

**A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS'
PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THEIR LEADERSHIP
CAPACITY AND COMPETENCE AT AN INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL IN THONBURI, THAILAND**

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between teachers' perceptions towards their leadership capacity and competence at an international school in Thonburi, Thailand. The participants of this study were 81 full-time teachers from the selected school during the academic year 2019-2020. This researcher used the high-capacity leadership instrument adopted from Pierce (2007) based on Lambert's (2003) Leadership Capacity School Survey (LCSS), as well as teachers' competence survey adopted from Medley's (1977) Theory of Teacher Competence. This researcher analyzed the collected data from the survey with Descriptive Statistics, Frequency and Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation, and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The survey results showed that the teachers' perceptions towards their leadership capacity and competence were high at this international school in Thonburi, Thailand. The r-value was .677 with a significance value of .000, according to the Pearson correlation coefficient. The study indicated a strong positive relationship between teachers' perceptions of their leadership capacity and competence at this international school in Thonburi, Thailand.

Keywords: Teachers' Perception; Leadership Capacity; Competence

Introduction

Globalization has had a significant impact on the 21st century. In various national sectors, whether it is due to economic, cultural, social or educational factors, there have been sudden changes in technological development that have caused a greater and rapid shift in the way we communicate with each

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other. Many educational institutions must either rapidly catch up to the technological and digital age of our times or suffer the consequences of being left behind. To achieve this, learning communities should prioritize the professional development of teachers as instructional leaders and ensure that their training remains a top priority across the school curriculum.

To develop the quality of learning in a school, Berry, Daughtrey & Wieder (2010) stated that teachers should take on a leadership role and become more intertwined with the workings of the school to create a more welcoming place to learn. Despite this, when schools depend on the hard work of a single leader – without the delegation of duties – it is more likely that the school will begin to be overwhelmed with administrative procedures rather than focusing on academic goals. As a result, school improvement depends heavily on ensuring that teachers can become effective leaders and knowing the competencies of teacher leadership is essential to this task (Berry, Daughtrey & Wieder, 2010).

Another important factor for the school's success is teachers' competence, which is also a crucial focus of school leaders. Teachers' Competence is a theme that has been studied as long as there has been students' learning. Teachers' competence in this regard is usually defined as how teachers could try their best to guide, promote and support students to achieve specific academic goals, such as achievement and satisfaction (Garske & Blau, 2009). Becenti (2009) believed teacher competence was the teachers' ability to use research practices and implemented courses to improve and maintain student achievement. Similarly, Kirchner (2009) supported and commented that teachers' competencies were teachers' ability to influence students to learn and the ability to measure students' learning gains by particular goals or results.

The education industry is facing unprecedented challenges that have previously not been identified or measured before. For the most part, schools were relatively stable in terms of the social, economic, and political pressures placed on them.

With this in mind, effective leadership can help build a school's reputation, increase the quality of instruction, improve overall teacher-student engagement and enhance the experience of students' learning within the school environment. For this purpose, leadership capacity and teacher competence are crucial areas of research that should not be overlooked.

Meantime, in terms of marketing at this school, the researcher is concerned with the school's sustainable improvement and whether it is responsible

enough to make the school become the most highly sought after and competitive school within the current market environment. Educational leaders should meet this need to understand their community and increase the value students and parents receive.

While the selected school has only been launched for two years, much-needed research might greatly assist the school's expansion and development. However, there was no previous research on teachers' perceptions of their leadership capacity and competence. Therefore, the researcher has been interested in studying teachers' perceptions towards teachers' leadership capacity and their competency at the selected school.

Research Objectives

There were three objectives in this research

1. To identify the level of teachers' perceptions towards their leadership capacity at an international school in Thonburi, Thailand
2. To identify the level of teachers' perceptions towards their competence at an international school in Thonburi, Thailand
3. To determine the relationship between teachers' perceptions towards their leadership capacity and competence at an international school in Thonburi, Thailand

Literature Review

High Leadership Capacity

In Lambert's (2003) High Leadership Capacity Theory, the high leadership capacity includes four elements: an intense focus on vision, reflection and innovation, shared governance, and monitors and response to student achievement. The leadership capacity or skill of all teachers in the school needs to be developed and supported by principals to expand personal leadership capacity (Mangin, 2007).

Previous Studies on Leadership Capacity

Akonmolafe (2012) studied principal's leadership capacities as perceived by teachers in secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria, found that every schoolteacher had a better impression of principal leadership based on 250 sampled teachers. The result of this study was positive regarding leadership and managerial capacity in secondary schools in Nigeria.

Greenlee (2004) researched Building Teacher Leadership Capacity through Programs. Data Collection was done with students and teachers at the University of Florida. The research study aimed to determine the perception

of educational leadership teachers and students in the education field leadership skill acquired by teachers in the educational leadership program to elevate leadership capacity in schools.

Teachers' Competence

In Medley's (1977) Theory of Teacher Competence, she pointed out that teacher competency was considered any relevant skills, knowledge, professionalism, and professional value position, contributing to the successful teaching and learning practice. Broadly defined, competence means the teachers' abilities that will benefit the teaching and learning environment.

Olga (2012) also identified a number of factors that influence teacher competence: teacher's leadership within the classroom, the provision of a safe and warm academic environment for various students of different backgrounds, imparting academic knowledge, and ensuring sufficient encouragement is abound for student practice.

Previous Studies on Teachers' Competence

Achawarin (2009) studied various ASEAN regions by focusing on schoolteacher competency and examined Thailand's particular case, emphasizing three provinces of Thailand. It aimed to identify the relationship between four variables, teacher qualification, experience, school size, and teacher competency. Achawarin concluded that nine areas should be developed as a result of the study, are as follows, (1) language and technology, (2) curriculum development, (3) learning management, (4) psychology for teachers, (5) educational measurement and evaluation, (6) classroom management, (7) educational research, (8) educational innovation and information technology, as well as (9) teacher-ship.

Kavinda (2014) found that teacher competency was a necessary skill set in order to improve instructional design. The respective study, undertaken in Myanmar, illustrated the importance of teacher competency, especially for developing nations. The study, which compared teacher competency in the international school, found that traditional forms of instruction were inappropriate for the 21st century.

Conceptual Framework

This study was a correlation study that aimed to identify the relationship between teachers' perceptions towards their leadership capacity and competence at an international school in Thonburi, Thailand.

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of this study. The critical factors on the left side are based on Lambert's (2003) High Leadership Capacity and on the right side is based on the Theory of Teachers' Competence developed by Medley (1977).

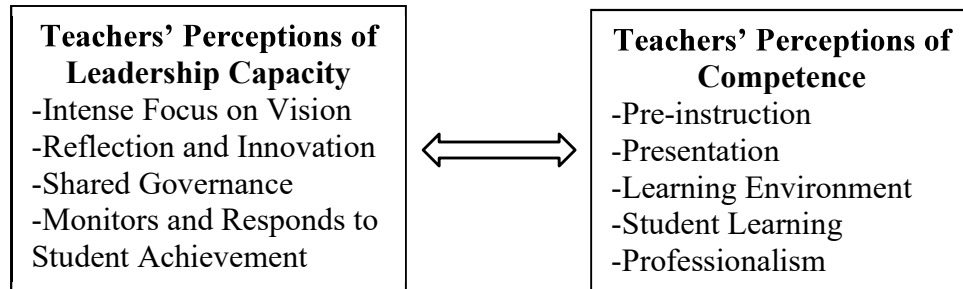


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of this Study.

Research Method

To determine the three research objectives, this research was designed as a quantitative and relationship study. The researcher utilized the survey questionnaire to collect data and study the perceptions of target groups through descriptive and correlation for analyzing the data of this study.

The researcher conducted the survey by distributing questionnaires to 81 teachers at an international school in Thonburi, Thailand, and 71 (87.7%) questionnaires were returned. A five-point Likert scale (5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly Disagree) was used by this researcher to measure the 71 teachers' perceptions towards their leadership capacity and competence with statistical analysis to interpret the results.

This research instrument was a questionnaire including three parts:

Part (I) was the general information of the teacher's demographic variables such as gender, age, nationality, educational background, and teaching experience.

Part (II) was the teachers' leadership capacity which was adopted from Pierce (2007), who had adapted from Lambert's (2003) Leadership Capacity School Survey (LCSS). This questionnaire had 17 items in four key components: Intense Focus on Vision, Reflection and Innovation, Shared Governance, and Monitors and response to students' achievement.

Part (III), the researcher used the respective instrument to identify teacher competency. It contains 33 items. The researcher adopted the original

questionnaire of Huyen (2003), which was first-authored by Medley (1977). Teachers' competence included pre-instruction, presentation, learning environment, student learning, and professionalism.

Findings

Research Objective One

Table 1 shows the Means and Standard of teachers' perceptions towards their leadership capacity based on the four components. The total mean score was 4.16 in the range of 3.51- 4.50 and is interpreted as high according to our data interpretation standards. Among the four constructs, Monitors and Responds to Student Achievement had the highest mean score, 4.52, interpreted as very high, and Shared Governance received the lowest mean score of 3.98, interpreted as high.

Table 1: *Means and Standard Deviations of Teachers' Perceptions towards Their Leadership Capacity (N=71)*

Leadership Capacity	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Intense Focus on Vision	4.15	.748	High
2. Reflection and Innovation	4.00	.804	High
3. Shared Governance	3.98	.785	High
4. Monitors and Responds to Student Achievement	4.52	.560	Very High
Total	4.16	.724	High

Research Objective Two

Table 2 shows the Means and Standard of teachers' perceptions towards their competence based on the five components. The total mean score was 4.46 in the range of 3.51- 4.50 and is interpreted as high according to our data interpretation standards. Among the five constructs, Learning Environment had the highest mean score, 4.59, interpreted as very high, and Student Learning received the lowest mean score of 4.33, interpreted as high.

Table 2: *Means and Standard Deviations of Teachers' Perceptions towards Their Competence (N=71)*

Competence	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Pre-instructions	4.45	.464	High
2. Presentation	4.42	.450	High
3. Learning Environment	4.59	.418	Very High
4. Student Learning	4.33	.534	High
5. Professionalism	4.53	.438	Very High
Total	4.46	.461	High

Research Objective Three

Table 3 shows the analysis of the relationship between teachers' perceptions towards their leadership capacity and competence. The result showed that $r = .677$, Sig. (2-tailed) was $.000$, which was less than $.05$. At the level of $.05$ (even $.01$), there was a strong positive correlation between teachers' perceptions of their leadership capacity and competence in the school. In conclusion, the hypothesis for this research was accepted, in other words, there was a significant relationship between teachers' perceptions towards their leadership capacity and competence at an international school in Thonburi, Thailand.

Table 3 Pearson Correlation between Teachers' Perceptions towards their Leadership Capacity and Competence (N=71)

		Teachers' Competence	Conclusion
Teachers' Leadership Capacity	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	$.677^{**}$	There is a significant relationship
	Sig. (2-tailed)	$.000$	

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

Discussion

Teachers' perceptions towards their leadership capacity

According to this research study findings, the total mean score of teacher's perceptions towards their leadership capacity at the international school in Thonburi, Thailand, was 4.16, which was in the range of 3.51-4.50, and it was interpreted as high. This indicated that the level of teachers' perceptions towards leadership capacity at the selected school was relatively good. Moreover, Fullan (2005) asserted that leadership capacity means constantly developing leadership for the future as insurance for continuous refinement and improvement.

In this study, the highest dimension was Monitors and Responds to Student Achievement, and its mean score was 4.52. This was interpreted as a very high level. It indicated that teachers at this selected school are deeply focused on monitoring and responding to student achievement. Lambert (2003) noted that high leadership capacity at the school depends on monitoring and responding to student achievement, while monitoring student achievement, networking, and collaborating to respond to this factor was key.

However, in this study, the lowest dimension was Shared Governance, and its total mean score was 3.98, which was still interpreted as high on the

interpretation scale. It indicated that put in place to increase collaboration between principals and teachers at this selected school. A precious study by Harris and Lambert (2003) stated that the group process is shared among team members, which illustrates greater responsibility and shared decision making.

Teachers' perceptions towards their competence

Overall, the total mean for teachers' perceptions of their competence was high with a mean score of 4.46, which was in the interpretation scale range of 3.51-4.50, at the international school in Thonburi, Thailand during the academic year of 2019-2020. This indicated that teacher's perception towards competence was highly cultivated. These higher-level survey results may be somewhat related to this selected school's short-term and long-term continuous commitment towards teachers' training, re-training and upgrading the knowledge, and bringing out the best abilities of each teacher. As a result of such commitments, teachers may feel competent and boost their morale.

In this study, the highest dimension was Learning Environment, and its mean score was 4.59; this was interpreted as a very high level. It was found that the learning environment was beneficial to students. Still, a good learning environment was developed by teachers in the classroom (Medley, 1977), and it was found that within this dimension, the highest score gained was I promote friendly interpersonal relationships (4.70), which were both interpreted as very high. Therefore, students benefit from a comfortable and friendly learning environment.

However, in this study, the lowest dimension was Student Learning, and its total mean score was 4.33, which was still interpreted as high on the interpretation scale. Olga (2012) stated that assessing tasks aided in the various teaching skills needed; this might explain why within this dimension, the highest score gained was I use a variety of assessments to monitor student learning, which scored 4.37 and was interpreted as high. Kin and Kareem (2019) came to the same result: greater student learning outcomes could be achieved by improved innovations, particularly with regards to assessments.

Relationship between teachers' perceptions towards their leadership capacity and competence

The statistical method between leadership capacity and competence identified a significance level of .00 significance level. Therefore, the study found a significant relationship between the teacher's perceptions of leadership capacity and their perceptions of competence at the international school in Thonburi, Thailand, for the academic year of 2019-2020. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient r-value was .677, which meant that the

relationship between the teacher's perceptions of leadership capacity and their perceptions of competence were strongly positive.

Teacher leadership capacity was found to be high, so Mar (2014) stated that the teachers had the necessary confidence and knowledge-built processes to engage appropriately in team-building exercises and tasks that required collaboration. To support this, Olga (2012) noted the role of numerous teacher competencies necessary for classroom instruction and how the teachers' competencies affected the students' experience. In particular, Olga (2012) said that a safe academic environment is suitable for imparting wisdom and knowledge while ensuring that motivation and encouragement are also cultivated.

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