

**THE RELATIONSHIP OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTION
TOWARDS LEADERSHIP CAPACITY AND THEIR
DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AT MON NATIONAL MIDDLE
SCHOOLS, IN YE TOWNSHIP, MON STATE, MYANMAR**

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Abstract: The main purpose of this study was to determine the relationships of teachers' perception towards leadership capacity and their demographic factors: age, education background, work experience, and training experience at Mon National Schools, Ye Township, Mon State, Myanmar. A total of 90 teachers from eight Mon National Middle Schools in the same state and the same township were surveyed for this study. The main source of the data was questionnaires that investigated teachers' demographic factors including age, education background, work experience, and training experience, and leadership capacities. The collected data were analyzed by using the Descriptive Statistics, Frequency, Percentage, Standard Deviation, Mean, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The study found that teachers' leadership capacities from eight middle schools were perceived as "good enough" in their schools. On the other hand, the correlation analysis found that there were no relationships between teachers' perceived leadership capacities and teachers' demographic factors including age, education background, and training experience. However, there was a positive relationship between leadership capacities and teachers' work experience at Mon National Middle School, Mon State, Myanmar. In order for the schools to become more sustainable, administrators from 8 Mon National Middle Schools are recommended to innovate, develop, and create more opportunities for all teachers to share ideas, to control teacher stability and other uncompleted situations. It could be a valuable research other researcher can conduct the similar research in other organizations and countries, and can also conduct the research on the relationship between leadership capacity and sustained high level of student achievement.

Keywords: Demographic factors (age, educational background, works experience, and training experience), Mon National School, Leadership Capacity Intense Focus on Vision, Reflection and innovation, Share Governance, Monitors and Responds to Student Achievement.

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Introduction

Just as organizations need good leaders, schools need good teachers with strong capacities for developing the school sustainability. In Thailand, the most beloved King Bhumibol has developed a Philosophy of “Sufficiency Economy” for the Thai Nation, which gradually formed a concept of sustainability in every field as well as in the educational field. In order to improve the school’s sustainability, every school needs a certain number of skillful teachers working as the leaders for their most time of work. They should be able to not only understand the shared vision and commitment, but also good at teaching and managing in the school. This kind of capacity is called teacher’s leadership capacity. Teachers or leaders should need to be responsible to the essential work of school, they need to attend the school activities actively and also need to be a sympathetic expert in what they are involve in.

Harris & Lambert (2003) mentioned that the school would lose the school goal and objects if only depending on one leader (the principal), a few teachers or only some people in school. Lambert also pointed out that if schools want to be developed or sustained, every people or teacher should be a leader and involve in school functions to develop a strong capacity for working at that school.

In Myanmar, there are many ethnic groups. Every ethnic group has their own sustainability policy. In the education field, there are so many kinds of schools set up in Myanmar such as private school, ethnics’ school, monastics’ school, and government school. According to the Myanmar government recognition on Myanmar ethnic groups, Mon is the one of the main ethnic groups with a population of eight million (Unrepresented nation and People Organization, UNPO, 2008) in Myanmar. In fact, Mon people owned the language before it became the Burmese Language. The Burmese Language was adopted from Mon Language Hla (2011). Till now, Mon people have had their own language, culture, literature, basic education system, and so on. In addition, they live in different parts of Myanmar but the largest population lives in Mon State.

Mon People has own history, language, governance, education policy, and so on without depending on the government. They develop their Mon National Education Committee called Mon National School. Mon National School is a non-profit school that is based in the community so it is called Mon public school. Therefore it is named a National School (MNS) which is under the control and management of Mon National Educational Committee (MNEC). The MNS has its own education system and curriculum from pre-school (Kindergarten) to middle school (grade 9) but in order to join the university, two higher education grade 10 and grade 11 are using government curriculum.

According to Mon National Education Presentation Report Mi Sar Dar (2011), Mon National Education is located in four different districts within different townships in Mon State and Karen State, such as (1) Tavoy District include; Taik Bu Township, Ye South and Ye North township, (2) Moulmein District include; Thanbyuzayat Township, Mudon Township, and Hlardakot Township, (3) Sa-ton District include; Moulmein, Kawkarate Township, Kyaikmaraw Township, and (4) Resettlement Site (where people moved from military as refugee) include; Bee Ree,

Tavoy and Hlockhane (Thail-Burma Border). In this study, the researcher planned to explore the relationship of teachers' perception toward teachers' leadership capacity with their demographic factors from all Mon National Middle School, in Ye North Township, Mon State, Myanmar.

Objectives

There are three objectives:

1. To survey the teachers' demographics including: age, education background, work experience, and training experience in Mon National School, Mon State, Myanmar.
2. To determine teachers' perceptions towards leadership capacities at Mon National School, Mon State, Myanmar.
3. To determine the relationships of teachers' perception towards leadership capacity and their demographic factors: age, education background, work experience, and training experience at Mon National School, Ye Township, Mon State, Myanmar.

Literature Review

This study was conducted upon the Lambert's (2003) High Leadership Capacity Theory.

In Lambert's (2003) High Leadership Capacity Theory, the high leadership capacity was composed of at least four characteristics in order to achieve school improvement. They include intense focus on vision, reflection and innovation, shared governance, and monitors and responds to students' achievement.

These four elements of leadership capacity were mainly related to the school building high leadership capacity through school improvement and school sustainably. Lambert (2003) mentioned, these four characteristics of high leadership capacity are closely related to success of the school sustainably and school improvement. And these four characteristics were the main elements of leadership dispositions, knowledge and skills needed to build leadership capacity in school and in organizations.

Regarding intense focus on vision it needs to improve teachers' abilities and to make a school effective with high leadership capacity, every teacher who is involved in leadership should engage with other teachers in teaching and learning cycle as reflect to each other through dialogue, share purposes, and develop school jointly. And also they must keep their schools alive by reviewing the school regularly.

Then, high leadership capacity needs reflection and innovation in order to make school achieve high capacity. It is important for all members to ensure that everybody is in the cycle of inquiry or involved in the reflection process. And also they need to make sure that everybody performs and is being encouraged into the group initiative process. Moreover, every teacher or member should be involved in collaborative innovation.

Meanwhile, school will be improved if the teachers are effective in share governance. Share governance includes participation and integrated innovation in

the process of decision making. On the other hand, teachers and all members develop their relationship to find new strategies to new thing for improving schools.

High leadership capacity should include monitors and responds to student achievement. Student achievement is the most measurable of the school improvement and school sustainable. To achieve the mission of the school, every teacher should be good in lesson planning, teaching, coaching, and assessing. Then all teachers and members should provide and receive both positive and negative feedback to and from coaches and to and from students' parents. Thus, the school enables to improve and sustain.

Therefore, based on these four characteristics, this researcher conducted the research based upon Lambert's (2003) high leadership capacity theory and her questionnaire. The researcher expected to find teachers' real perception towards leadership capacity, which may contribute to the school improvement and sustainability in Mon National Schools to some degree.

Conceptual Framework

This research mainly aimed to explore the relationship of teachers' perception towards leadership capacity with their demographic factors from eight Mon Middle Schools in Ye Township, Mon State, in Myanmar.

Figure 1 below shows the conceptual framework of this study. On the left side were teachers' demographic factors including age, education background, work experience, and training experience; on the right side the variable was teachers' leadership capacities, which included 4 key components: intense focus on vision, reflection and innovation, share governance, and monitors and responds to student achievement.

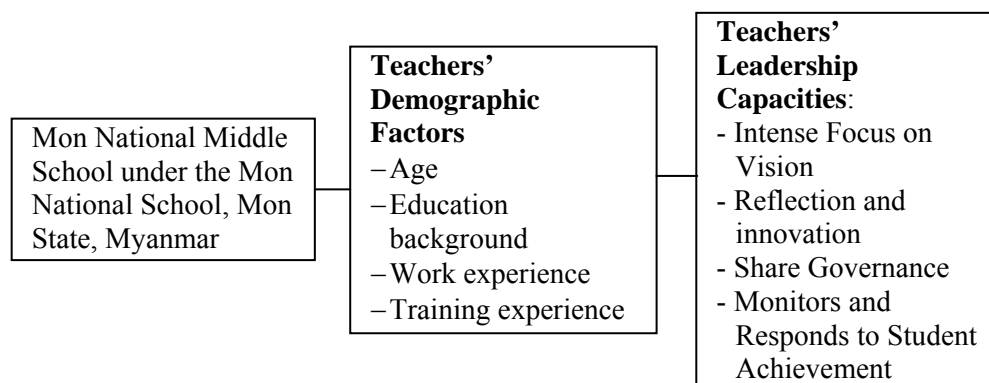


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of The Study

Method/Procedure

The purposes of this study were to determine the relationship of teachers' perception toward leadership capacities and their demographic factors including age, education background, work experiences, and training experiences in Mon National Middle Schools, under the Mon National School, in Ye Township Mon State, Myanmar.

This research was a quantitative and relationship study, which used the Lambert's (2003) High Leadership Capacity Questionnaire as the major research instrument for data collection. The researcher used descriptive statistics and correlation method to find the demographic factors, and determine the relationships of teachers' perception towards leadership capacity in all eight Mon National Schools. The questionnaires were divided into two parts: Part (I) teachers' demographic including their ages, education backgrounds, work experiences, and training experiences; and Part (II) teachers' perception toward leadership capacity in all eight Mon National Schools. The participants were all 90 teachers from Eight Mon National Middle Schools, Ye Township, Mon State, Myanmar.

To conduct this study, first, the researcher requested the permission from in-charge of Mon National Education Committee (MNEC). After getting a permission letter, the researcher and a relative who drove motorbikes for researcher distributed questionnaires through Eight Mon National Middle Schools. The researcher started distributed questionnaires in the second week of June, 2014 and finished on 24, June, 2014.

Findings/Results

Research Objective One: Research objective one was to survey the teachers' demographics including: teachers' ages, education background, work experience, and training experience in Mon National School, Mon State, Myanmar.

The results showed 71.1% of teachers were in the age between 18 – 19 years old, 27.8% of teachers were between age 30 – 39 years old, only 1.1% of teacher (1 teacher) belonged to the ages between 40 – 49, and there is no teacher whose age was between 50 to above years old. Out of 90 teachers, 36 which were 40% of teachers finished high school, 15 teachers which were 16.7% were in the process of studying distance university, 39 which were 43.3% teachers were graduated with bachelor degree, and no teacher had the master degree holding. From total 90 teachers, 43 which were 47.8% teachers had 1 to 3 years work experiences, 23 which were 25.6% of teachers had 4 to 6 years work experiences, only 8 which were 8.9% teachers had 7 to 9 years work experiences, and 16 which is 17.8% of teachers had 10 and above year work experiences. Out of 90 teachers, there are 24 (26.7%) teachers were no training experience, 33.3% of 30 teachers were received only Child Center Approach (CCA) or Reading, Writing for Critical Thinking training, which it means these teachers were had only one training experience, 24 (26.7) teachers were had both CCA and RWCT training experiences, and only 12 (13.3%) of teachers were had both CCA, RWCT and other training; such as head master/ mistress training, child friendly school training.

(See Table 1 on the next page)

For research objective 2: Mean and Standard deviations were used to determine teachers' perception toward leadership capacities at Mon National Middle School, Mon State, Myanmar. As table 2 shown regarding to four construct questionnaire: construct 1- intense focus on vision questions included number 1 to 6, construct 2- reflection and innovation questions included number 7 to 11, construct 3- share governance questions included number 12 to 14, and construct 4- monitors and

responds to student achievement questions included number 15 to 17. The total means score of leadership capacity on intense focus on vision were 3.23, in the means of leadership capacity on reflection and innovation were 2.89, in the mean of leadership capacity on share governance were 2.53, and in the means score of leadership capacity on monitors and respond to students' achievement were 3.05. All in all those four components leadership capacities means scores were in the range of 2.51 – 3.50.

Table 1: Number and Percentage of Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

demographics		Number	Percentage
Age	18 – 29 years old	64	71.1
	30 – 39 years old	25	27.8
	40 – 49 years old	1	1.1
	50 and above years old	0	0
	Total	90	100
Education Background	High School	36	40.0
	Distance University Student	15	16.7
	Bachelor Degree	39	43.3
	Master Degree	0	0
	Total	90	100
Work Experiences	1 – 3 years' experience	43	47.8
	4 – 6 years' experience	23	25.6
	7 – 9 years' experience	8	8.9
	10 years and above experience	16	17.8
	Total	90	100
Training Experiences	No Training	24	26.7
	Only CCA or RWCT	30	33.3
	Both CCA and RWCT	24	26.7
	Both and Others Include	12	13.3
	Total	90	100

Table 2: Teachers' Perception toward Leadership Capacity at Mon National Middle Schools

Leadership Capacities	N	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
1. intense focus on vision	90	3.23		Good enough
2. Reflection and innovation	90	2.89	0.58618	Good enough
3. Share governance	90	2.53		Good enough
4. Monitors and responds to student achievement	90	3.05	0.64867	Good enough
Total	90	2.92	0.49838	Good enough

For research objective 3: Correlation were used was to determine the relationship of teachers' perception toward leadership capacity with their demographic factors including age, education background, work experience, and training experience at Mon National Middle School, Ye Township, Mon State, Myanmar. The table 3 shown the correlation significant value between leadership capacity and age group were 0.229, the significant value between leadership capacity and education background was 0.186, and the correlation significant value between leadership capacity and training experience was 0.622, which meant that the significant value of age, education background, and training experience were bigger than 0.05; therefore, there were no significant relationships between teachers' perceived leadership capacity and their age, education background, and training experience.

Meanwhile, since the correlation significant of work experience was 0.243 and significant value is 0.021, which is smaller than 0.05. Therefore, there is a positive significant relationship between leadership capacity and teacher work experiences, in Mon National Middle Schools.

Table 3: Correlation between Teacher Demographics and Leadership Capacity

Demographics		Leadership Capacity
Ages	Pearson Correlation	0.128
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.229
	N	90
Education background	Pearson Correlation	0.141
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.186
	N	90
Work experience	Pearson Correlation	0.243
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.021
	N	90
Training experience	Pearson Correlation	0.053
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.622
	N	90

*p < 0.05

Discussion

1. Demographic factors of Teachers

Age: According to population pyramid of Myanmar. In every school, start form primary followed by middle to high schools, most teachers would be female and young. Similarly, most teachers in eight Mon National Middle School were young. Teachers' age were starting from 18 – 29, followed by 30 – 39, then 40 – 49, and 50 and above years old. However, there was completely no teachers at age 50 and above and also very few only (1.1%) teachers in age 40 – 49 years old showed in Mon National Middle, Mon State. The majority of teachers' age between 18 and 29 was 46 out of 90.

Therefore it could be assumed that the school and teaching environment were very active and effective. As the schools were filled with young teachers, its potential would grow faster and it would bring the high achievement to teaching environment and schools develop. On the other hand, there would be more perfect and develop to schools if the Mon National Education Committee (MNEC) provided good training, teaching and learning excavation to young teachers because young teachers are active, creative, and first learning person.

2) Education Background: In this study, the research found out that more than one third of teachers were holding bachelor degree, followed by teachers who finished high school, then teachers who were in the process of studying Distance University. But there was no teacher who was holding master degree in Mon National School. The highest education level of teachers from eight Mon Middle Schools was bachelor degree. However, 36 (40%) out of 90 teachers were only finished high school.

Therefore, the research finding revealed that Mon National Education Committee (MNEC) needs to create more opportunities for learning environment for those teachers, such as vocational training, livelihood training, needed to join them to other high school level program (like GED, Post-Ten), technical training and so on. Moreover, Mon National Education Committee (MNEC) also should provide more opportunities for all low education background teachers to be skillful and be more committed to their work and focus on life- long learning and teaching more effectively. On the other hand, since there were no teacher who was holding master degree, Mon National Education Committee (MNEC) should create opportunities for all teachers to be able to develop and enhance their academic level into higher education such as master degree.

3) Work Experience: According to the findings, this study found that most teachers 43(47.8%) had 1 – 3 year work experience, followed by 4 – 6 year work experience 23 (25.6%), then 10 years work experience (17.8%), and the least was 7 – 9 (8.9%) years of work experience. Therefore, according to this study finding, it could be assumed that schools were with many new recruited teachers who lacked work experience.

In this case, on the other hand, Mon National Education Committee (MNEC) should provide more leadership capacity training to keep teacher stable and put more effort on their work. On the other hand, all teachers from eight Mon National Middle Schools were not only needed to learn and gain more experience form their particular fields, but also they would need to have more work experience in order to improve and enhance both their personal skills, in teaching and learning skills.

4) Training Experience: The study also found that most teachers (33.7%) from eight Mon National Middle Schools had one training experience which was Child Center Approach (CCA) or Reading Writing for Critical Thinking (RWCT) training, followed by teachers (26.7%) had both CCA and RWCT trainings, then as similar (26.7%) teachers had no training experience, and then (13.3%) teachers had more than two training (CCA, RWCT, and other trainings).

According to the results, every teacher should have at least one training in order to teach more effectively and to treat or behave more professionally to

students. Besides, if teachers had more training experience, they would become more mature in teaching, they also had more self confidence in teaching, self-development in order to work with group and participate well in sharing ideas or information with other teachers. That might lead to high teacher leadership capacity, at least to improve the teachers' qualification and learning experiences as well.

2. Perception of teachers on leadership capacity

According to this study, it found that teachers from all eight Mon National Middle Schools perceived the leadership capacities with a total average mean scores of (2.9236), which was in the range of 2.51 – 3.50 and it was interpreted as “good enough” for their perceived leadership capacity in general.

Moreover, regarding teachers perceived separately in four components of leadership capacities, the mean score of teachers perception of intense focus on vision was 3.23, teachers perception on reflection and innovation was 2.89, then the mean score of teachers' perception on share governance was 2.53, and while teachers' perception on monitor and respond to student achievement was 3.05, which all mean scores expressed as high but it was interpreted good enough leadership capacities in all eight schools.

In dealing with each question item scores, it was found that teachers perceived very low in question item 4, 7, 9, 12, 13, and 14 in their school. But they perceived strong or they represent exemplary in their school in question item 11, 15, 16, and 17, the rest questions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, and 10 are good enough, meant that they were doing well or in the process of keep going leadership capacity in their schools. So there were still some processes needed for the school teachers to improve their leadership capacity though generally this study indicated that teachers' leadership capacities in Mon National Schools were “good enough”.

Pierce (2007) who did a study on A Determination of the Reliability and construct Validity of the Leadership Capacity School Survey, mentioned that primary school teachers perceived more positive or high leadership capacities than teachers from secondary school teachers, in fact, teachers from secondary school perceived high leadership capacities than high school teacher did.

Hang (2011) conducted the study of Teachers' Perception of Their Principals' leadership Capacities. The finding of this study found that teachers who had higher education perceived higher significant leadership capacities than teachers' who had low education level. And also longer work experience teachers perceived higher significant leadership capacities than shorter work experience teachers.

Therefore, in general, teachers form Mon National School perceived “good enough” leadership capacities though most of them were short work experience between 1 – 3 year experiences.

3. Relationship between teachers' demographic factors and leadership capacity

In this study, the researcher tried to identify the relationship of teachers' perception toward leadership capacities and their demographic factors including age, education background, work experience, and training experience. The testing of research hypothesis result showed that the probability significant of relationship between leadership capacity and age significant was 0.229, the relationship between

leadership capacity and teachers' educational background was 0.186, and the relationship between leadership capacity and teacher training experience significant was 0.622; all three significant value were bigger than 0.05. Therefore, the research hypotheses were rejected and that meant there were no relationships between teachers' perceived leadership capacities and teachers' demographic factors of age, education background, and training experience. However, the study found that there was a positive significance between teachers' leadership capacities and teachers' demographic of work experience with significant value 0.021, it was smaller than .05 significant value.

Hang (2011) conducted the study of "Teachers' Perception of Their Principals' leadership Capacities". This study found that teachers who had a higher level of education perceived higher significant leadership capacities than teachers who had a low level of education. In addition, teachers who had longer work experience perceived higher significant leadership capacities than teachers with shorter work experience.

Although this study found that there were no relationships between leadership capacities and teachers' demographics of age, education background, and training experience; a positive relationship between leadership capacities and teachers' demographic of work experience was found Mon National School, Mon State, Myanmar. It confirmed Hang's (2011) findings that teachers with longer work experience perceived higher significant leadership capacities than teachers with shorter work experience.

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