

A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS' LEADERSHIP CAPACITY AND THEIR DECISION-MAKING STYLES IN A SECONDARY VOCATIONAL SCHOOL IN CHANGSHA, CHINA

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Abstract: The main purpose of this study was to determine the relationships between teachers' perception towards leadership capacity and their decision-making styles in a secondary vocational school in Changsha during the academic year 2018-2019. A total of 95 teachers from a secondary vocational school in Changsha were surveyed in this study. The main source of the data was questionnaire that investigated teacher's perception towards their leadership capacities and their decision-making styles. The collected data were analyzed by using the descriptive statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The study found that teachers' leadership capacities from secondary vocational school were perceived as needed in this school, and there was a significant relationship between teachers' perceived leadership capacities and their decision-making styles in a secondary vocational school in Changsha, China.

Keywords: Perception, teachers' leadership capacity, decision-making styles, secondary vocational school Sections.

Introduction

In recent years, teacher leadership capacity has become a popular issue in the study of school management in Western countries. This issue was also attracted the attention of scholars in China recently. Researchers start to focus on how to achieve teacher leadership capacity in the context of China's education in the recent decade, and they believed that teachers or leaders need to be responsible to the routine of school, they need to attend the school activities actively and need to be a sympathetic expert in what they are involve in (Song, 2011).

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 person or teacher should be a leader and

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involve in school functions to develop a strong capacity for working at that school.

The number of private secondary vocational schools has been increasing since 1997, when the national education policy was reformed openly, Li (2010) reported. So many of these private secondary vocational schools are facing the pressure of survival. The same problem happened in secondary vocational schools in Changsha, China. Researchers interviewed school leaders about their worries and challenges in running schools before the study began. As the school has just been established, the school team reflects their desire to learn more about teachers' leadership capacity and decision-making styles because no previous research has been conducted.

The effectiveness of decision, according to Hoy & Miskel (1991), is determined by both the quality of the decision and the acceptance and commitment of subordinates to implement the decision. Decision making style is frequently regarded as equivalent with leadership style, and leadership style classifications are reflected on the decision-making processes.

In order to consider all the above problems and get the support of school leaders, the researchers decided to conduct a study to test the relationship between teachers' leadership capacity and decision-making style in Changsha secondary vocational school in China. Researchers hope to investigate teachers' leadership capacity and decision-making styles. These findings can help school leadership teams recognize the importance of teachers' leadership and decision-making styles in future work.

Research Objectives:

There were three research objectives:

1. To determine the teachers' perception towards their leadership capacity in a secondary vocational school in Changsha, Hunan Province, China.
2. To identify the decision-making styles of teachers in a secondary vocational school in Changsha, Hunan Province, China.
3. To determine the relationship between the teachers' leadership capacity and their decision-making styles in a secondary vocational school in Changsha, Hunan Province, China.

Literature Review

Lambert (1998, 2003) published the book, *Building Leadership Capacity for School Improvement*. Her high leadership capacity book introduces four characteristics needed to achieve sustainable school improvement. They were: intense focus on vision, reflection and innovation, shared governance, and monitoring and responding to student achievement. These four elements of

high leadership capacity are required for the school to develop sustainable school improvement.

In Lambert's (2003) High leadership Capacity Theory, high leadership capacity is composed of four necessary elements required for continuous school improvement. They are;

(1) Intense Focus on Vision

Intense focus on vision, it needs to improve teachers' abilities and make school more effective with high leadership capacity. Every teacher involved in leadership should engage with other teachers in teaching and learning cycle as they reflect with each other through dialogue and shared purpose while developing the school jointly. They must keep their school moving forward by reviewing the school vision regularly to maintain improvement.

(2) Reflection and Innovation

Reflection and innovation to make schools achieve with high leadership capacity. It is important for all members to ensure that everybody is in the cycle of inquiry and involved in the reflective process. Everyone has the potential and right to work as a leader. Leading is skilled and complicated work that can be learned by every member of the school community. Democracy clearly defines the rights of individuals to actively participate in the decisions that affect their lives. Moreover, every teacher or member should be involved in collaborative innovation.

(3) Shared Governance

Shared governance is about participation and integrated innovation in to the process of decision making. Teachers and all academic members should develop their relationships to find new strategies and new opportunities for improving the school.

(4) Monitoring and Responding

Monitoring and responding to student achievement. Student achievement is the most measurable aspect of school improvement and school sustainability. To help achieve the mission of the school, every teacher should be good at lesson planning, teaching, coaching, and assessing. Then all teachers and members should provide and receive both positive and negative feedback to and from teacher/coaches and to from students' parents, thus the school is continually improving in a sustainable way.

According to Marshall (2013), sustainable student achievement is the goal of the school improvement movement. In order for schools to be successfully

sustainable improved, the principals and teachers need to work well in the following four areas: teacher supervision, curriculum planning, interim assessments, and teacher evaluations. Marshall believed supervision and evaluation should be fair and logical.

Vroom and Yetton's (1973) Theory of Decision-Making Styles is useful and effective one and structured very complicated way: it also introduces a clear statement of what the leader is supposed to reach the final decision (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008). This model was developed to help the instructors examine and determine and respond the more effective decision-making style while in different problem situations. Vroom, Yetton and Jago (1998) offered the five decision making styles well-known as the room- Yetton's decision making model to call for all instructors to participate in decision making process of the hierarchy of school. Each of these five decision-making options are described below in order from unilateral style to shared style of decision.

(1) Autocratic I& II Decision-making Styles

This kind of decision-making style involves two components, namely autocratic I and autocratic II. Autocratic I decision making style involves the decision-maker solving the problem by using the information he/she already possesses. In Autocratic II decision making style, the decision-maker usually collects specific information from his/her team, then makes a final decision based on the specific information he/she has received. They do not tell the team or other people involved that their input is to be used to make the decision (Vroom and Yetton's).

(2) Consultative I& II Decision-Making Styles

This kind of decision-making style involves two components, namely consultative I and consultative II. Consultative I; the decision-maker shares and explains his/her ideas to the team to collect some different ideas, suggestions from them and then makes a decision. Consultative II; this decision-maker believes that he/she is the one who is responsible for decision-making. This style involves asking for suggestions or ideas from a team but the decision is the decision-maker's sole responsibility (Vroom and Yetton).

(3) Group Decision-making Style

Vroom and Yetton's stated that this kind of decision maker always shares his/her ideas, asks for suggestions and brainstorms together in a group to find a solution to the problem. He/she brings the problem or cause to their team and discusses different ideas or suggestions to make a decision. The decision-maker believes that his/her role is to facilitate and guide the team to reach their goals and make final decisions together. The final decision will be the result of everyone agreeing and being satisfied with the decision.

In conclusion, based upon Lambert's (2003) high leadership capacity theory and Vroom and Yetton's theory, this research was explored to determine the relationship between teachers' leadership capacity and decision-making styles in the secondary vocational school in Changsha, China.

Conceptual Framework

As the theoretical framework has set up, this researcher used Lambert's high leadership capacity theory, which includes intense focus on vision, reflection and innovation, shared governance, and monitoring and responding to student achievement to investigate; and Vroom and Yetton's decision-making style models (Autocratic, Consultative and Group), to investigate the relationship between teachers' leadership capacity and their decision-making style in a secondary vocational school in Changsha, China. Figure 1 below presents the details of conceptual framework for this study.

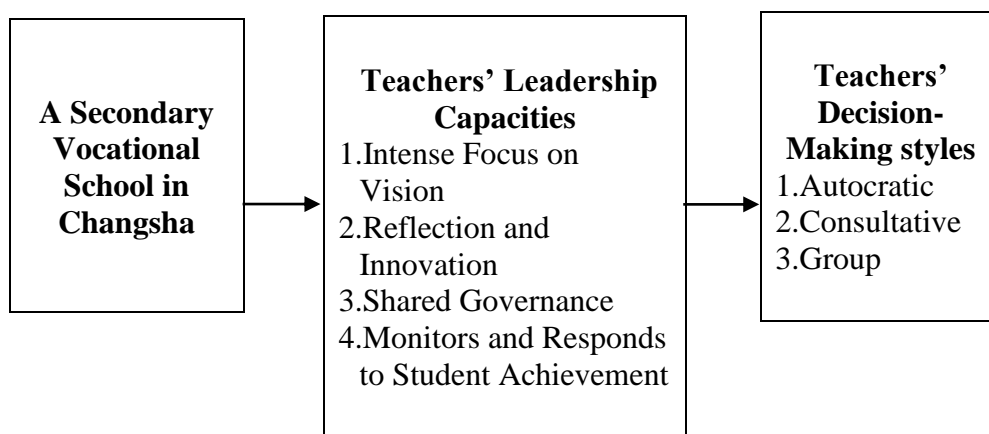


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of This Study

Research Instrument

The purpose of this study was to identify the relationship of teachers' perception towards their leadership capacity and their decision-making style in this secondary vocational school in Changsha during the academic year of 2018.

This research was designed as a quantitative and relationship study, which adopted the questionnaire by Pierce (2007) Leadership Capacity School Survey, which was developed from Lambert's (2003) Leadership Capacity School Survey. Questionnaire to investigate the teachers' perception towards their leadership capacity. This researcher also used the decision-making styles survey from the related research conducted by Dennis (2012). The researcher used a questionnaire including three-parts to investigate the teachers'

leadership capacity and their decision-making styles in a secondary vocational school in Changsha, the three parts were: Part (I) of the questionnaire contained the general information of the teachers' demographic variables such as gender, age, nationality, and education. Part (II) in this part, the questionnaire used to identify the teachers' perception toward their leadership capacity. Part (III), in this part, the questionnaire used to determine the differences in teachers' decision-making style in a secondary vocational school in Changsha. The researcher used descriptive statistics and the Pearson Product-Moment Coefficient of Correlation method in this study.

Population

The target study group for this research was comprised of all full-time faculty teachers from a secondary vocational school in the academic year of 2018. As there were 95 teachers currently teaching in the school, so all the 95 teachers who are working full time from a secondary vocational school in Changsha were used as the target group for this study. Among the 95 teachers, there were 59 female teachers and 36 male teachers.

Findings

The findings of this study were based on the data analysis of all valid questionnaires.

Research Objective One

Table 1 shows the summary of means and standard deviations of teachers' perception towards their leadership capacity based on the four components at a secondary vocational school in Changsha. The total mean score was 2.07 in the range of 1.51-2.50 and is interpreted as "need". Among the four components, Shared governance had the highest mean scores 2.21; Monitors and Responds to Student Achievement had the lowest mean score of 1.99.

Table 1: *Summary of Means and Standard Deviations of Teachers' Perception towards Their Leadership Capacity (N=95).*

Leadership capacity	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
Shared governance	2.21	.91	Need
Reflection and Innovation	2.06	.84	Need
Intense Focus on Vision	2.01	.77	Need
Monitors and Responds to Student Achievement	1.99	.95	Need
Total	2.07	.77	Need

Research Objective Two

Table 2 shows the Summary of Means and Standard Deviations of Teachers' Perception towards Their Decision-Making Styles. Accordingly, the overall

mean score was 3.38, in the range of 2.51-3.50, which mean all 95 teachers used these three decision-making styles “Neutral”, though most teachers uses group decision-making styles as Table16 and 20 together implied.

Table 2: *Summary of Means and Standard Deviations of Teachers’ Perception towards Their Decision-Making Styles (N=95).*

Decision-Making Styles	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
Group Decision-Making styles	3.41	.80	Neutral
Consultative Decision-Making styles	3.37	.83	Neutral
Autocratic Decision-Making styles	3.36	.80	Neutral
Total	3.38	.75	Neutral

Research Objective Three

The results of Table 3 show the relationship between teachers’ perception toward leadership capacity and their decision-making styles in a secondary vocational school in Changsha city, Hunan province, China. Since the significance value was 0.00, which is less than .05. Thus, it was concluded that there was a significant relationship between teachers’ perception toward leadership capacity and their decision-making styles in a secondary vocational school in Changsha, Hunan province, China. So, this researcher accepted the research hypothesis and reject the null hypothesis in this study. Additionally, the r value .950** indicates there was a positive relationship between teachers’ perception toward leadership capacity and their decision-making styles in a secondary vocational school in Changsha, the positive relation means increasing of leadership teachers’ capacity cause improve of their decision-making ability.

Table 3: *Pearson Correlation between Teachers’ Perceptions towards Their Leadership Capacity and Their Decision-Making Styles (N=95).*

Variables	Decision-Making styles	
Leadership Capacity	Pearson Correlation	.950**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	95

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Discussion

1. Teachers’ perception towards their leadership capacity in a secondary vocational school in Changsha.

This study firstly found that teachers from this school perceived on teachers’ leadership capacities with total average mean scores and it was interpreted as need for their perceived leadership capacity in general, and while teachers’

perception on monitor and respond to student achievement, which all mean scores expressed as high, it was interpreted need leadership capacities in a secondary vocational school.

On the other hand, in this situation, the teachers' leadership capacity in a secondary vocational school interpreted in the neutral, which indicated that intense focus on vision, in this school, teachers are making good progress here. Therefore, the school needs to improve the teachers' leadership capacity through different strategies. For example, in the school, not just the head teacher can take a leadership role; every teacher can be in the role of leadership depending on their professionalism and skillfulness. Different to this study, Akomolafe (2012) studied the leadership of the principals in Ekiti State, Nigeria, and she found that each teacher is actively recognizing their main leadership skills. Based on her findings, the strong leadership built by the school principal was very important, school principal must establish in terms of cooperation, motivation, empowerment and administrative behavior.

Greenlee (2004) suggested that school teacher leadership is important to increase or improve the educational leadership preparation program. Leadership needs to be developed among teachers and principals to build a democratic learning community. The researcher agreed that the quality of the principal investment in teacher leadership will be an important process for the future of school management.

According to Harris & Lambert (2003), leadership capacity is a wide, broad term which has been used for decades. It is one of the more popular terms in 21st century leaders' roles. There are many criteria in leadership capacity building but to build leadership capacity. People should have two main critical conditions in or successfully establish sustainability. As this study found there was a strong positive relationship between teachers' perception towards their leadership capacity and their decision-making style in a secondary vocational school in Changsha, this researcher believed these two factors are the most important in terms of sustainably improving school management and administration.

2. Teachers' perception towards their decision-making styles in a secondary vocational school in Changsha.

Teachers' perceptions towards their decision-making styles in this secondary vocational school in Changsha was regarded as "Neutral" according to the data interpretation criteria, which indicated that when there is a problem in a school, teachers usually making a decision to solve it by themselves. The three decision-making styles all used as "Neutral", though group decision-making style was practiced relatively more in the school.

Meanwhile, this study also found that thought most teachers used three styles of decision making “neutral”, quite many of them practiced group decision-making styles more and only a few practiced autocratic decision-making styles. This result were relevant to the study of Ryabova (2009), who also found at most decision-making moments, people prefer preferred the group decision making style. Ryabova studied the decision-making styles of Thai and foreign principals in Bangkok and international schools in Bangkok found that there were significant different decision-making styles between Thai and foreign principals. However, both Thai and foreign principals frequently adopted consultative decision-making styles and they preferred the group decision making style.

Previous researcher Dennis (2012) studied a comparative study of teachers' perceptions of dean decision-making styles between private universities and public universities in Bangkok, Thailand. In his research, according to the views of the two university teachers, the presidents of the universities also practiced three different styles “neutral” and group decision making style was regarded relatively often. In addition, because he concluded that the teachers of the two universities, the denominations of public universities and private universities didn't have significant differences in decision-making styles.

Additionally, Ramanigopal (2008) carried out research on Self- Esteem and Decision at the University of Agra to investigate the self-esteem and Making Styles of School Teachers. The results showed that there was a significant positive correlation existing between self-esteem and a vigilance style of decision-making style but other styles were found to be negative. Meanwhile, there was and decision-making styles of ere any significant difference existing between male and found that between the three of vigilance, defensive avoidance, and hyper vigilance. According to Ramanigopal (2008), male teachers had higher self-esteem than female teachers.

3. The relationship between teachers' perception towards their leadership capacity and their decision-making styles in a secondary vocational school in Changsha.

According to the research results, there was a strong positive relationship between teachers' perception towards their leadership capacity and their decision-making styles in a secondary vocational school in Changsha. According to Harris & Lambert (2003), leadership capacity is a wide, broad term which has been used for decades. It is one of the more popular terms in 21st century leaders' roles. There are many criteria in leadership capacity building but to build leadership capacity, people should have two main critical conditions in order to successfully establish sustainability. Pearson product

Moment correlation was used to analyze the relationship between the total mean score of the two variables, the teachers' perception towards their leadership capacity and their decision-making styles. The result of this analysis identified the correlation between the teachers' perception their leadership capacity and their decision-making styles, since the significance was 0.00. Thus, it was concluded that there was a significant relationship between the teachers' perception towards their leadership capacity and their decision-making styles in a secondary vocational school in Changsha. Additionally, the Pearson Correlation r value was. 950, which could be interpreted as a strong positive relationship between teachers' perception towards their leadership capacity and their decision-making styles in a secondary vocational school.

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