional system was still focused on memorizing. The curriculum did not encourage students to think or focus on the instructional system rather than the learning system. The study results also suggested that if applying curriculum was incorrect or defective, failure would finally occur. This would lead to organizational challenges, particularly in schools which were expected to provide instruction in accordance with the curriculum.

As for the students’ low reading competency, remarked that students were not aware of value of Thai language learning.” Most of them used local Malay language in daily life and Thai language was used to communicate with only teachers. Finally, it caused social problems because students when entered the wider society, they would suffer communication losses. In terms of teachers’ work overload, and Ministry of Education accepted that teachers in education reform era still had a work overload and the problem needed to be seriously addressed. There should a way be to reduce teacher’s work load so that they can carry out responsibility for their duties effectively (Ministry of Education, 2004). The Office of the Education Council (2004) noted that managing limited budgets in schools was a difficult problem. This result was consistent with Ministry of Education Office (2004) that education reform caused budget limitations. Sometimes, it caused teachers to use their own money to support learning activities in spite of these teachers having economic limitations.

Facing challenges from unrest was a unique phenomenon for educators in Southern border provinces of Thailand. Schools could not provide full education because instruction sometimes must be stopped, causing students’ low
achievement (Jitpiromsri) Scott said that the core of the organization in the schools is instruction. It is a key component of organizational development. Scott explained that instruction was a core technology, so if the core of the organization was affected, it must affect the organization’s growth as well. The findings suggested that educators, especially in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat who worked in the red zone were worried, fearful, lacking morale, encouragement and happiness more than educators working in Songkla and Satun which were in the yellow zone. Jitpiromsri explained that the unrest in Southern border provinces such as ambush and burning schools caused teachers, school administrators and students, to lack a feeling of morale, to the point that finally they decided to move to another place. Therefore, schools became low on staff that had abilities to develop organizations efficiently. Lunenburg and Ornstein said that the atmosphere in schools indicated the potential of schools, because they were open systems. So, a school could not avoid the various problems occurring in the surrounding area. The temporary solution was to try to create a closed system of organization but it was not good for organization because it affected the instructional management. Thus, what schools could do was to try to strengthen people’s health by building reinforcement and motivation for people in the organization.

These things appeared to be obvious, in that the government was trying to motivate people in the organization, especially in the three Southern border provinces, by providing risk bonuses of 2500 Baht/month, getting double retirement age and special privileges as well as increasing morale and encouragement to people in the Southern border provinces. Trying to build organizational atmosphere could help organizations reduce problems of fear, lack of morale and encouragement, but it was not sustainable solution. In Southern Thailand, ensuring safety for teachers, school administrators and personnel was a significant task of school in unrest. The Deep South Watch (2009) reported that the cruel violence in the area continually occurred and the impact
on schools could not be avoided because the dimensions of social problems in the Southern border provinces were complex. Stated that the three southern border provinces were a special area. Problems and social conditions, in the past, created distrust between government officials and people in the Southern border provinces. Unfortunately, when the unrest emerged, schools were confronted with challenges in building relationships, especially between personnel staff in schools and between schools and communities. Therefore, the lack of building relationships among people or creating wide gaps in relationships among the majority of people in the Southern border provinces who were Islamic and the minority who were Buddhists could lead to cultural conflict (Martin, 2002).

Despite educators in Southern border provinces of Thailand encountered various challenges from education reform and unrest; they tried to perform positive characteristics of natural leadership that fitted the events and context of the area.

The educators confronted with the complex tasks and security problems clearly demonstrated their understanding of the situation and awareness of the changing environment. As Arunyawet stated, adaptation in the changing environment is critical. Educators in the education reform era must be patient, tolerant to the barriers and devoted to work. They cannot escape the problems. Ruebling urged that the key to success for educational management was the focus on instruction. The teachers and administrators must demonstrate instructional leadership in terms of knowledge and understanding of curriculum and efficient instructional methods development to enhance students’ achievement levels, which was the primary expectation of parents and communities.

Because of the different cultural context, it is difficult to pinpoint one western “leadership theory” that best describes practices that have emerged in southern Thailand. Coping with the deep conflicts in this area surpasses glib recommendations of western “multicultural education” or “culturally relevant pedagogy,” for example. This situation also goes far beyond the “context of change” Fullan envisioned. Thai cultural and
moral values of responsibility and duty support the persistence and efforts of educators in this context, but understanding of cultural, linguistic and religious differences requires extraordinary effort, particularly when faced with the demand to simultaneously improve achievement scores.

Moreover, longstanding problems on the region are beyond the capacity of schools alone to address. The situation also demands leadership that recognizes the emotional and psychological toll on educators and communities. The context taxes those in leadership preparation at universities in Southern Thailand, such as the one where the lead researchers work, to develop a way to prepare educators for their work. Such adaptations, as well as interventions to support educators in the field, are underway.