

Higher LEAP: Learning Area Coordinators' Leadership Approaches and Faculty Performance in a Philippine University

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ABSTRACT

Leadership is a connection between those who aim to influence and those who choose to be influenced and follow. Leaders at all levels practice definite patterns and systems that guide them to perform at their best. The descriptive-correlational study was conducted to identify the most common leadership

approaches of learning area coordinators and determine its association with their faculty performance rating. Seventy – six senior high school faculty members were randomly selected to answer an adopted leadership practices inventory instrument developed by Kouzes and Posner. The survey questionnaire measured the learning area coordinators' level of application of the five leadership approaches. Faculty performance evaluation was also retrieved. Data analysis was carried out using the Chi-square test of correlation. The study findings revealed that learning area coordinators apply the five leadership approaches (modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act and encouraging the heart) very frequently. Furthermore, about 70% of faculty performed from very satisfactorily to outstanding. Among these leadership approaches, it is modeling the way, challenging the process and encouraging the heart that was associated, $X^2(15, 76 = 27.91, 33.66 \text{ and } 33.11) = 24.99, p < .05$) to faculty performance evaluation. Based on the findings, recommendations that would enhance and develop leadership styles and practices are given.

Keywords – Higher LEAP, Learning Area Coordinators, Leadership Approaches, Faculty Performance, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Currently, educational organizations face various challenges in leadership practices (Sirisookslip, Ariratana, and Ngang, 2014). This problem might be due to different ranking styles, diverse pedagogical approaches, distinct school cultures, and various management considerations. Educational leaders can utilize two different leadership model (Mulford, 2003) or two management styles (Brown and Owusu, 2014), and even varied leadership methods such as democratic, laissez-faire, authoritarian, transactional, emotional, inspirational, distributed leadership and transformational (Aunga & Masare, 2017; Minadzi & Boadu, 2016; Player, 2014; Drobot & Roşu, 2012; Hardman, 2011; and Adeyemi, 2010). In ASEAN Countries, Malaysia enables school leaders to take responsibility and to act and view leadership practices as transformational and distributed (Jones, Adams, Hwee Joo, Muniandy, Perera, & Harris, 2015). Moreover, the leaders in schools in Indonesia has a role as a father who is expected to set good examples. Indonesian leaders are probable to show compassion while using a more paternalistic leadership style (Irawanto, 2009). With these distinguishable accounts, confusion arises in the school environment including ordering and commanding among the teachers and administrators.

According to Boyce as cited by Lazaro (2011), as the world of work continues to change at a rapid pace, different organizations and top management must investigate alternative means of developing the skills and abilities needed by leaders such as principals, learning area coordinators, discipline coordinators, and even teachers. This action of enhancing leaders' abilities and influencing the way a person feels will lead to a successful realization of goals in a dynamic organization (Ibrahim, 2014; and Akerele, 2007). Positions such as learning coordinators and faculty both play a significant role in the educational society; they must imbibe and adhere towards the understanding of their institution's quality policy statements, philosophy, vision, and mission. The study suggested that to be an effective school leader, direction and purpose to a happy, goal oriented and the productive school must be given consideration (Masare, 2017). But how this thought possible if conflict ascends in the school settings? How one could manifest the school's standards if the learning coordinator's leadership practices did not meet his teachers' stimulus to perform at his best. Symeonidis (2015) mentioned that to influence teachers, factors such as professional freedom, just supervision, and participation in educational decision-making should be given. The improvement of the employees' performance is a significantly important aim in which the leader tries to achieve through several actions and considerations (Emmanouil, Osia, and Paraskevi-Ioanna, 2014).

A countless challenge on universities to uphold and improve their programs and services are the demand of 21st-century benchmark and Association of South East Asian Nation (ASEAN) countries. However, the real challenge is no longer how to improve but more so how to sustain and continually improve. What leadership approach matters? The OECD (2001) claimed that school improvement movement of the past 20 years had put a great emphasis on the role of effective school leaders which is vital to the achievement of the demands from the macro to micro level to large-scale sustainable education reform. School head's leadership style and teachers' beliefs, routine, professional growth, classroom engagement, and other job-related attitudes were connected (Minadzi & Boadu, 2016; Hardman, 2011; and Adeyemi, 2010).

Effective educational leaders could develop the capacity of the school to enhance students' learning and teachers' motivation and performance (Daley, Guarino, and Santibanez, 2016). In Singapore, principals play an active role in enhancing the middle management team. They are expected to empower heads of departments with direct instructional roles when teachers, staff, and students are more accustomed to the change (Ng, 2015). Learning area coordinators,

therefore, may affect their teachers' performance by implementing effective leadership style to develop the capacity of the school in different key result areas such as instruction, objectives, organization, staffing, community outreach program, research, student services and the like. According to Ibrahim (2014), a few leadership practices can influence the way teachers will perform their tasks. Learning coordinators leadership styles significantly impact teacher job satisfaction and motivation to develop them and accomplish well.

The study investigates the relationship of teachers' performance, and the leadership approaches that their learning area coordinator utilizes. The researchers, who work with learning area coordinators are intrinsically motivated to embark on this study since it is timely to recommend ways to improve coordinators' leadership styles. The study had been conducted in the University of Perpetual Help Molino Campus, the university that envisions itself in developing Filipino citizen as a great leader committed to becoming Helpers of God with great character for nation-building.

FRAMEWORK

The researchers anchored the study on Feidler's Contingency Model. The model encapsulates the matching of leadership approach to a certain situation. This model states that there are no best practices of leadership. Instead, a leader's success and effectiveness are based on how he/she adjust to a certain situation and challenges (Bello, 2015). The researchers believe that when teachers are in a critical encounter, he/she must be guided appropriately and must receive the best assistance as possible. Learning coordinators must properly set the right leadership practice and approach during the given situation. With this guidance, better performance is undeniably in a great position. Employees are the most significant assets of the organization and the most noteworthy source of competitive advantage, thus having the best systems in guiding and managing a human resource is of high importance (Player, 2014). The researchers emphasized that when teachers are correctly directed by their learning area coordinator's best examples and leadership practices, the school community will undeniably perform very well.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Through a systematic research inquiry, an attempt is made to ascertain the relationship of faculty performance and learning area coordinators' leadership approaches. The study specifically sought to answer the following questions: (1) to identify the most commonly used leadership approaches of the different learning area coordinators of the senior high school department; (2) to determine the level of job performance among teachers; and (3) to compare the significant relationship between teacher's performance rating and the leadership approaches of their learning area coordinators.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The goal of the study is to identify the different leadership approaches of the learning area coordinators' and the teachers' year-end rating. Descriptive method and correlational research design were used. Researchers obtained measures of association to study the relations existing to two variables which are not manipulated (Vogt & Johnson, 2011).

Research Site

The research was conducted in the University of Perpetual Help Molino Campus, particularly in the Senior High School of the Basic Education Department. The department was chosen because the two researchers work directly with the faculty and learning area coordinators of the mentioned department.

Participants

The study includes 93 faculty members of the senior high school department in a University in Cavite, Philippines for the school year 2017 – 2018. Seventy – six sample teacher – respondents were determined using Raosoft sample size calculator with a 5% margin of error and 95% confidence level.

Instrumentation

The main instrument in gathering and collecting the desired data was an adopted inquiry form developed by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner (Lazaro, 2011). The questionnaire is all about the Leadership Practices Inventory

(LPI). The reliabilities for the LPI, as measured by Cronbach alpha coefficients ($\alpha = 0.810, 0.901, 0.843, 0.825$ and 0.898) are consistently strong (Posner, 2016). It is composed of two parts; Part I dealt with faculty year-end performance evaluation for School Year 2017 – 2018. Part II is made up of thirty questions which asked their perception on how often their learning area coordinators practice the following leadership approaches; (a) modeling the way, (b) inspiring a shared vision, (c) challenging the process, (d) enabling others to act, and (e) encouraging the heart.

Data Gathering Procedure

To be able to gather data, researchers submitted an approval letter to the administrators of the university. Human resource department provided the faculty performance evaluation. In the distribution, the entire respondents were requested to answer the leadership inventory form after the in-service training given to faculty. The researchers personally administered the research instrument to the respondents, and the results were collected, tallied, tabulated and submitted for statistical treatment with the guidance of statistician.

Data Analysis

The following statistical techniques were used to ensure accuracy and reliability of results in the analysis and interpretation of the data: (1) Percentage, (2) Mean (3) Standard Deviation and (4) Chi-Square Test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Learning Area Coordinators' Leadership Approaches

There were 76 faculty members involved in the research study. Nine (9) learning area coordinators were evaluated based on the degree they practiced the five leadership approaches.

Table 1. Modeling the Way as Leadership Approach Use by the Learning Area Coordinators

Department	Mean	SD	Interpretation
ABM	8.19	1.90	Usually
English & Research	9.32	0.80	Almost Always
FCL & Philosophy	8.28	0.46	Very Frequently
Filipino	7.45	1.41	Usually
HUMSS	7.80	1.18	Usually
Mathematics	8.33	0.81	Very Frequently
PEH, Arts & Design	8.28	0.79	Usually
Science	9.20	0.68	Almost Always
TVL	9.17	1.06	Almost Always
Overall	8.45	1.07	Very Frequently

Table 1 presented that English and Research Coordinator ($M = 9.32$, $SD = 0.80$), Science Coordinator ($M = 9.20$, $SD = 0.68$) and TVL Coordinator ($M = 9.17$, $SD = 1.06$) almost always practiced modeling the way. Meanwhile, two (2) coordinators used the leadership approach very frequently, they were Math Coordinator ($M = 8.33$, $SD = 0.81$) and FCL & Philosophy Coordinator ($M = 8.28$, $SD = 0.46$). The overall mean of 8.45 with $SD = 1.07$ indicated that the *learning area coordinators, in general, are very frequent in setting themselves as a good example to teachers.*

Findings may imply that area coordinators are acquainted and aware with the importance of giving voice clearly and authentically to team values and directions through setting themselves as good examples. Such a leader is a role model for the followers, and his behaviors are idealized by them (Aydin, Sarier & Uysal, 2013).

Table 2. Inspiring a Shared Vision as Leadership Approach Use by the Learning Area Coordinators

Department	Mean	SD	Interpretation
ABM	8.53	1.87	Very Frequently
English & Research	9.76	0.41	Almost Always
FCL & Philosophy	8.36	0.53	Very Frequently
Filipino	6.93	2.23	Fairly Often
HUMSS	7.20	1.06	Fairly Often
Mathematics	8.33	1.33	Very Frequently
PEH, Arts & Design	8.39	0.96	Very Frequently
Science	9.29	0.61	Almost Always
TVL	8.87	1.14	Very Frequently
Overall	8.53	1.36	Very Frequently

It can be gleaned from Table 2 that English and Research coordinator ($M = 9.76$, $SD = 0.41$) and Science coordinator ($M = 9.29$, $SD = 0.61$) almost always practice inspiring a common vision. Furthermore, TVL, ABM, PEH & Arts and Design, FCL & Philosophy and Mathematics coordinators use it very frequently. However, two (2) coordinators from Filipino and HUMSS Department fairly often exercise the stated leadership approach.

The computed overall mean was 8.53, indicating that in general the coordinators very frequently use inspiring a shared vision style. According to Aydin (2013), leaders identify and set high objectives, create a team spirit and can repetitively encourage others to make an action. Likewise, in path-goal theory, as cited by Jay (2014), leaders in school do clarify and set goals together with the subordinates which will eventually inspire them to find the best path for achieving these set goals. The role may also remove barriers to better performance and promote cohesiveness and effort of the team. Another vital purpose of leadership is that goals must be shared, whereby leaders and followers focus on the common good and commit to the philosophy, vision, mission, and values of the school. Shared obligations lead to sincerity and faith in the organizational system, and climate as faculty learn to transcend self – interest for the sake of the institution (Smith, 2016).

Table 3. Challenging the Process as Leadership Approach Use by the Learning Area Coordinators

Department	Mean	SD	Interpretation
ABM	7.75	2.29	Usually
English & Research	9.40	0.64	Almost Always
FCL & Philosophy	8.28	0.71	Very Frequently
Filipino	7.45	1.43	Usually
HUMSS	6.50	0.84	Fairly Often
Mathematics	8.52	0.85	Very Frequently
PEH, Arts & Design	8.03	1.07	Usually
Science	8.98	0.99	Very Frequently
TVL	8.83	1.39	Very Frequently
Overall	8.33	1.30	Very Frequently

Based on table 3, only English and Research coordinator practice almost always the approach of challenging the process with the computed mean of 9.40 and a standard deviation of 0.64. Meanwhile, four (4) coordinators very frequently use the same approach, they were Science coordinator ($M = 8.98$, SD

= 0.99), TVL coordinator (M = 8.83, SD = 1.39, Mathematics coordinator (M = 8.52, SD = 0.85) and FCL and Philosophy coordinator (M = 8.28, SD = 0.71). The rest of the coordinators were evaluated by teachers as those who usually and fairly often use the approach of challenging the progression.

The calculated general mean of 8.33 with the standard deviation of 1.30, overall, shows that *coordinators are very frequent in* using the leadership style of *challenging the process*. School leaders must be willing to take risks to provide and deliver a stimulus for change and innovation. Such transformation and innovation are vital and dynamic part and plays a fundamental role in effective leadership and well community (Smith, 2016).

Table 4. Enabling Others to Act as Leadership Approach Use by The Learning Area Coordinators

Department	Mean	SD	Interpretation
ABM	8.31	1.99	Very Frequently
English & Research	9.75	0.34	Almost Always
FCL & Philosophy	8.83	0.42	Very Frequently
Filipino	6.88	2.15	Fairly Often
HUMSS	7.22	1.04	Fairly Often
Mathematics	9.02	0.77	Very Frequently
PEH, Arts & Design	9.06	0.85	Very Frequently
Science	9.48	0.74	Almost Always
TVL	9.39	1.13	Almost Always
Overall	8.79	1.36	Very Frequently

Table 4 shows that learning area coordinators of English and Research department (M = 9.75, SD = 0.34), Science department (M = 9.48, SD = 0.74) and TVL area (M = 9.39, SD = 1.13) almost always use the approach of enabling others to act. The rest were either very frequent (PEH, Arts and Design, M = 9.06, SD = 0.85), (Mathematics, M = 9.02, SD = 0.77), (FCL & Philosophy, M = 8.83, SD = 0.42) and (ABM, M = 8.31, SD = 1.99) or fairly often (HUMSS, M = 7.22, SD = 1.04) and (Filipino, M = 6.88, SD = 2.15). *In general, coordinators are very frequent in* using the leadership style of *empowering others to perform* (Overall mean = 8.79, SD = 1.36). Finding is supported by Smith (2016) which affirms that followers should be motivated to achieve more than the original planned tasks and functions. Learning area coordinators as leaders must encourage teachers to be innovative, analytic and creative. Followers challenge on

the issues of the discovery of new ideas, methods and the production of creative solutions to problems.

Table 5. Encouraging the Heart as Leadership Approach Use by the Learning Area Coordinators

Department	Mean	SD	Interpretation
ABM	8.72	1.92	Very Frequently
English & Research	9.94	0.18	Almost Always
FCL & Philosophy	8.67	0.61	Very Frequently
Filipino	7.48	1.53	Usually
HUMSS	7.68	0.89	Usually
Mathematics	9.05	0.78	Very Frequently
PEH, Arts & Design	8.92	0.66	Very Frequently
Science	9.70	0.58	Almost Always
TVL	9.46	1.03	Almost Always
Overall	8.97	1.14	Very Frequently

The result from Table 5 presents that coordinators of English & Research, Science and TVL department almost always encourage the heart of the teachers with calculated means equal to 9.94 (SD = 0.18), 9.70 (SD = 0.58) and 9.46 (SD = 1.03) respectively. Meanwhile, Mathematics (M = 9.05, SD = 0.78), PEH, Arts & Design (M = 8.92, SD = 0.66), ABM (M = 8.72, SD = 1.92) and FCL & Philosophy (M = 8.67, SD = 0.61) learning area coordinators utilize the same approach very frequently. Others, HUMSS (M = 7.68, SD = 0.89) and Filipino (M = 7.48, SD = 1.53), practice it usually.

The overall mean of 8.97 (SD = 1.14) establishes that *coordinators are likewise very frequent in encouraging their teachers*. It implies that coordinators uplift teachers' spirits and draw them upward. Leaders have characteristics of inspiring and motivating their followers to be part of their success. Inspiration should be a common trait among leaders (Smith, 2016).

Faculty Performance Evaluation

There were 76 faculty members involved in the research study. Faculty performance evaluation is presented using figure 3 below.

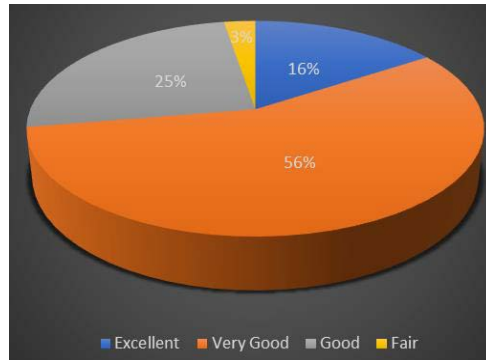


Figure 3. Faculty Year-end Performance Rating SY 2017 – 2018

It can be gleaned from Figure 3 that 56% (43), of teachers, were very satisfactory, 25% (19) satisfactory, and 16% (12) excellent. Only 3% (2) received a fair evaluation. The result may imply that *most of the teachers did it very well and even outstanding during the year-end faculty evaluation*. Therefore, it is evident that schools need effective administrators, as leaders, who are proactive in their department and approaches resulting to an increased teachers' job satisfaction, better performance and strengthened commitment to perform and be part of attaining the school's vision (Alam, 2017).

Significant Association between Faculty Performance and Learning Area Coordinators' Leadership Approaches

Table 6. The Result of Chi-Square Test On Learning Area Coordinators' Leadership Approaches And Faculty Performance Evaluation

Leadership Approaches	χ^2		Degrees of Freedom	Significance	Decision
	Computed	Critical alpha = 0.05			
Modeling the Way	27.91	24.99	15	Significant	Ho: Rejected
Inspiring a Shared Vision	28.50	28.86	18	Not Significant	Ho: Accepted
Challenging the Process	33.67	24.99	15	Significant	Ho: Rejected
Enabling Others to Act	27.14	28.86	18	Not Significant	Ho: Accepted
Encouraging the Heart	33.11	24.99	15	Significant	Ho: Rejected

Based on Table 6, *modeling the way*, $X^2 (15, 76 = 27.91) = 24.99, p < .05$), *challenging the process* $X^2 (15, 76 = 33.67) = 24.99, p < .05$), and *encouraging the heart* $X^2 (15, 76 = 33.11) = 24.99, p < .05$), were associated to faculty performance evaluation. With these results, the hypothesis that “learning area coordinators’ leadership styles such as modeling the way, challenging the process and encouraging the heart have no significant association between faculty performance” were rejected.

On the other hand, the X^2 value of 28.50 and 27.14 were both less than its critical value of 28.86. With these results the hypothesis that “inspiring a shared vision and enabling others to act, as both leadership approaches, have no significant association with faculty performance” were accepted.

The result may imply that the integration of different leadership approaches such as setting oneself as a commendable example, motivating others and encouraging teachers’ motives are important in developing outstanding teachers. There is evidence that an integrated leadership approach has a beneficial effect on both teacher job satisfaction and school performance (Smith, 2016). Furthermore, Rachman, Putrawan & Suryadi (2018) concluded that leadership styles have direct positive effects on teachers’ performance. An occurrence of variation and changes to teacher’s performance has been directly significantly affected by a variety of leadership styles. There is a relationship between leadership styles and school effectiveness (Tatlah & Iqbal, 2012).

In general, the result confirms how the Fidler’s Contingency Model works, senior high school learning area coordinators exercise and utilize the five leadership approaches very frequently especially when needed which ensued to teacher’s creditable performance. Overall, the coordinators of English and Research, Science and TVL departments almost always utilize these approaches to lead their area. Based on the faculty evaluation, about 70% were very good and excellent. This may present that teachers were highly motivated to achieve objectives at their best because they are assured that learning area coordinators are equipped with the best leadership ready when sudden challenges or unexpected changes occur. The results also show that modeling the way, challenging the process and encouraging the heart were the leadership approaches that are most likely associated with faculty performance rating.

CONCLUSIONS

Leaders who set themselves as good examples, inspire others with mutual goals, challenge members to do at their best, give followers opportunity to perform

power and discretion and recognize others through giving commendations are the five leadership approaches that are most common to senior high school learning area coordinators. These styles are evident since the faculty, in general, evaluated the coordinators based on the frequency of delivery and utilization of the approaches as very frequent. Additionally, the researchers concluded that the senior high school faculty members are generally performing from very well to outstanding. Thus, it is highly recommended that higher leadership enhancement and advancement program (LEAP) must be crafted to deliver greater chances for both teachers and coordinators to explore a more advanced and comprehensive trainings that will give complex opportunities in terms of content orientation, pedagogies relative to students' authentic learning and all other key areas including research and institutional citizenship.

Lastly, based on the results, it was noted that approaches such as modeling the way, challenging the process and encouraging the heart are positively related to teachers' performance. It is, therefore, significant to heighten and strengthen approaches that will clarify and complement leaders' values to the ideals of the university. Learning area coordinators must align their actions with the institution's shared values. Administrators must learn to give opportunities that will drive teachers to innovate and grow, and constantly improve that will generate a more depth achievement whether from wins or learning from their mistakes. Similarly, school leaders must recognize everyone's contribution to the attainment of success, to create a spirit of oneness and to produce extraordinary results.

TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

The result of the study could be translated through a journal article for local and international publications, newsletters, social media, and other media for information dissemination. Additionally, both the external and internal stakeholders might be able to translate the paper into a more comprehensive administrative policy and advanced leadership programs that could generate cooperative trusts, research of similar studies and a more in-depth understanding of the context. Finally, it can be translated through sharing this with the institution's employees to present and clarify the administrative policies in the workplace.

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