

**A COMPERATIVE STUDY OF THE
TEACHING VOLUNTEERS' PERCEPTIONS
TOWARD LEADERSHIP STYLES AND
ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AT SHANAN
EDUCATION NETWORKING GROUP (SENG),
NORTHERN SHAN STATE, MYANMAR**

L. Zau Dim¹

Yan Ye²

Abstract: The purpose of this study was to compare the teaching volunteers' perceptions toward leadership styles and organizational cultures in SHANAN Education Networking Group (SENG), Northern Shan State, Myanmar. The study focused on teaching volunteers from the five (5) selected community-based education centers in Northern Shan State, under the SHANAN Education Networking Group, Myanmar. The sample was composed of eighty-five (85) teaching volunteers in SENG. The main source of the data was a set of questionnaire that covers teaching volunteers' demographics, leadership styles and organizational culture. The collected data were analyzed by using the descriptive statistics, Frequency percentage, Standard deviation Mean, and One-way ANOVA. The study found that Democratic leadership style was the most perceived leadership style of teaching volunteers at SHANAN Education Networking Group, Northern Shan State, Myanmar. The teaching volunteers' perceptions toward Organizational culture were at "Positive level," which means that they were positive perceptions towards the Organizational culture of SHANAN Education Networking Group, Myanmar. The research found there was no significance difference between teaching volunteers' leadership styles and their perceptions toward organizational culture. No matter what leadership styles teaching volunteers were used, their perceptions toward organizational culture were the same.

Keywords: Teaching Volunteer's leadership styles, leadership, Organizational culture, Community Based School, Myanmar.

Introduction

Nowadays, leadership becomes everyone's business for many reasons. One of the reasons is that people are aware of how it is important leading or leadership is in this global age. The effectiveness of leadership can shape or determine of their respective nation,

organization, society, community, and school even their family. In addition to this, people have learnt and understood the effectiveness of the good and bad leaders from the past. Therefore, leadership is taking a very important role in every nations, societies, communities, organization, and schools. Leadership can be referred as the image as well as the power which may change people, and transform potential into reality. Leadership is the vital act which brings to success all of the potential that is in an organization and its people. It will be meaningless to put someone who cannot influence in the place of leadership. We as human beings might face the same problem under the same sun, but the way our leaders solve these problems might be different. Thus, leadership is not only a major way in which people change the minds of other and move organizations forward to accomplish identified goals, but also leadership is the key factor that drive every organization to success or to be accepted by the community (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). It is true that we, as human being are socially come together to carry out various activities, since we do know that there are so many things that we cannot do alone without the help of other people. Therefore, making an organization to success, the people or members of the organization will be still the key factors to make it happened.

Objectives

1. To survey the demographics of teaching volunteers at SHANAN Education Networking Group, Northern Shan State, Myanmar including gender, age, year of working experience, and educational level.
2. To identify leadership styles of teaching volunteers at SHANAN Education Networking Group, Northern Shan State, Myanmar.
3. To identify the teaching volunteers' perceptions of the organizational culture of SHANAN Education Networking Group, Northern Shan State, Myanmar.
4. To compare teaching volunteer's perceptions toward an organizational culture in SHANAN Education Networking Group, Northern Shan State, Myanmar based upon their leadership styles.

Literature Review

What is Leadership and what is the significant difference between leadership and leaders? The answer is that a leader is a person who leads or serve, but the leadership is the behavior; attitude; and attribute of the leader.

On the other hands, it has been argued that leaders are born, but they are not made. However history has

¹ M.Ed. Candidate in Educational Administration, Graduate School of Education, Assumption University, Thailand
zaudimshanan@gmail.com

² Ph.D., Director of Educational Research, Statistics and Measurement Center, Graduate School of Education, Assumption University, Thailand

been a testimony to the fact that several leaders have shown extraordinary leadership capability in later parts of their life (e.g. Abraham Lincoln - the 16th President of the United States, 1809-1865). According to the statement of Henman (2012), there were several different views upon leadership; Plato believed that only particular selected person with greater wisdom should be leaders. Aristotle argued that from the moment of their birth, some are marked dominated and other for command. St. Paul said only those deemed worthy through the divine blessing could truly lead. Some others believed that God is the one who chose leaders through royal or noble birth, and since indeed these men did secure positions of power, the theory seemed credible. These historical perspectives continued to influence thinking throughout the centuries. (Henman, 2012). Thus, leadership can not only transform potential into reality, but leadership is the ultimate act which bring to success all of the potential that is in an organization and its people. Leaders propose new paradigms when old ones lost their effectiveness (Kouzes, Posner 2007).

Why Focus on Leadership Styles

The style of an organization's leadership is reflected in both the nature of that organization and its relationships with the community. Very few leaders understand the full significance of how influential their leadership style is about the performance and satisfaction of their employees. Leaders control both interpersonal and material rewards and punishments that often shape employee behavior and influence an employee's performance, motivation, and attitude. They can affect an employee's self-image and resulting potential in either a positive or negative way by being supportive, fair, and encouraging, or unsupportive, inconsistent, and critical. In addition, they can even affect an employee's health and energy level by creating a stimulating work climate or one filled with tension and fear. However, the potential consequences of a leader's style should be understood and not be underestimated (Warrick, 1981).

Styles of Leadership Used in This Study

An autocratic leader places a low emphasis on people (human capital) and a high emphasis on performance. Moreover, it should be understood that you are the boss and make the decisions, that your only purpose is to make as many trademarks as possible, and that you will not tolerate disobedience. In the leadership exercise, you should begin by making clear the above ground rules and be telling people exactly what you want each of them to do. You should closely supervise and control each employee, push them to work harder, and make them redo anything that you don't like. Your main purpose as a leader is to push for performance and

maintain your authority (Warrick, 1981). The downside is that most people resent being treated this way. Therefore, autocratic leadership often leads to high levels of absenteeism and high staff turnover. However, the style can be effective for some routine and unskilled jobs; in these situations, the advantages of control may outweigh the disadvantages.

A democratic leader places a high emphasis on both people and performance. They are genuinely interested in their people but also expect a high level of performance in terms of both quality and quantity. They approach the management as a professional and take time to establish clear objectives, define responsibilities, and provide the necessary leadership, planning, organizing, controlling and communicating, motivating, and developing to reach a high level of both productivity and satisfaction. This style is important when team agreement matters, but it can be difficult to manage when there are lots of different perspectives and ideas. However, there are some strong points in using democratic leadership style. Democratic leadership can lead to better ideas and more creative solutions to problems. Cherry, K (2008) found about the democratic leadership is that although democratic leadership can be described as the most effective leadership styles, however it does have some potential downsides. In some cases, group members may not have the necessary knowledge or expertise to make quality contributions to the decision-making process. On the other hand, democratic leadership works best in situations where group members are skilled and eager to share their knowledge.

Laissez-faire Leadership: The term "laissez-faire" is originally coming from a French phrase meaning "Leave it be." This kind of leadership style can be describing a leader who leaves his or her colleagues often alone to get on with their work. It can be taking accord as an effective style when a team is generally made up of the individuals who are very experienced, intrinsically motivated and skilled self-starters, where the leader monitors what is being achieved and communicated those achievements back to the team on a regular source (Manktelow, 2009, 2011). Thus, laissez-faire leaders don't interfere; they allow people within the team to make many of the decisions. This works well when the team is highly capable, is motivated, and doesn't need close supervision. However, this behavior can arise because the leader is lazy or distracted. This is where the approach can fail (Henman, 2008).

What is Organizational Culture?

Organizational culture is made up by the specific collection of values and norms that are shared by people and groups in an organization and that control the way they interact with each other and with

stakeholder outside the organization. Thus, organizational values may consider as beliefs and ideas about what kinds of goals members of an organization should pursue and ideas about the appropriate standards of behavior organizational members should be applied to achieve the goals. Through organizational values, it develops organizational norms, guidelines or expectations which recommend suitable kinds of behavior in particular situations and which control the behavior of organizational members towards one another (Jones, 2001). Thus, most importantly, understanding the cultural forces enables us to understand ourselves better. Culture, therefore is a key factor not only in achieving organizational goals, but in attracting and keeping desirable employees, creating a positive public image, and building respectful relationships with stakeholders.

What is Organizational Theory?

Organizational theory has also become increasingly diverse during the past two decades, in terms of the perspectives that organization theorists use to study these important social phenomena which affect so many aspects of our lives. Organizational theory is the study of how organizations function and how they influence and are exaggerated by the environment in which they operate. Why do we study organizational theory? The reason is organizations impact on so many aspects of our daily lives. Thus organization theory is important in two key respects. Firstly, organization theory helps us to reflect upon and understand who we are and why we are who we are. Secondly, organization theory is actually all about us and how we interact with others during our encounters in a vast array of different, often untruthfully ordinary and mundane, social contexts that we take for granted because we are not able to see or imagine any further to how things appear to be (McCauley, Duberley, & Johnson, 2007). Thus, knowing and understanding organizational theory will help us to diagnose problems, and utilizing the process of organizational design and make all necessary adjustments that help the organization to achieve its goals (Jones, 2001).

The Concept of Organizational Culture

The culture of an organization is included all the

beliefs, feeling, behaviors, and symbols that are characteristic of an organization. In addition to shared values and norms that are controlled organizational members' interactions with one another inside the organization and with suppliers, customers from outside the organization. Therefore, an organization's culture is shaped by the people inside the organization, as a result of the ethics of the organization, employment rights given to employees, and by what type of structure used by the organization (Jones, 2001). Moreover, cultural forces are powerful because they operate outside of our awareness. Therefore, we need to understand them not only because of their power but also because they help to explain many of our confusing and frustrating experiences in social and organizational life. Most importantly, understanding the cultural forces enables us to understand ourselves better (Schein, 2010).

How is the culture created?

Culture is a very important key factor not only in achieving organizational goals, but in attracting and keeping desirable employees, creating a positive public image, and building respectful relationship with stakeholders. Therefore, culture is important because it shapes;

- What the organization considers to be "right decisions"
- What employees consider being appropriate behavior and how they interact with each other with the organization?
- How individuals, work groups and the organization as a whole deal with the work assigned to them
- The speed and effectiveness with which things get done
- The organization's capacity for and receptiveness to change
- The attitudes of outside stakeholders in the organization

Thus, an organization's culture can be supportive of or hinder the implementation of new initiatives and the achievement of its overall goals. (Desson & Clouthier, 2010)

Conceptual Framework

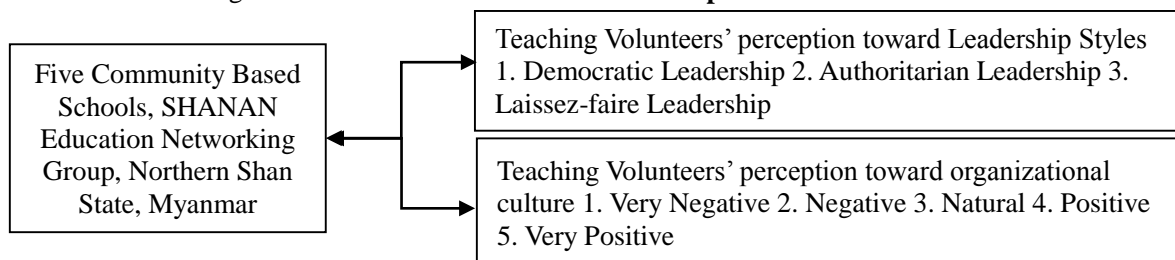


Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework of This Study

Method/Procedure

This study was a comparative study and aimed to identify and compare between the different perception toward leadership styles and organizational culture of teaching volunteers in SHANAN Education Networking Group (SENG), Myanmar. The research was used teaching volunteers in SHANAN Education Networking Group (SENG), Myanmar as the sample. The researcher used a questionnaire combined with three categories (1) Demographic Data, (2) perceptions of Leadership Styles – (i) Democratic Leadership style (ii) Autocratic Leadership Style (iii) Laissez-fair Leadership, (3) and perceptions of Organizational Culture, and the questionnaires were designed to examine teaching volunteers' perceptions of Leadership styles and Organizational culture in SHANAN Education Networking Group (SENG), Myanmar. The researcher adopted the questionnaires from the previous and reliable scholars. The SHANAN Education Networking Group is compromised with fifteen (15) community based education centers parts of Kachin State, Northern Shan State, Mandalay Division, and Sagai Division, Myanmar. But, the study was conducted in five community-based education centers under SENG in Northern Shan State, because these five education centers were located in one state. Those five (5) centers are:

1. Dima Education Center
2. Bumsumshi Education Center
3. Lashio Education Center
4. Ye Won Education Center
5. St. Matthew Orphanage Center

The total number of participants for this study was 85 teaching volunteers. The number of teaching volunteers from the Dima Education Center would be 10 teaching volunteers, the Bumsumshi Education Center would be 8, Ye Won Education was 7, Lashio Education Center was 10, and St. Matthew's Orphanage Center was 50.

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data obtained and scoring of the instruments used. Frequency percentage was used to survey the teaching volunteers' demographic including age, gender, years of working experience, and education level, and to identify the difference leadership styles of teaching volunteers at the SHANAN Education Networking Group (SENG), Myanmar. Thus, means standard deviation was used to identify the organizational culture of SENG. One way ANOVA was used to compare teaching volunteers' perception toward Leadership Styles and organizational culture in SENG based upon their leadership styles.

Findings/Results

Objective One

There were more female 61.5% than male 38.5% in SHANAN Education Networking Group (SENG), Northern Shan State, Myanmar. The mode percentage of teachers' age was 16-29 years (50.8%), 35.4% of teaching volunteers were between 30-49, 12.3% were between 50-64 and only 1.5% was above 64 years in SHANAN Education Networking Group (SENG), Myanmar. Regarding educational background, 53.8% of teaching volunteers were holding Bachelor's Degree, 18.5% of teaching volunteers were completed High School or Equivalent and waiting for enrolment to an university, 10.8% of teaching volunteers were holding Professional Degree (e.g. M.B.B.S/ L.L. B/ M.Div.), 10.8% of teaching volunteers were holding Master's Degree. Working experience: 9, 23.4% of teaching volunteers had 1-2 years working experience, 20.3 of teaching volunteers had under 1 years working experience, 20.3% of teaching volunteers had more than 8 years of working experience, 17.2% of teaching volunteers had 3-4 years of working experience, 10.9% of teaching volunteers had 5-6 years working experience, and 7.8% of teaching volunteers had 7-8 years working experience.

Objective Two

Among 65 respondents there were 6 respondents (9.20%) got same scores for both authoritarian and democratic leadership style. According to the EFFCT direction on interpretation, the researcher determined that 6 respondents were being in transition period. Most of respondents (76.90%) had practiced democratic leadership styles except the 6 in transition. There were very few autocratic teaching volunteers (7.70%) and laissez-faire teaching volunteers (6.20%) in SHANAN Education Networking Group (SENG), Northern Shan State, Myanmar.

Objective Three

The overall responses regarding their perceptions toward organizational culture of SHANAN Education Networking Group, Northern Shan State, Myanmar was rated at "Positive." Since the mean for total is 3.8351 in the range of 3.50-4.49. This implied that they viewed organizational culture at SENG was as positive, especially regarding their perceptions toward Organizational culture.

Objective Four

There were no significant differences between the means of teaching volunteers' perceptions toward organizational culture according to their leadership styles.

Discussion

The study tried to identify the demographics of teaching volunteers, teaching volunteers' perception toward leadership styles according to their demographics profiles, different perception of organizational culture at SENG, and to compare teaching volunteer's perception toward an organizational culture in SENG according to their leadership styles.

Gender: The study showed that teaching volunteers in SENG's community based education center(s) were generally more female (61.5%) than male (38.5%). Therefore, it could be assumed that the lack of balance could lead to a difference in perceptions about female and male teachers. In addition, this lack of balance could be caused by a difference in perceptions.

Age: According to population pyramid of Myanmar, most teaching volunteer in SENG's community based education center(s) were younger starting 16-29, followed by 30-49, then above 64. However, there were very few teaching volunteers over 64. Since the majority of teaching volunteers were ages between 16-29, therefore it could be assumed that the organization has the active, and fresh teaching group and through these young and active teachers and their potential to grow would bring a great achievement to the organization in the near future. Therefore, the organization should encourage the teaching volunteers in order to continue their further study.

Education Background: Most of the teachers in SENG were graduates holding bachelor degrees, followed by high school and the least were vocational/technical school students. Therefore, the activities should concern the following theme training: give or create more opportunities for the teaching volunteers to be able to develop and enhance their academic level into higher such as Master degree and P.hD level in educational field or related fields. Thus, in order to enhance their skills in teaching and learning by providing training program such as vocational/technical school or teacher training, or self-study, professional development activities including seminars, conference, meetings are suggested to provide as they need to grow in their professional fields, as they will implement and upgrade the goals of the organization.

Working Experience: The majority of teaching volunteers in SHANAN Education Networking Group (SENG), Northern Shan State, Myanmar had been working for SENG for 1-2 (26.2%) years of working experience followed by under 1 (18.5%) year, and the lowest percentage was 7-8 (23.4%) years of working experiences. It could be concluded most of the teaching volunteers were still not only needed to learn and gain more experience from their particular fields, but also

and they would have to gain more experience in order to develop and enhance in both their personal skills in teaching and learning skills.

Leadership styles: 76.90% of the respondents to the researchers' questionnaires from SENG were preferred using Democratic Leadership Style, 7.70% of the respondents were preferred Autocratic Leadership Styles, 6.20% of the respondents were preferred Leases-Fair Leadership Style, and 9.20% of the respondents were found out in transition period. According to Warrick (1981), although democratic leadership style can be described as the most effective leadership styles, nevertheless it does have some potential downsides. For instance, under the situations where roles are unclear or time is of the essence, democratic leadership can be led to communication failures and uncompleted projects. In some cases, group members may not have the necessary knowledge or expertise to make quality contributions to the decision-making process. On the other hand, democratic leadership can be worked best in situation where group members are skilled and eager to share their knowledge. Consequently, a democratic leader places a high emphasis on both people and performance. They are genuinely interested in their people but also expect a high level or performance in terms of both quality and quantity. They approach the management as a professional and take time to establish clear objective, define responsibilities, and provide the necessary leadership, planning, organizing, controlling and communicating, motivating, and developing to reach a high level of both productivity and satisfaction (Henman, 2008). Moreover, the path-goal's theory of leadership also focused on the relationship between leaders' styles, the work setting or work environment and also the characteristic of the followers. Thus, the theory also mentioned that leaders should be naturally changed their behavior to match the situation. In addition to this, other leadership theories focused on variables that are related to the environment and that would be determined which styles of leadership are suitable for a particular situation.

Organizational culture: The overall responses regarding their perceptions toward organizational culture of SHANAN Education Networking Group, Northern Shan State, Myanmar was rated at "Positive level" with an average mean of 3.50 and standard deviation of 0.50. This implied that they viewed organizational culture at SENG was as positive especially regarding their perceptions toward organizational culture. Therefore, it could be implied that most teaching volunteers respect the work that they are doing in SENG and view it as meaningful. Secondly, it could be assumed that most teaching volunteers were unable to decided regarding the

organizational strategic and direction, self-confidence, leadership skills, and organizational systems and procedures. Thirdly, it could be identified that most teaching volunteers in SENG felt they were treated with respect and given trusts by leadership of the organization. They also felt that they are given clear and consistent direction about their work priorities; team members demonstrate kindness and consideration toward one another; encouraged making decisions and acting on them as appropriate. They viewed that they are being motivated, guided, and encouraged by the leaders in order to do find the most appropriated career for them. Finally, it could be concluded that they respected, valued, and believed in the organization's vision and goals.

The findings of this study were similar to some other previous researches and were reassuring the results of them. Kyaw, M. (2012) did a study on teachers' perceptions of leadership and Organizational climate and the result of his study showed that there were no significant differences of teachers' perceptions toward organizational climate in Graduate schools of Assumption University in terms of their different leadership styles. NyewNyew, M. (2011) also did a research on teachers' perceptions of challenges and leadership styles and it revealed that there were no significant differences between teachers' different perceptions of challenges with their different leadership styles. Therefore, the finding of this research also support the finding of both Moe Kyaw and Mai NyewNyew which stated that there were no significant differences between teaching volunteers' leadership styles and organizational culture at SHANAN Education Networking Group (SENG), Myanmar.

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