

**AN APPLICATION OF BLAKE AND
MOUTON'S LEADERSHIP STYLES OF
SEMINARIANS OF SAINT JOSEPH MAJOR
SEMINARY IN HO CHI MINH CITY DIOCESE
DURING SERVING AT PARISH**

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to use the theory of Blake and Mouton's leadership Grid to measure seminarians' behaviors in when they served at parishes. The objectives were (1) to determine the leadership styles the seminarians applied during serving at parish; (2) to examine relationship between seminarians' leadership styles and their demographic profile; (3) to compare the difference in Team leadership styles among age groups, diocese groups, educational attainment groups, and work experience groups.

The research method using in this study was quantitative. A Likert scale questionnaire which based on Blake and Mouton's leadership Grid theory was used to determine leadership styles of 168 seminarians of five classes from three dioceses at Saint Joseph Major Seminary of Ho Chi Minh City diocese. The data from questionnaire was analyzed by using SPSS program.

The findings of this study demonstrated that there was a dominant leadership style the seminarians applied during serving at parish; seminarians' leadership styles were no related to age, diocese, educational attainment, and work experience; Team leadership style of seminarians were no significantly different among age groups, diocese groups, educational attainment groups, and work experience groups.

Keywords: Leadership Style, Blake and Mouton's leadership, Seminarian, Seminary, Parish

Introduction

Leadership is one of elements which existed in human society for long time ago. Leadership associates with human's sense of living community. It created success, survival and development of any human team (Nwaogu, 2008). Look back to human history, according to Phil (August 8, 2008), good leadership was always an element necessary and important to help people achieve success in their life. Nowadays leadership was still needed in every aspect of the world. Even, Phil stated: "A world without leaders is

like a ship without lighthouse." In other words, today human world was developed and changed strongly and quickly because there were great leaders to contribute and build it. The great leaders which human on the earth could not forget came from every field, such as Buddha, Jesus Christ, and Mohammed... in spiritual aspect or Newton, Copernicus, *Descartes*, *Pasteur...* in scientific field and so on (Nwaogu, 2008).

Leadership was one of three missions the Church received from Jesus Christ, God made man (Hyos, March 13, 1999). Jesus entrusted the mission of leadership to the Church through The Twelve including Saint Peter and the eleven other followers of Jesus. Jesus gave them the authority of leadership when Jesus said: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19 The New American Bible Revised Edition). At the same time, Jesus also reminded the leaders of the Church about the importance of leadership. Jesus said: "If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit" (Luke 6:39 The New American Bible Revised Edition; Matthew 15:14).

Jesus' teaching of leadership was significant for the Church's leaders, especially for the priests. According to Church's teaching, the priests were the representatives of Jesus Christ. They assumed essential responsibility for Christian community. They were the minister of the vital redemptive actions. Through the authority received, they became the fount of life and vitality for whole Church and for his parish. In other words, priests were indispensable leaders to the community entrusted to them. They received the authority of leading community from God through their bishop who the genuine successor of The Twelve. Together with their bishop, priests as bishop's associates led the community entrusted to them (Hyos, March 13, 1999; John Paul II, March 25, 1992). Even, Pope John Paul II (March 25, 1992) affirmed that without priests the Church could not exist and fulfill the missions she received from Jesus Christ, God made man. Therefore, it required the priests, as the leaders of the Christian community entrusted to them, to become good leaders (Hyos, March 13, 1999).

Becoming good leaders is also a requirement for seminarians because they are candidates to become priests. In the future, when they are ordained as priests, they will become leaders for the parish

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community assigned to them. Therefore, during training time in seminary, it is necessary for them to have chances to practice leading community. Pope Paul VI, in "Decree on Priestly Training" on October 28, 1965, suggested the bishop as well as the educators to facilitate their seminarians to practice leading in a parish appointed.

How can people who are in charge of training seminarians determine and measure seminarians' leadership style?

There are solutions to help determine and measure leadership styles, especially seminarians' style of leadership applied. This study focuses on one of the solutions is that Blake and Mouton's Leadership Grid. This Leadership Grid also helps seminarians recognize their tendencies and possibilities of leadership so that the educators can help them to become good leaders.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study include:

1. To determine the leadership styles the seminarians applied during serving at parish.
2. To examine relationship between seminarians' leadership style and their age, diocese, educational attainment, and work experience.
3. To compare Team leadership style among age, diocese, educational attainment, and work experience groups.

Theoretical Framework

Leadership style of parish priest would affect practicing and developing parishioners' faith. Therefore, parish priest had to concern about his role of leadership in carrying out pastoral works. It meant that when parish priest took place pastoral works, he had to concern both his task and his parishioners (John Paul II, March 25, 1992). This was also a compulsory requirement for the seminarian when he served at parish. During severing at parish, the seminarian received the assignment from the priest who was a leader of that parish so as to take responsible for some the associations in that parish. When the seminarian was in charge of those associations of parish, they had to lead those associations to develop. Therefore, the seminarian had to concern both task and people. (Hyos, March 13, 1999; John Paul II, March 25, 1992).

There were many theories of leadership, especially leadership style. Leadership style theory was a theory which emphasized leader behaviors (Northouse, 2012). When taking place the study of leadership style, the Ohio State University identified two facets of leader including Initiating Structure and Consideration (Lim & Daft, 2004; Lunenburg &

Ornstein, 2008; Pierce and Newstrom, 2008). Initiating Structure emphasized task and Consideration highlighted people. From two these facets, the scientists of Ohio State University identified four leadership styles which depended on high or low degree for Initiating Structure and Consideration. Leadership style was also an important study of the University of Michigan study. The scientists of Michigan identified two aspects relative to leadership style. Those two aspects included employee centered leadership and production centered leadership (Hoy & Miskel 1991; Hughes, Ginnet & Curphy, 1999; Lim & Daft, 2004; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008; Wood, Wallace & Zeffane, 2001).

Concern of task and concern of people are two important dimensions of leaders. To determine leadership styles the seminarians applied during serving at parish, this study used the theory of Blake and Mouton's Leadership Grid. In their theory, Blake and Mouton used six elements which describe leader's behaviors including conflict resolving, initiative, inquiry, advocacy, decision making, and critique. From six these elements, Blake and Mouton identified seven leadership styles (Blake & McCause, 1991; Blake & Mouton, 1986). The following seven leadership styles of Blake and Mouton's theory were used in this study:

Team Leadership style: A leader who applies this style maximizes both concerns for task and for people. The seminarians who apply team leadership style will emphasize fulfilling their mission and supporting their followers. When seminarians carry out pastoral works, they invite and support their subordinates to complete those works. In other words, in the process of pursuing task, the seminarians will facilitate the parishioners who cooperate with them.

Authority-Compliance leadership style: A leader who possesses this style maximizes concern for task, but minimizes concern for people. The seminarians who apply the Authority-Compliance leadership style control their followers strictly when they carry out their task. They require their subordinates to obey their decisions in the process of working. They do not care individual opinions, group meeting.

Country Club Leadership style: A leader who uses this style maximizes concern for people, but minimizes concern for task. The seminarians who apply Country Club Leadership style have friendly attitudes with people. They want to create a warm climate for their subordinates. They consider finishing their work less important than supporting others.

Impoverished Leadership: A leader who follows this style minimizes both concerns for task and for people. The seminarians who apply

Impoverished Leadership use minimum their effort to finish their mission. Even they are talent people of leading they do not want to spend their energy on their work. They do not also care their subordinates. Therefore, it is not necessary to communicate or to organize meeting with their subordinates. In other words, in the process of taking place their work, seminarians do not also concern about listening to their subordinates' opinions, ideas...

Middle of the Road Leadership: In comparison with Team Leadership style and Impoverished Leadership style, Middle of the Road Leadership style occupies middle degree. The seminarians who apply Middle of the Road Leadership try to finish their mission with enough effort. They show to concern for both task and people, but only in average. It seems that they try to maintain neutral view for work and people.

Paternalistic leadership style: A leader who follows this style shows high concern for both task and people. However, these leaders consider their subordinates as their children. This point makes Paternalistic Leadership style different from Team Leadership style. The seminarians who apply this style require their followers to carry out their work according to their standards and commands. When their subordinates made mistakes, they will criticize and show their subordinates as the parents who take charge of guiding their children.

Opportunistic leadership style: A leader who possesses this style will choose any style of six above styles. His/ her choosing depends on changes in

his/her organization and from social circumstances. The seminarians who apply Opportunistic Leadership style observe and assess their parish conditions before they carry out a certain mission. Observing and assessing always seems their first step. After they obtain the first step, they will carry out the second step by choosing suitable leadership style.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in this study had two sets. The first set included independent variables of age, diocese, educational attainment, and work experience. The second set comprised dependent variables of seven leadership styles: Team Leadership style, Authority-Compliance Leadership style, Country Club Leadership style, Impoverished Leadership style, Middle of the Road Leadership style, Paternalistic Leadership style, and Opportunistic Leadership style. These styles were nominated by Blake and Mouton' Leadership Grid (Blake & McCanse, 1991; Blake & Mouton, 1986).

Seven dependent variables helped to determine leadership styles the seminarians applied when they served at their parishes assigned.

Fours independent variables described the influences of various diversities on seminarians' leadership styles.

The conceptual framework of this study was designed as follows:

Conclusion and discussion

Findings for research object 1: To determine the

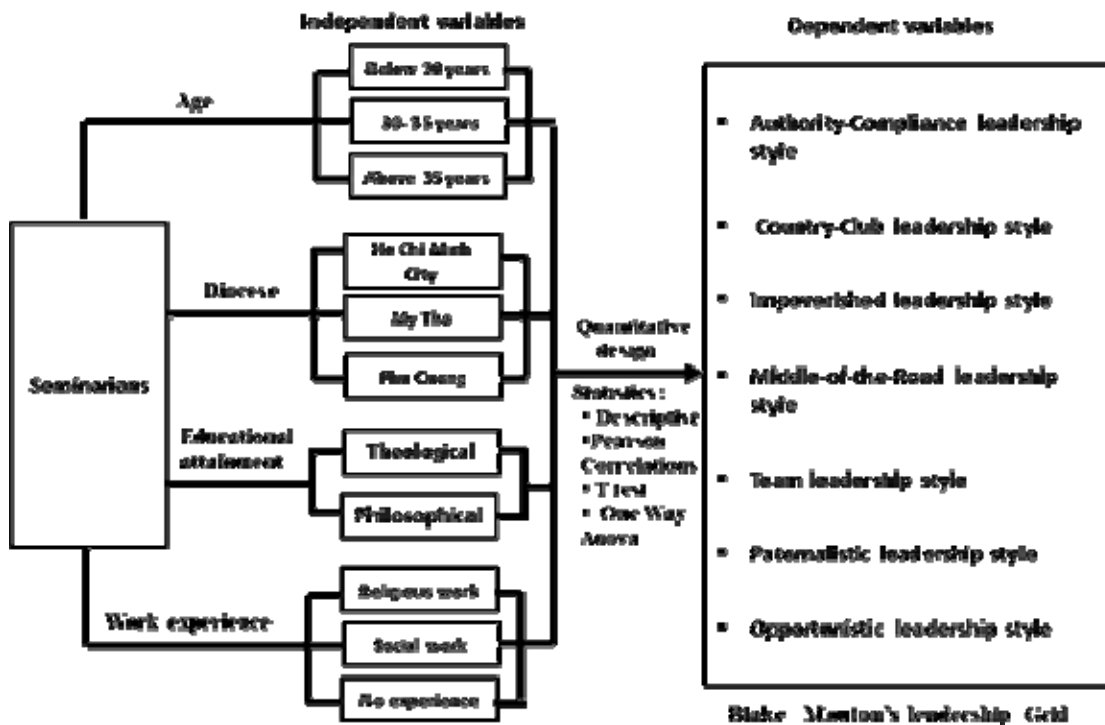


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

leadership style the seminarians applied during serving at parish. 168 seminarians of Saint Joseph Major Seminary in Ho Chi Minh City diocese which were surveyed in this study showed one dominant leadership style in accordance with seven leadership styles of Blake and Mouton's Leadership Grid. The dominant leadership styles of 168 seminarians were 94 Team leadership styles, 37 Country-Club leadership styles, 34 Middle of the Road leadership styles, 1 impoverished leadership style, 1 Paternalism leadership style, and 1 Opportunism leadership style. Only Authority-Compliance leadership style was not reported in this study. This result showed that Team leadership style was the highest of six applied leadership styles.

Findings for research objective 2: To examine the relationship between leadership styles and age, diocese, educational attainment, and work experience. Three leadership styles, Impoverished leadership style, Paternalism leadership style, and Opportunism leadership style, were .06 % ; it meant that there was only one seminarian applied Impoverished leadership style; only one applied Paternalism leadership style; only one applied Opportunism leadership style. Therefore, this study only examined the relationship between three leadership styles (Team leadership style, Country-Club leadership style, and Middle of the Road leadership style) and age, diocese, educational attainment, and work experience. In this study, it was found that three leadership styles (Team leadership style, Country-Club leadership style, and Middle of the Road leadership style) did not relate to age, diocese, educational attainment, and work experience.

The Relationship between Leadership Style and Age. The age element was surveyed in this study included three groups: Under 30 years, Between 30 and 35 years, and Above 35 years. As for seminarians' leadership styles and age, it was found that the seminarians' leadership styles were not influenced by various age groups. In other words, there were not significant differences between leadership style and age.

This result was supported by previous findings. The finding of Singboorana (2001) in research on leadership styles and employees' work values in Siam Video Production Company Limited showed that there were not significant relationship between leadership styles and age. According to study of Sirirat (2003) in regard to teaches' leadership styles in Classroom Management, she also indicated that the style of the teachers who were in different ages were not significant. Angkanakitkul (2005) carried out one research on the perception of employee of leadership styles at ABC Company Limited. Angkanakitkul reported that leadership style and age had

nonsignificant relationship. However, Padapurackal (2006), in the research on teacher Leadership Style in motivating classroom at Assumption University, concluded that leadership style and age was significant relationship.

From previous findings, the almost results which were found in the studies were that there were not significant relationship between leadership style and age. However, there could be the study such as Padapurackal (2006), which showed that the leadership styles were affected by various age groups. This proved that the influence of age on leadership style was not fixed one. This influence could be changed in different organizations. There were factors to help the leaders' leadership styles not to be affected by different ages, such as good training leadership, supervising, and feedback (Anuwatprakit, 2003).

As to this study of the leadership styles of the seminarians of Saint Joseph Major Seminary of Ho Chi Minh City diocese during serving at parish, leadership style and age was not significant relationship. Similar to the statement of Anuwatprakit (2003) above, there were factors in Saint Joseph Major Seminary of HO Chi Minh City diocese to make seminarians' leadership style not to be influenced by age. They were good program of training leadership, sound role of spiritual advisors of each seminarian. Concretely, good program of training leadership provided sound thoughtfully understanding of leadership (John Paul II, March 25, 1992; Paul VI, October 28, 1965). At the same time, in Saint Joseph Major Seminary of Ho Chi Minh City diocese, each seminarian has a spiritual advisor to help him overcome difficulties in regard to different ages (Brannen, 2010). It was these reasons that they conducted to the result: there was no significant relationship between seminarians' leadership style and their age.

The Relationship between Leadership Style and diocese. Diocese element which was studied in this study was a concept in regard to geographic location. Diocese element was categorized into three groups: Ho Chi Minh City diocese, My Tho diocese, and Phu Cuong diocese. Regarding seminarians' leadership styles and diocese in this study, it was found that the seminarians' leadership styles were not related to various diocese groups. In other words, there was not significant relationship between leadership style and diocese.

There were previous studies to support this result. The research of Khummantakhun on perception of School Administrators in regard to supervisory competencies, as Anuwatprakit (2003) referred to, reported that there was no significant relationship between supervisory competencies of administrators and their workplace location. Also in 1997,

Pornpikanate, as Anuwatprakit (2003) mentioned, took place her research in the Royal Awarded Primary schools Under the Jurisdiction of the Office of the National Primary Education Commission. In her study, Pornpikanate concluded that the administrators were not affected by working at the different organizational in process of academic administration. For the study of Anuwatprakit (2003) regarding teachers' leadership styles in classroom management, she showed that different workplace locations did not influence on teachers' leadership styles.

As to the study of the leadership styles the seminarians in Saint Joseph Major Seminary of Ho Chi Minh City diocese applied during serving at parish, there were some reasons to lead the result: there was no relationship between the seminarians' leadership style and their diocese. The reasons included good training priesthood, regularly giving superior's directions, commonly meeting of sharing and learning experience in leading parish. Accordingly, good training priesthood gave seminarians sound knowledge of leadership and skill of leading parish community (Hyos, March 13, 1999; John Paul II, March 25, 1992). At the same time, the regularly giving superior's directions helped seminarians to gain full insight of pastoral works and parish situations (John Paul II, March 25, 1992). Furthermore, the meeting of sharing and learning experience in leading parish between dioceses was often organized to help seminarians increase ability to lead community (Paul VI, October 28, 1965).

In a word, thanks to suitable activities in priesthood formation, seminarians' leadership styles were not influenced by different dioceses.

The Relationship between Leadership Style and Educational Attainment. Educational attainment element which was conducted in this study comprised two groups: philosophical seminarians and theological seminarians. As regards leadership styles and educational attainment, it was found that leadership style was not affected by their educational attainment. In other words, there was no relationship between seminarians' leadership style and their educational attainment.

This result was supported by previous studies. In 2001, Singboorana carried out the research on leadership style at Siam Video Production Company Limited in Thailand. In this study, Singboorana showed that leadership styles were not affected by educational attainment. For the study of Kutchsuwanmanee of "The relationship between leadership style and work satisfaction of employee in private and public organization in Bangkok" in 2002, Kutchsuwanmanee found that there was nonsignificant relationship between leader behaviors

and educational attainment. Chumsuwan (2003) studied leadership style of the managers in Thai non-life insurance companies and Thai-Japanese non-insurance companies, Chumsuwan reported that the leadership style of the managers in selected companies and managers' educational attainment was no significant relationship. Regarding leadership behaviors at Ruengwa Standard Co. Ltd, Tayapiwatana (2004) also reached to the same result as above. Accordingly, leader behaviors were not influenced by educational attainment. There were two studies in 2005, one for Kitja's and one Angkanakitkul's. Both of them found that educational attainment did not affect leadership styles. However, there were also studies which showed that educational attainment affected leader behaviors, such as three studies in 2000, one for Partanun, one Chookruvong, and one Lee. Both studies of Partanun and Chookruvong reported that there was significant relationship between leadership style and educational attainment. Meanwhile, Lee's topic found that educational attainment affected three of five styles of studied leadership. Dangsurisri (2003), based on the path goal theory of Robert House relative to leadership style, asserted that education attainment was one of elements which influenced leadership style. For the study of teachers' leadership style in classroom at Assumption University in 2006, Padapurackal found that leadership style and educational attainment was significant relationship.

From two opposite dimensions in the studies above, it proved that educational attainment could influence on leadership styles in these organizations but not in others. As for the study of the leadership styles the seminarians of Saint Joseph Major Seminary in Ho Chi Minh City diocese during severing at parish, leadership was not related to educational attainment. Here, there were reasons to lead to this result, such as good training priesthood, directing of the parish priest whose parish the seminarians practiced leadership (Hyos, March 13, 1999; John Paul II, March 25, 1992). Therefore, the seminarians' leadership styles were not influenced by their educational attainment.

The Relationship between Leadership Style and Work Experience. The element of work experience which was surveyed in this study included three groups: No experience, Religious Experience, and Social Experience. As to the relationship between seminarians' leadership style and their work experience, it was found that leadership style was not affected by their work experience. In other words, there were no relationship between seminarians' leadership style and their work experience.

This result was in same line with previous studies. Two studies of Partanun (2000) and of Lee

(2000), in regard to leadership styles, reported that there was no significant relationship between work experience and leadership style. Singboorana (2001), in the study of Leadership Styles and Employees' Work Values, she asserted that there were nonsignificant relationship between leadership styles and the number of work years in company. The result of the relationship between leadership style and work satisfaction of employee in private and public organization in Bangkok also indicated that there was no significant relationship between length of service and leader behaviors (Kutchsuwanmanee, 2002). There were three studies in 2003, one for Chumsuwan, one Dangsurisri, and one Anuwatprakit. They also proved that teachers' leadership style and teachers' work experience was nonsignificant relationship. Tayapiwatana (2004) also reported that the length of work years did not affect leader behaviors. Two studies in 2005 were accomplished by Kitja and Angkanakitkul. They indicated that there was no significant relationship between the number of work year and leadership style. Generally, almost research had obtained the conclusion: there was no significant relationship between leadership style and work experience. However, the study of Chookruvong (2000), in relation to Leadership Style and Motivation in Bangkok of Thailand, obtained other consequence. Accordingly, Chookruvong reported that work experience affected on leadership style.

There were reasons to make leadership style not to be influenced by work experience. According to Anuwatprakit (2003), if leaders joined in different training courses, seminars, and workshops, they would increase their ability to lead. The result was their leadership style not to be impacted by their work experience. This case also happened to the seminarians of Saint Joseph Major Seminary when they applied their leadership style during serving at parish. Thanks to good priestly training, joining meeting of sharing experience in leadership, the seminarians' leadership styles was not influenced by their work experience.

Findings for research objective 3: To compare the difference in Team leadership style among age groups, diocese groups, educational attainment groups, and work experience groups. After determining the dominant leadership style of 168 seminarians of Saint Joseph Major Seminary in Ho Chi Minh City diocese, there were six of seven leadership styles according to Blake and Mouton's theory to be used. The dominant leadership styles of 168 seminarians were 94 Team leadership styles, 37 Country-Club leadership styles, 34 Middle of the Road leadership styles, 1 impoverished leadership style, 1 Paternalism leadership style, and 1 Opportunism leadership style. Only Authority-Compliance leadership style was not

reported in this study. This result indicated that Team leadership style was the highest of six applied leadership styles.

When comparing Team leadership style in age groups, diocese groups, educational attainment groups, and work experience groups, it was found that there were no significant differences in Team leadership style among age groups, diocese groups, educational attainment groups, and work experience groups.

This study was supported by previous studies. Blake, Mouton and Allen (1987) carried out the study of spectacular teamwork. They showed that Teamwork was skill which could be trained, because it was not significant difference in the diverse elements. The studies relative to Blake and Mouton's theory asserted that Team leadership style which was effective leadership was not different in element in regard to conflict environment, various demographic groups (Benerjee, 2009; Zafar, 2011).

This study of seminarians' leadership style the seminarians reached to the result was that Team leadership style was not different in age groups, diocese groups, educational attainment groups, and work experience groups. There were reasons to make Team leadership not to be different, such as good priesthood formation, regularly courses of advising ethnic of leader's role, seminary's team life, daily Spiritual directions, and monthly recollecting their life, especially strong desire to follow the example of Jesus who possessed Team leadership style (John Paul II, March 25, 1992; Paul VI, October 28, 1965). In a word, Saint Joseph Major Seminary in Ho Chi Minh City diocese provided good conditions to help seminarians to be high conscious of strength of teamwork. Therefore, Team leadership style of seminarians among age groups, diocese groups, educational attainment groups, and work experience groups were not significant difference.

Recommendations

For the priesthood formation. The program of training priesthood, which carries out at Saint Joseph Major Seminary in Ho Chi Minh City diocese, is effective. It provides sound understanding of leadership to the seminarians. At the same time, it creates the seminarians to have ability to do teamwork.

The activities in the program of priesthood formation were organized well. These activities, such as the workshops of practicing leading, the seminars of sharing and learning experiences, and the courses of training teamwork, are lasted all training period constantly. These help the seminarians possess leadership styles which are not affected by personal diverse elements. Therefore, these activities need

maintaining and developing in the program of training priesthood.

The activities relate to spiritual training, such as regularly courses of advising ethnic of leader's role, seminary's team life, daily Spiritual directions, and monthly recollecting their life, help the seminarian to be conscious clearly about their vocation and priesthood life. These activities stimulate the seminarians to follow the example of Jesus, who was maximized concern for task and for people. Therefore, this program of priesthood training as well its activities needs maintaining to produce good leaders in the future.

For the educators, the educators of Saint Joseph Major Seminary in Ho Chi Minh City diocese carry out two functions including training knowledge and spirit. The recommendations were made as follows:

According to the findings in chapter 4, seminarians' leadership styles were not affected by their diversity. One of reasons can be take account is that the role of educator in Saint Joseph Major Seminary in Ho Chi Minh City diocese. Their role, especially spiritual advisors' role, is very important. They are the companions of seminarians during priesthood training. The seminarians are required to reveal all difficulties to their spiritual advisors. It was the spiritual advisors who help the seminarians overcome the difficulties in seminarian's life, in particular in leading community. Therefore, it is necessary to build up effective spiritual advisor staff.

Although there was not different among seminarians' diversities, the number of seminarians' Team leadership style was only 94 out of 168 (55.95%). Therefore, the spiritual advisors need to check spiritual requirements, as such regularly monthly recollecting, frequently attending mediation and celebration in the program of priesthood formation to help them in self-training unceasingly and daily to follow Jesus. However, the educators and spiritual advisors also need to become seminarians' companion trustworthy to help seminarians concern about relationship effectively.

For seminarians, there were some strong points for the seminarians of Saint Joseph Major Seminary in Ho Chi Minh City diocese.

First, the number of Team leadership style was majority over six other leadership styles. It proved that, in general, they were leaders who concern for task and people. They could adapt to parish environment in leading community.

Second, according to the findings of objective 2, seminarians' leadership styles were not affected by their adversity. It proved that they could abilities to overcome their adversity in priesthood training to get good result of leadership.

Although seminarians' Team leadership style was majority, it only got 94 out of 168 (55.95%). Therefore, to increase the ability to lead community in the future, there are some recommendations for seminarians as follows:

They need to join activities in the program of priesthood training and to develop their ability to do teamwork more. These recommendations help them have sound behaviors of leadership, especially Team leadership.

They are required to compulsorily attend programs which help to increase their awareness and desire of following Jesus' example. Once they have clear awareness and strong desire, they will follow Jesus' example, especially the example of leadership.

Recommendations for further research

There are some recommendations for further research as follows:

1. The study of leadership style should be spread to all 26 seminaries in Vietnam. This is useful for the educators, the superiors, Vietnamese bishops, and Vatican can know the situation of education at seminaries in Vietnam relative to third mission (leadership).

2. The study of leadership style should be spread to parish priest who are leading their parishes in Ho Chi Minh City diocese now. This is significant for the His Eminence Cardinal John Baptist, Archbishop of Ho Chi Minh City diocese as well as His excellence Bishop Peter, Auxiliary Bishop of Ho Chi Minh City diocese can know and assess the priest's ability of leadership in Ho Chi Minh City diocese.

3. The study of leadership style should be investigated to measure the leadership style of the members of parish council. At the same, it should be used to assess leadership style of the presidents of the associations in parish. This measuring and assessing will help the parish priest know the situation of parish and of the associations in parish.

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