

# **RELATIONSHIP AMONG LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR AND LEARNING ORGANIZATION IN THE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF CHANTHABURI DIOCESE**

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## **Abstract**

The study investigated leadership behavior and learning organization among Catholic school's administrators of Chanthaburi Diocese. Differences relating to gender, work experience, and school size were investigated. It was found that members of the sample used a variety of leadership behaviors and demonstrated a strong awareness of learning organization. No differences were found relating to gender and school size, but there were several specific differences that were related to work experience. A strong correlation was found between leadership behavior and learning organization. The report concludes with suggestions that can be drawn from these results.

## **Background**

The modern world is characterized by the development of advanced information and communication technologies and the use of these technologies for the expanded globalization of the world and a shift from economies based on heavy machinery to those based on digital technologies. These great changes have required many organizations to redefine quality and excellence. Educational organizations, with their responsibility to develop the knowledgeable people needed by these organizations, must also adapt to new conditions. As acknowledged by the 1999 National Education Act, public education administrators must facilitate continual and systematic learning reform.

The administrators of Catholic schools under the Jurisdiction of Chanthaburi Diocese recognize the importance of educational reform and organizational reengineering with the goal of improving group and individual learning through greater participation. In this study, the researcher considered the behavior of leaders of Catholic schools within the jurisdiction of Chanthaburi Diocese in their efforts at

organizational development and to meet the goals of the 1999 National Education Act.

## **The Study**

The purpose of the study was

- To investigate administrative leadership behavior in the Catholic schools within the Jurisdiction of Chanthaburi Diocese, broken down by sex, work experience, and school size.
- To examine learning organizational level of the Catholic schools' administrators within the Jurisdiction of Chanthaburi Diocese, by sex, work experience, and school size.
- To compare leadership behavior of the Catholic school's administrators within the Jurisdiction of Chanthaburi Diocese, by sex, work experience, and school size.
- To investigate the relationship among leadership behavior and learning organization of Catholic school's administrators within the Jurisdiction of Chanthaburi Diocese, by sex, work experience, and school size.

It was hypothesized that leadership behavior and learning organization varies according to the independent variables of sex, work experience, and school size.

The theoretical basis of the study was found in House's (1971) situational leadership model, which was itself based on that author's path-goal theory. In this model, four types of leadership are conceptualized:

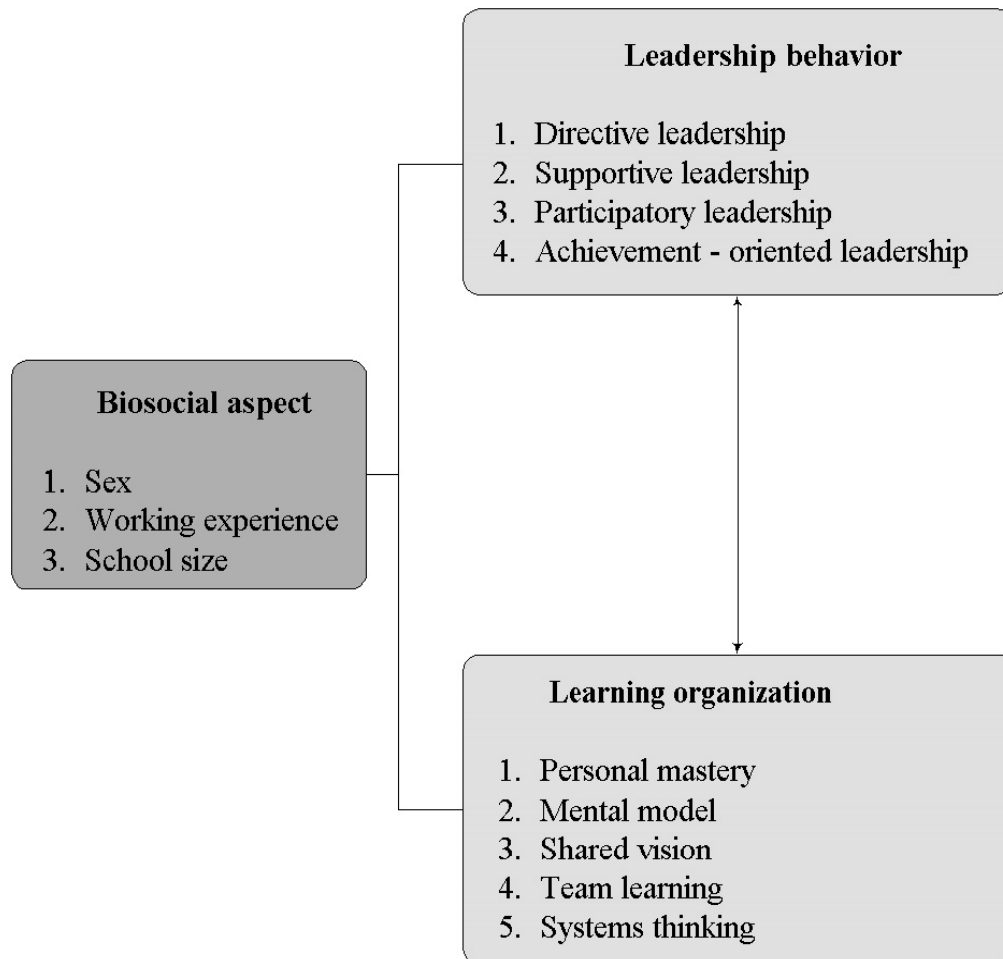
- directive leadership, in which leaders guide their followers, informing them as to their expectations and demanding that they act according to standardized rules;
- supportive leadership, in which leaders demonstrate an interest in the well-being and needs of followers and act according to these needs;
- participatory leadership, in which leaders attend to the suggestions of their followers and use the suggestions in decision-making;

- achievement-oriented leadership, in which leaders set goals, expect high performance, and praise followers who have high self-confidence and who successfully reach challenging goals.

The second theoretical basis of the study was Senge's (1990) learning organization theory, which conceptualizes leadership into five components:

- personal mastery, which involves the way organization members learn and continually develop their work related abilities;
- the mental model, which involves means of changing ideas and adjusting beliefs in order to become responsive to new information and develop creative thinking that furthers the accomplishment of organizational goals;
- shared vision, which involves developing a forward-looking process-oriented perspective that is connected to the desires of organizational members;
- team learning, which involves the sharing of learning among organizational members through mutual exchange of ideas that allows the development group knowledge and abilities;
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- systems thinking, which involves the development of balanced and creative problem solutions as a means of creating defensive resolutions and developing a holistic viewpoint.

Thus, the study framework is as follows:



**Figure 1.** Idea framework of the study

The research problem was addressed by investigating 79 administrators and assistant administrators in 12 Catholic schools of Chanthaburi Diocese during the 2000 academic year. The independent variables were gender (male or female), work experience (5 years or less or over 5 years), and school size (Small: 1 - 1,000 students; Medium: 1,001 - 1,500 students; Large: more than 1,501 students). The dependent variables include Leadership Behavior (Directive leader, Supportive leader, Participatory leader, Achievement - oriented leader) and Learning

organization (Personal mastery; Mental model; Shared vision; Team learning; Systems thinking).

The instrument used in collecting data was a three-part questionnaire:

- Part 1: Respondent data of three items: gender, work experience, and size of school at which employed;
- Part 2: Questionnaire testing the four leadership behaviors containing 33 five-scale items, adapted from House and Dessier (1974) and Kanchana Chanthai (1996);
- Part 3: Questionnaire testing the five aspects of learning organization containing 35 five scale items adapted from Apntree Rodsuth (1998).

A pretest was conducted in order to determine discrimination through a Pearson Product - moment correlation coefficient item - total correlation. A discrimination of 0.9683 - 0.9701 was found for the questionnaire concerning leadership behavior and of 0.9682 - 0.9690 was found for the questionnaire concerning learning organization. Reliability of 0.9690 was found through the use of coefficient alpha. Items with .20 of discrimination and verified reliability were administered to the subjects.

Using the SPSS for Windows package, the following statistical analyses were used to test the hypotheses. The hypotheses that gender, work experience, and school size result in varied leadership behavior and organizational level were each tested using t-tests and one-way ANOVA. A simple correlation was used to test the relationship between leadership behavior and learning organization.

## **Results**

The study found that Catholic school's administrators within the Jurisdiction of Chanthaburi Diocese use to a great extent supportive leadership, directive leadership, achievement-oriented leadership, and participatory leadership, respectively. They have on the whole a strong awareness of learning organization and operate at high levels in terms of team learning, shared vision, personal mastery, mental model, and systems thinking, respectively.

No significant differences were found based on gender, school size, position within any aspect of leadership behavior. Although there was no significant difference in

overall leadership behavior based on work experience, a statistically significant difference (.05 level) in work experience was found regarding directive leadership.

No significant differences were found based on gender, school size, position within any aspect of learning organization. Although there was no significant difference in overall learning organization based on work experience, a statistically significant difference (.05 level) in work experience was found regarding shared vision.

There is a significant correlation (.01 level) among leadership behavior and learning organization. Considering individual factors, a significant correlation of directive leadership, supportive leadership, participatory leadership, and achievement-oriented leadership with learning organization on personal mastery, mental model, shared vision, team learning and systems thinking, and at .05 level on achievement-oriented behavior with shared vision.

### **Recommendations**

Catholic schools administrators within the Jurisdiction of Chanthaburi Diocese should develop all types of leadership behavior that can be used to respond to varying situations. The schools should provide new administrators with leadership training prior to their assumption of duties. Administrators should recognize the importance of mental models and systematic thinking as a means of contributing to effective and creative problem solving. Administrators should support teachers in their efforts to work freely and should strive to build their self-confidence through the development of intrinsic motivation; the administrators should clearly set responsibilities for each position in order to maximize the sharing of knowledge and experience and should encourage teachers to use their full capacities in their work.

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