Contingency Theories of Leadership: Effectiveness of the College Instructor's Leadership Style

Engr. John Vincent L. Santos
Holy Cross College, Sta. Rosa, N.E., Inc.
j.vince103@gmail.com

Abstract: This research was conducted to determine which leadership style is the most dominant and most effective based on the actual practice of the college instructors and the preference together with the needs of the students. Participants include college students from different year levels and five different major programs of the Holy Cross College. The data gathering method utilized is with the use of a survey form. It consists of 40 questions designed to have insight on the actual and preferred leadership styles, its performance and effects. These extensive questionnaires were administered in order to provide a background on what is the leadership style used by college instructor of Holy Cross College. The leadership styles being analyzed is based from four (4) contingency theories of leadership namely: The Fiedler's Model, Situational Leadership Theory, Path-Goal theory and Leader-member exchange (LMX) Theory. The data was examined in detail for the study, and each question was analyzed to provide better result. Findings established that the effectiveness of leadership style is in direct connection with the leadership style used by college instructors and maturity level of the students. Additionally, other aspects include working environment, current situations, educational platform used and well-being of the students.

Keyword: Contingency Theory, Leadership Style, Classroom Management, Student, College Instruction

INTRODUCTION

The college instructors are tasked with responsibilities on everyday basis. In addition to this task is the management functions including planning, organizing, leading, and monitoring the classroom setup[1]. Leading, one of the management functions, has a direct correlation with the way that an instructor will handle administrative routines such as observations, addressing parental and teacher concerns, handling discipline issues and how they will be an effective person to teach and become a role model for the future professionals[2]. This also raises morale on both sides of the college instructor and student if the persons involved are using an effective style of leadership when situations are unfavorable especially in the middle of a pandemic. Contingency plans are being implemented; thus the college instructor must be able to address the ever changing educational system that and be able implement the effective leadership style in a classroom setup[3].

This research about the contingency theories of leadership focuses to pinpoint its effectiveness when utilized by college instructors as their leadership style. Extensive questionnaires

---

[1] Karl F. Simpson and Fred E. Fiedler, "A Theory of Leadership Effectiveness.," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* (1969).

[2] Susan Isaac, "Teachers' Leadership Styles and Students' Academic Performance in Mathematics Courses" (University of Georgia, 2011).

[3] Gina Smith et al., "Successful Instructional Leadership Styles in Education.," *Journal of Instructional Research* 6 (2017): 46–52.

will be administered in order to provide a background on what is the leadership style used by college instructor of Holy Cross College. The leadership style being analyzed is based from four (4) contingency theories of leadership namely: The Fiedler's Model, Situational Leadership Theory, Path-Goal theory and Leader-member exchange (LMX) Theory.

In the current situation with the ongoing pandemic, leading in education faces a new and significant challenge. Contingency plans are being implemented in the sector of education such as looking and finding better ways to deliver the learning and lessons to the students. For the safety of the students and the community, all in- and off-campus events and activities that will gather students in crowded or enclosed areas and/or will include travel have been restricted.

Distance learning programs are being recommended by government and non-government organizations. It is advised in response to the current educational system in the middle of a pandemic. The instructors and the students are advised to utilized digital technology. New methods of learning are being introduced such as online classes to reach each other distantly and proceed with the academic learning to avoid its disruption.

This have given rise to a new and significant challenge on how the college instructors act as a leader with will his or her members have been away. With this flexible learning alternative mode of education, classes are now conducted through online methods and problems including the following arises:

• What is the most dominant leadership style that college instructors tend to perform in the Holy Cross College based on the contingency theories of leadership?

• What leadership style is considered the best for the students of Holy Cross College in order to become motivated and promoted as an effective leader?

• Does the type of students match the leadership style utilized by the college instructor of Holy Cross College?

• How effective are these leadership styles that college instructors in Holy Cross College used and what are its effect to motivating and promoting effective leadership to students?

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the research conducted on the "Qualitative study on Educational Leadership Styles and Teacher Morale" [4], there is a direct correlation with the leadership and the morale of the persons involved. When appropriately practiced, it will ensure an effective leadership strategy followed by development in character, traits, and other aspects that the member and leaders of an organization should be mindful about. This thing increases morale within the organization and helps develop leaders with potential.

The results from this study implied that professionalism and preparation are signs of an effective school leaders. These characteristics leads to the development and building of a positive personal relationship, academic and professional excellence to those people who are continuously engaged. The students see the leaders as a role model in this way. In addition, effective school leaders also have the same and joined vision with their constituents and students. As this shared vision encourages and demonstrate compassion. This vision is being developed through communication, by having a regular communication with instructors and students, they are

---

[4] Karie Lorraine Hickman, "A Qualitative Study on Educational Leadership Styles and Teacher Morale," *Carson-Newman University* (2017).

becoming more aware of these characteristics.

According to a literature review on the "Effects of Leadership Styles and Student Academic Achievement"[5], there is a direct relation between school leadership and student achievement. This plays a significant role in building the conditions in a school that helps develop instruction and positive relationship between the school and community.

The results of this literature review indicates that there is more that this relationship. As there are many variables associated regarding school leadership, student achievement and school culture, it is difficult to measure its relation quantitatively. Qualitatively speaking, it suggests that there is a relationship between these things. Effective leadership styles lead to leadership that helps the student improve their academic and professional growth. But not just for the students, it also helps improve the school which leads to more school and student achievements[6].

According to the research entitled "The Role of Leadership Style in Creating a Great School"[7], Leadership is critical in creating a school culture in which college instructors are satisfied with their job. Constituents who are led by effective leaders have been known to be more driven, motivated, and find more joy in their work. There is a perception that being motivated and driven by an effective leader result to being happier and thus willing to put greater efforts into work.

One of the most essential leadership traits for the success of an effective leadership is communication[8]. There is an importance in having an open line of communication so that the college instructor and students feel supported. They may also have this notion that their voice is being heard and their opinions matter. Most of the time, the cause of a toxic environment is because there are feelings that cannot be easily expressed such as disappointments and dissatisfaction[9]. This are caused by miscommunication between the instructors, students and other persons involved.

METHODS

Over the years, there are three major questions that are directly related to the effectiveness of being a leader:
•What personality traits differentiate leaders from non-leaders?
• What leadership style is the most effective?
•Which interactions between leadership style and the group situation are effective?

We come to understand that leaders have a strong sense of responsibility, vigor and persistence. Leaders tend to pursue completions in task, goals and originality. They have passion in problem solving, initiative in social situations and self-confidence. Leaders have a personal sense of identity, willingness, readiness, and ability to influence others. They have the capacity to build structured plans and social interaction systems based on their characteristics and traits.

---

[5] James D Rautiola, "Effects of Leadership Styles and Student Academic Achievement," *Unpublished master's thesis). Northern Michigan University, Marquette, MI* (2009).

[6] Paul Hersey and Kenneth H Blanchard, "Situational Leadership," in *Dean's Forum*, vol. 12 (Citeseer, 1997), 5.

[7] Bradley S Smith and Vicki Squires, "The Role of Leadership Style in Creating a Great School," *SELU Research Review Journal* 1, no. 1 (2016): 65–78.

[8] Barid Nizarudin Wajdi, "The Differences Between Management And Leadership," *Sinergi : Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Manajemen* 7, no. 1 (July 21, 2017), accessed October 21, 2017, http://ejournal.unitomo.ac.id/index.php/feb/article/view/31.

[9] Robert J House, "Path-Goal Theory of Leadership: Lessons, Legacy, and a Reformulated Theory," *The leadership quarterly* 7, no. 3 (1996): 323–352.

By recognizing this characteristics and trait of an effective leader, questions have risen and researches are being conducted to determine its relationship with the effects and effectiveness of a leader. The questions include what makes an effective leader. The cluster of research begin with the personality characteristics by comparing autocratic and democratic leadership; initiating and consideration structure' directive and participative leadership; Theory X and Theory Z; production and people-concerned.

This research recognizes and compares two type of leadership to determine which was the most effective. However, this research showed inconsistent results as this are greatly affected by number of variables and situations. Neither of the two leadership styles in the given clusters are hailed as effective because of its inconsistencies.

Fiedler broke through the idea of one single effective leadership style. According to him leadership effectiveness is contingent upon the situation. The interaction between leadership style and situation predicts the effectiveness of leadership behavior. In other words, both types of leadership behavior can be effective, but the situation in which the leader operates determines whether one type of behavior will be more effective than the other. Describing leadership behavior Fiedler introduced the dichotomy 'task oriented' vs. 'relationship oriented'.

A new phase in leadership style research was born. Describing effective leadership behavior which was contingent upon the situation.

The researcher seeks to find the Effectiveness of the College Instructor's Leadership Style in Holy Cross College. This will be done by collecting the data from the questionnaire for the students. And applying a systematic process of data analysis.

The first set of data will be based on the Fiedler Model. The students will be asked if the college instructors have a task-oriented or relation-oriented leadership style. Additionally, they will be asked which of the two-leadership style they prefer based on the Fiedler model.

The second set of data will be based on the Situational Leadership Theory. The students will be asked of their maturity level and the leadership style that the college instructors implement in the classroom setup. The researcher will identify if the maturity level of the student matches the leadership style utilized. Additionally, they will be asked which of the four-leadership style is best suited for their academic and professional growth.

The third set of data will be based from the Path-Goal Theory. The students will be asked which of the four-leadership style the Path-Goal Theory has is being possessed by the college instructors. Additionally, they will be asked which of the four-leadership style they prefer based on the Path-Goal Theory that is necessary in order to become motivated and promoted as an effective leader.

The fourth set of data will be based from the Leader-Member exchange Theory. The students will be asked which of the two groups they belong to. Additionally, the researcher will examine which of the two groups are dominant and if there is a relation with the leadership style that must be utilized.

The fifth set of data will be gathered to provide result on how the college instructor's leadership style are being performed in a classroom Setup.

The final set of data will be gathered to provide result on how effective are these leadership styles on the perspective of the academic and professional growth of the students of Holy Cross College.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The first objective of this research is to determine the most dominant leadership style that college instructors tend to perform in the Holy Cross College based from the contingency theories of leadership.

Table 1 - Actual Leadership Style based on Fiedler Model

Fiedler Model	Responses (Total of 160)
Task-Oriented Leadership Style	84 (52.5%)
Relation-Oriented Leadership Style	76 (47.5%)

Table 2 - Actual Leadership Style based on Situational Leadership Theory

Situational Leadership Theory	Responses (Total of 160)
Telling	57 (35.6%)
Selling	25 (15.6%)
Participating	60 (37.5%)
Delegating	18 (11.3%)

Table 3 - Actual Leadership Style based on Path-Goal Theory

Path-Goal Theory	Responses (Total of 160)
Directive Leadership	40 (25%)
Achievement Oriented	31 (19.4%)
Supportive Leadership	38 (23.7%)
Participative Leadership	51 (31.9%)

In summary, the most dominant leadership style is being task-oriented yet the tasks given are based on the needs and preferences of the students. They were given with the opportunity to be active in participating in the decision making process for the benefit of the class.

The second objective of the research is to determine the most effective leadership style based from what the students of Holy Cross College consider as an effective leader.

Table 4 - Preferred Leadership Style based on Fiedler Model

Fiedler Model	Responses (Total of 160)
Task-Oriented Leadership Style	84 (52.5%)
Relation-Oriented Leadership Style	105 (65.6%)

Table 5 - Preferred Leadership Style based on Situational Leadership Theory

Situational Leadership Theory	Responses (Total of 160)
Telling	42 (26.3%)
Selling	32 (20%)
Participating	78 (48.7%)
Delegating	8 (5%)

Table 6 - Preferred Leadership Style based on Path-Goal Theory.

Path-Goal Theory	Responses (Total of 160)
Directive Leadership	28 (17.5%)
Achievement Oriented	27 (16.9%)
Supportive Leadership	45 (28.1%)
Participative Leadership	60 (37.5%)

In summary, the preferred leadership style of the student to be utilized by college instructors have its focus on their well-being and active participation. They want to have someone to rely to about the procedures and tasks based on their needs and preferences. It shows their willingness to accomplish tasks if their well-being is being put first.

The third objective of the research is to determine if the type of students matches the leadership style utilized by the college instructor of Holy Cross College.

Table 7 - Maturity level of the Students based on Situational Leadership Theory

Situational Leadership Theory	Responses (Total of 160)
Unable and Unwilling	11 (24.4%)
Unable but Willing	39 (24.4%)
Able yet Unwilling	20 (12.5%)
Able and Willing	90 (56.3%)

Table 8 - Characteristic of Two sides students according to LMX theory

Leader Member Exchange Theory	In Group	Unsure	Out Group
Performance Rating	55 (34.4%)	85 (53.1%)	20 (12.5%)
Attention	71 (44.4%)	60 (37.5%)	29 (18.1%)
Treatment	94 (58.8%)	52 (32.5%)	14 (8.8%)

As most of the students perform better, given a considerable amount of attention and being as equal, we can conclude that most of the students are part of the group. It means that they belong to the In-Group of the Leader-member Exchange Theory.

The last objective of the research is to determine the effectiveness of the leadership styles that college instructors in Holy Cross College used and its effect to motivating and promoting effective leadership to students.

Table 9 - Performance and Effects of the College Instructor's Leadership Style

College Instructor's Leadership Style	Positive	College Instructor's Leadership Style	Positive
Performance	105.13 (65.7%)	12.67 (7.9%)	42.2 (26.4%)
Effects	117.47 (73.4%)	35 (21.9%)	7.53 (4.7%)

The characteristics and traits that are being utilized by the college instructors come side by side with the leadership style they use. Which means its effect is in direct connection with the leadership style being performed.

Table 9 shows that more than half of the students experience and observe that their college instructors perform the common duties and responsibilities of becoming an effective leader. Additionally, the number of students who see that their college instructors are not an performing its functions is significantly high rather than those who are not sure. It means that there are situations where certain college instructors fails to be an effective leader.

Regardless, the results show that there is a majority of positive effects of the leadership style on the students. While only few view themselves as not improving or unable. This can also be in connection with the students maturity level. Even though the members doesn't see their leaders performing at all times, they can still improve on their own with enough guidance and direction.

CONCLUSION

Findings established that the effectiveness of leadership style is in direct connection with the leadership style used by college instructors and maturity level of the students. The effectiveness of a leadership style is not solely based from the leader's characteristics and traits itself. Factors such as working environment, member's abilities, needs and preferences, and certain situations are needed to be considered. It is important to identify the best leadership style for the academic and professional growth of the students. As they are the future working force of the organizations.

The most dominant leadership style utilized by the college instructors of Holy Cross College is being a Participative task-oriented leader. But the tasks they give are based on the needs and preferences of the students. They were given with the opportunity to be active in participating in the decision making process for the benefit of the class. Taking structured plans and strategic moves that allow the members to participate in the decision making process gains a great deal of respect. Especially on the side of the students, they tend to be more participative of they know that their feelings and opinions matter. This creates positive environment in the school and classroom setups.

In relation to the actual leadership style being utilized, the student's preference is aligned with the actual practice of leadership by the college instructor. It worth noting that only a little percentage of students want to be delegated with tasks. Delegating type of leadership give only a little attention for its members. They prefer having an active role in the working environment, at the same time they want to have someone to lead them. They know that they cannot do things alone, but they want to have someone who will inspire them, give them motivation and direct them towards the goals and objectives.

In addition to their preference, the characteristics of the students also show that they are

able and willing. It means that they possess that skills, confidence and passion that is necessary to accomplish their works. They are even ready for a delegating leadership style where most of the decisions come from the students themselves, and the college instructors main job is to ensure that there is progress with them. Although the theories dictates that able and willing maturity level matches with a delegating leadership. The members of the organization being considered are students. They still have the need to be guided and directed. It is only logical to think that they prefer being in participation to better harness their skills and leadership, but still needs guidance from their college instructors.

The findings also show that there is a majority of positive effects of the leadership style on the students. While only few view themselves as not improving or unable. This can also be in connection with the students maturity level. Even though the members doesn't see their leaders performing at all times, they can still improve on their own with enough guidance and direction.

As a conclusion, the effectiveness of the leadership style being utilized in Holy Cross College is in positive relation with the preference and needs of the students. Educational systems are much more effective when leaders are viewed as being personable and relationship oriented.

REFERENCES

Hersey, Paul, and Kenneth H Blanchard. "Situational Leadership." In *Dean's Forum*, 12:5. Citeseer, 1997.

Hickman, Karie Lorraine. "A Qualitative Study on Educational Leadership Styles and Teacher Morale." *Carson-Newman University* (2017).

House, Robert J. "Path-Goal Theory of Leadership: Lessons, Legacy, and a Reformulated Theory." *The leadership quarterly* 7, no. 3 (1996): 323–352.

Isaac, Susan. "Teachers' Leadership Styles and Students' Academic Performance in Mathematics Courses." University of Georgia, 2011.

Rautiola, James D. "Effects of Leadership Styles and Student Academic Achievement." *Unpublished master's thesis). Northern Michigan University, Marquette, MI* (2009).

Simpson, Karl F., and Fred E. Fiedler. "A Theory of Leadership Effectiveness." *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* (1969).

Smith, Bradley S, and Vicki Squires. "The Role of Leadership Style in Creating a Great School." *SELU Research Review Journal* 1, no. 1 (2016): 65–78.

Smith, Gina, Maria Minor, Henry Brashen, and Kristie Remaly. "Successful Instructional Leadership Styles in Education." *Journal of Instructional Research* 6 (2017): 46–52.

Wajdi, Barid Nizarudin. "The Differences Between Management And Leadership." *Sinergi : Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Manajemen* 7, no. 1 (July 21, 2017). Accessed October 21, 2017. http://ejournal.unitomo.ac.id/index.php/feb/article/view/31.