

Assessing the Impact of Leadership Styles on Organizational Effectiveness in Chinese Vocational Schools

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Abstract: This research examines the impact of leadership styles on the organizational efficacy of vocational institutions in China. The main aim is to evaluate the effects of several leadership dimensions—communication, decision-making, motivation, empowerment, conflict management, relationship building, and ethical behavior—on these schools' overall operation and performance. Utilizing a descriptive-comparative and regression analytic methodology, data was gathered from instructors and students at five vocational schools in Guangdong Province via structured questionnaires. The research examined the opinions of leadership effectiveness among instructors and students, finding notable disparities between the two groups, with teachers consistently providing more favorable leadership evaluations. The regression study further substantiated that leadership styles substantially influence critical aspects of organizational success, including strategy planning, resource management, employee engagement, performance management, and student orientation.

Keywords: Communication; Decision-making; Motivation; Empowerment; Conflict Management; Relationship Building; Ethical Behavior.

1. Introduction

The quality of education and the overall success of schools are greatly influenced by effective leadership styles and organizational effectiveness in the ever-changing world of educational institutions. Organizational effectiveness is the degree to which a company or group accomplishes its aims and objectives, whereas leadership styles cover a range of methods used by leaders to direct and impact their subordinates. When it comes to creating productive classroom settings, raising student accomplishment, and protecting the interests of all parties involved in schools, these two ideas go hand in hand.

There has been a lot of focus in international educational research on leadership styles and organizational success at the macro level. Avolio et al. (2019) and Bassiouni and Belhaj (2020) are two of the many studies that have looked at the effects of different styles of leadership on organizational outcomes like communication, decision-making, and employee happiness. Dorsey and Chen (2020) and Chen and Liu (2021) are two examples of organizational effectiveness frameworks that have been created to evaluate and improve educational institutions' performance in areas such as strategy planning, resource management, and performance evaluation.

Problems and intricacies arise, especially in vocational schools, when these ideas are examined closely, especially in the Chinese setting. Different socio-cultural, economic, and institutional elements influence the leadership styles and organizational dynamics of China's vocational schools. Within these institutions, for example, innovation and good communication may be stifled by bureaucratic decision-making and hierarchical leadership systems (Jones & Lee, 2021). In addition, vocational schools face difficulties in managing resources effectively and offering quality education due to financing limits and limited resources (Kim & Lee,

2020).

A case study in a vocational school in Guangdong Province, for example, found that the leadership there was ineffective, with issues like making decisions from on high and a lack of dialogue amongst the faculty, students, and administration (Smith & Johnson, 2018). As a whole, the organization was inefficient, staff morale was low, and student involvement was low because of these problems. Similarly, a case study conducted in a Shanghai vocational school shed light on the challenges faced by school administrators in attempting to improve organizational effectiveness while simultaneously navigating intricate bureaucratic systems and meeting the needs of many stakeholders (Wang & Liu, 2019).

Empirical research is urgently needed to address these difficulties and inform evidence-based policies in China's educational landscape, especially inside vocational institutions, where leadership styles and organizational effectiveness play a significant role. While there is an increasing amount of literature on educational leadership and organizational performance on a worldwide scale, there is a significant lack of studies focusing on the unique circumstances of China's vocational education system. Past research has mostly ignored the specific difficulties and possibilities encountered by China's vocational schools in favor of more generic educational settings or Western contexts. To fill this knowledge vacuum, this study analyzes the connection between leadership styles and organizational effectiveness in Chinese vocational schools. It zeroes in on areas such as communication, decision-making, motivation, empowerment, relationship building, conflict management, and ethical behavior.

Effective leadership styles are of utmost importance in vocational schools since they significantly influence multiple aspects of organizational effectiveness. Effective communication in educational environments is crucial for

effective leadership, promoting openness and cooperation among school administrators, educators, and students (Smith & Peterson, 2019). According to Johnson et al. (2020), transformational leadership, which involves inspiring communication and sharing a vision, has been linked to improved communication effectiveness and organizational cohesion. Moreover, leadership styles have a substantial impact on the decision-making processes in vocational schools. Engaging stakeholders in decision-making processes, known as participatory leadership approaches, has been associated with increased satisfaction and commitment among teachers and students (Brown & Collins, 2018). In contrast, it has been observed that authoritarian leadership styles might potentially result in diminished morale and a reluctance to embrace change (Jones & Lee, 2021). Moreover, motivation plays a pivotal role in influencing performance and fostering engagement inside vocational educational institutions. According to Wang and Smith (2019), empirical evidence suggests that transformational leadership has the capacity to inspire and encourage both instructors and students, hence fostering a healthy organizational atmosphere. In vocational schools, the cultivation of a culture of invention and initiative necessitates the presence of empowerment, which entails the delegation of authority and the promotion of autonomy (Bassiouni & Belhaj, 2020).

The utilization of conflict management tactics by educational administrators has a substantial influence on the overall success of the organization. According to Thomas and Johnson (2018), leaders that employ a collaborative and problem-solving methodology in addressing conflicts are able to cultivate trust and collaboration among all stakeholders, hence enhancing the overall good atmosphere inside the school. On the contrary, the implementation of *laissez-faire* leadership styles has the potential to intensify conflicts as a result of insufficient intervention and guidance (Nguyen et al., 2021). Furthermore, establishing robust connections is essential for fostering a nurturing and unified school environment. According to Avolio et al. (2019), transformational leaders place a high value on interpersonal relationships and cultivate a sense of belonging among both instructors and pupils, hence promoting collaboration and teamwork. In contrast, it has been observed that transactional leadership styles tend to overlook the relationship dimension of leadership, prioritizing the accomplishment of tasks (Zhu et al., 2020). Moreover, the demonstration of ethical conduct by educational administrators establishes the framework for upholding integrity and ensuring accountability inside vocational educational institutions. According to Brown and Mitchell (2019), ethical leadership practices are characterized by the promotion of honesty, fairness, and transparency, which in turn foster trust and confidence among stakeholders.

Strategic planning, led by visionary leadership, is crucial for establishing long-term objectives and coordinating resources to accomplish them, hence enhancing organizational success (Dorsey & Chen, 2020). The optimization of resource allocation and promotion of efficiency within vocational schools can be achieved through effective resource management, which is supported by transformational leadership (Smith & Johnson, 2019). In addition, it has been argued that decentralized leadership structures have the potential to improve an organization's ability to adapt and respond to evolving demands, hence promoting flexibility and agility (Kim & Lee, 2020). Employee engagement and satisfaction levels are crucial

metrics for assessing the overall well-being and effectiveness of a firm. According to Brown and Smith (2020), the implementation of supportive leadership styles, such as transformational and servant leadership, has been found to have a favorable influence on employee happiness and engagement within the education sector. Furthermore, it is imperative to employ student-centered leadership strategies in order to improve student happiness and academic achievements in vocational educational institutions (Johnson & Wang, 2018).

This study carries substantial significance within the framework of vocational schools in China for multiple reasons. The significance of vocational education in China's economic development and workforce preparation is of paramount importance. The significant increase in demand for skilled personnel across multiple sectors is a direct consequence of China's ongoing shift towards a knowledge-based economy. Vocational schools play a crucial role in providing students with the necessary practical skills and knowledge to effectively address the changing demands of the workforce (Zhou & Wu, 2020).

Furthermore, the presence of competent leadership and efficient organizational practices is crucial in guaranteeing the excellence and pertinence of vocational education. The increasing proliferation and variety of vocational programs in China have created a pressing demand for effective leadership that can effectively steer these institutions towards achieving high standards of performance. Furthermore, it is crucial to prioritize organizational effectiveness in order to optimize the use of resources, enhance student results, and bolster the overall competitiveness of vocational schools within the educational framework of China (Zhang et al., 2019).

Vocational schools in China have distinct obstacles that require a customized strategy for leadership and organizational administration. Significant challenges to effective leadership and organizational effectiveness arise from various factors, including bureaucratic systems, funding limits, and societal attitudes of vocational education. Hence, it is imperative to comprehend the distinct requirements and intricacies of vocational schools in China in order to formulate focused interventions and policies that effectively tackle these obstacles (Guo & Xu, 2018).

Although the significance of leadership and organizational success in vocational education is increasingly acknowledged, there is a noticeable lack of research in the specific context of vocational schools in China. Previous research frequently concentrates on broad educational environments or is carried out within Western frameworks, so neglecting the distinct obstacles and prospects encountered by vocational schools in China (Li & Wu, 2019). The current body of empirical research on the correlation between leadership styles and organizational effectiveness in Chinese vocational schools is particularly scarce. Although research conducted in other nations offers essential insights, it is important to acknowledge that the unique cultural, institutional, and policy circumstances in China may require a unique approach to leadership and organizational management (Wang & Sun, 2020).

In addition, current research mostly concentrates on analyzing leadership and organizational efficiency at a large scale, neglecting the intricate dynamics at a smaller scale within vocational schools. In order to design methods that effectively promote leadership effectiveness and organizational performance in Chinese vocational schools, it

is crucial to have a comprehensive understanding of the daily challenges and experiences faced by school leaders, teachers, and students (Chen & Li, 2021).

Consequently, the primary objective of this research is to address the existing knowledge deficit by undertaking a thorough investigation into leadership styles and organizational efficacy in Chinese vocational schools. The study will specifically concentrate on various dimensions including communication, decision-making, motivation, empowerment, conflict management, relationship building, and ethical conduct. Through an examination of the existing gaps in the scholarly literature, the primary objective of this study is to offer significant insights and recommendations aimed at enhancing leadership practices and organizational performance within the vocational education sector in China.

2. Statement of the Problem

This study aims to assess the impact of leadership styles on organizational effectiveness in vocational schools in China. Specifically, this study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the assessment of the respondents of the leadership style in their vocational school in terms of:

- 1.1 Communication
- 1.2 Decision-Making
- 1.3 Motivation
- 1.4 Empowerment
- 1.5 Conflict Management
- 1.6 Relationship Building
- 1.7 Ethical Behavior

2. Is there a significant difference in the assessment of teachers and students of the leadership style in their vocational school?

3. What is the assessment of the respondents of the organizational effectiveness in the vocational school in terms of:

- 3.1 Strategic Planning
- 3.2 Resource Management
- 3.3 Employee Engagement and Satisfaction
- 3.4 Performance Management
- 3.5 Student Focus

4. Is there a significant difference in the assessment of the teachers and students of the organizational effectiveness in their vocational school?

5. Do leadership style variables have significant impact on organizational effectiveness in vocational schools in China?

6. Based on the results of the study, what enhanced leadership excellence initiative for Chinese vocational schools can be designed to improve leadership effectiveness and organizational performance in Chinese vocational schools?

3. Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the assessment of teachers and students of the leadership style in their vocational school.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the assessment of the teachers and students of the organizational effectiveness in their vocational school.

4. Research Design

The research design used many analytical tools, such as descriptive, comparative, correlational, and multiple regression methods. These methodologies comprehensively

examined the correlation between leadership styles and organizational effectiveness at vocational schools in Guangdong Province, China.

The descriptive technique was used to provide a thorough grasp of the characteristics and viewpoints of people on leadership styles and organizational effectiveness. A quantitative evaluation of essential aspects, such as communication, decision-making, motivation, and organizational structure, was performed using standardized questionnaires administered to instructors and students. This method characterized the prevailing leadership styles and organizational dynamics evident in the chosen schools. The next phase of the research focused on a comparative analysis to identify differences in the assessment of leadership styles and organizational effectiveness between instructors and students. Statistical tests, including t-tests, were used to compare and determine whether significant differences in opinions and experiences existed among participants in the vocational school environment based on their distinct roles and viewpoints.

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to assess the predictive ability of leadership styles on organizational effectiveness. The research analyzed the correlation between leadership style attributes and aspects of organizational performance, seeking to ascertain the influence of diverse leadership behaviors on organizational outcomes. These results enhanced the understanding of how leadership influenced organizational efficiency in vocational schools.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Assessment of the Respondents of the Leadership in their Vocational School

Table 1 displays respondents' evaluation of the communication procedures inside their vocational schools, including students and instructors. The table provides insights regarding the efficacy of leadership communication with stakeholders, including students and instructors, inside these schools. The document provides the average scores, standard deviations, and interpretations for each indication derived from the perspectives of students and instructors.

Indicator 4 exhibits the highest combined mean score, with respondents affirming that "Educational administrators foster a conducive atmosphere that promotes the open exchange of ideas and concerns" (Mean = 2.90, SD = 0.97), securing the top place among the indicators. This indicates that a critical strength of leadership communication in these vocational schools is fostering an atmosphere conducive to open conversation. Effective communication is essential for cultivating trust and cooperation among stakeholders in educational environments. Research by Mitchell et al. (2019) indicates that open and supportive communication significantly improves organizational performance and stakeholder satisfaction.

The lowest combined mean score pertains to Indicator 6, which indicates, "There is a prevalent occurrence of communication breakdowns between school administration and teachers/students" (Mean = 2.64, SD = 0.97), ranking tenth. This suggests that communication failures, while not ranked exceptionally low, are seen as one of the less effective elements of leadership communication. This corresponds with Gilley, McMillan, and Gilley's (2021) findings, which emphasized that communication failures are prevalent in educational institutions and may result in misunderstandings, diminished morale, and a lack of cohesiveness among faculty

and students.

Table 1. Assessment of the Respondents of the Leadership in their Vocational School as to Communication

INDICATORS	CLASSIFICATION	MEAN	SD	INTERPRETATION	RANK
1. The school administration adeptly conveys objectives and anticipations to both educators and learners.	Student	2.68	1.07	Agree	4.5
	Teacher	2.87	0.81	Agree	
	Combined	2.78	0.95	Agree	
2. The establishment of effective and transparent communication channels among school administration, instructors, and students is evident.	Student	2.65	1.11	Agree	7.5
	Teacher	2.87	0.82	Agree	
	Combined	2.76	0.98	Agree	
3. School administration actively seeks and values feedback from both teachers and students.	Student	2.64	1.14	Agree	7.5
	Teacher	2.87	0.85	Agree	
	Combined	2.76	1.01	Agree	
4. Educational administrators foster a conducive atmosphere that promotes the open exchange of ideas and concerns.	Student	2.81	1.07	Agree	1
	Teacher	2.98	0.85	Agree	
	Combined	2.90	0.97	Agree	
5. The communication in major decision is not clear and transparent enough.	Student	2.66	1.10	Agree	6
	Teacher	2.87	0.82	Agree	
	Combined	2.77	0.98	Agree	
6. There is a prevalent occurrence of communication breakdowns between school administration and teachers/students.	Student	2.52	1.10	Agree	10
	Teacher	2.75	0.82	Agree	
	Combined	2.64	0.97	Agree	
7. School administrators seldom offer prompt updates or information regarding modifications or advancements.	Student	2.70	1.14	Agree	3
	Teacher	2.93	0.87	Agree	
	Combined	2.82	1.02	Agree	
8. Inadequate communication has resulted in teachers and students feeling ignorant about crucial educational concerns.	Student	2.53	1.17	Agree	9
	Teacher	2.80	0.85	Agree	
	Combined	2.67	1.03	Agree	
9. A conspicuous disparity exists between the communication conveyed by school administrators and the actual experiences encountered by teachers and students.	Student	2.77	1.20	Agree	2
	Teacher	3.00	0.89	Agree	
	Combined	2.89	1.06	Agree	
10. In general, the efficacy of communication from school leadership is suboptimal, impeding the operational efficiency of the vocational school.	Student	2.69	1.08	Agree	4.5
	Teacher	2.87	0.84	Agree	
	Combined	2.78	0.97	Agree	
Overall Mean	Student	2.67	0.71	Agree	
	Teacher	2.88	0.53	Agree	
	Combined	2.77	0.63	Agree	

LEGEND: STRONGLY AGREE (4) =3.51-4.0); AGREE (3) =2.51-3.50); DISAGREE (2) =1.51-2.50); STRONGLY DISAGREE (1) =1.0-1.50)

Moreover, while the aggregate mean ratings primarily reside within the "agree" category, a significant disparity in viewpoints exists between students and instructors. Teachers consistently evaluated leadership communication more favorably than students, with an overall mean of 2.88 compared to the students' 2.67. This disparity indicates that educators may perceive a greater alignment with the leadership's communication initiatives than students. These discrepancies signify the necessity for more inclusive communication strategies that adequately address the concerns of both educators and learners, a conclusion corroborated by research from Men and Stacks (2020), which highlighted the significance of customized communication methods in educational leadership.

These findings highlight the need to establish more transparent, consistent, and inclusive communication tactics in vocational institutions. School leadership must rectify communication failures and guarantee that information is clear and timely, as shown by the decreased ranks in communication clarity (Indicator 6) and communication breakdowns (Indicator 5). Implementing these tactics may

bridge the disparity between student and instructor perspectives, thus improving overall organizational efficacy.

6. Conclusion

1.The most favorable evaluation of leadership style, with instructors ranking it more highly than students, indicates that while leadership methods are beneficial, there are chances for improvement. The inconsistencies in ratings suggest a need to improve openness, engage students more in decision-making, and establish uniform dispute-resolution procedures. Resolving these challenges may enhance the congruence between instructors' and students' perspectives, augmenting overall happiness with leadership.

2.The notable disparity in leadership evaluation between instructors and students, with teachers providing more favorable ratings, implies that teachers may possess more engagement or knowledge of leadership methods. This underscores a deficiency in communication and engagement with students, who may perceive a diminished connection to leadership processes. Promoting more open and participatory leadership techniques might close this gap and provide a more

cohesive understanding of leadership success.

3.The generally favorable evaluation of organizational success, shown by elevated evaluations from educators, suggests that while the school's strategic planning, resource management, and other operational domains perform well, student satisfaction is comparatively lower. Students' diminished scores indicate apprehensions over their participation in these processes, especially in resource distribution and decision-making. Enhancing students' active involvement and comprehension of these procedures may elevate their opinions of the school's efficacy.

4.The pronounced disparity in evaluating organizational efficiency between instructors and students, with teachers assigning higher ratings, highlights a separation between the two factions. Teachers' increased engagement in strategic and operational procedures results in a more positive perspective. This necessitates more openness and student participation in organizational operations to harmonize viewpoints and guarantee that all stakeholders feel equally included and appreciated in the school's pursuit of effectiveness.

5.The considerable influence of leadership styles on organizational efficacy in vocational schools indicates that leadership is the primary catalyst for institutional success, with effective leadership practices responsible for the bulk of the variation in school performance.

7. Recommendations

1.Provide frequent updates, such as newsletters or town hall meetings, to educate teachers and students about significant choices and forthcoming activities. This guarantees that all stakeholders see themselves as integral to the decision-making process.

2.Establish a bi-monthly leadership communication platform where administrators provide concise updates and facilitate opportunities for inquiries and input from students and educators.

3.Formulate a student advisory body that collaborates with school administration to provide student insights on significant choices impacting the institution. This will enhance student participation and satisfaction with leadership methods.

4.Invite student representatives from each department to participate in monthly leadership meetings to address student-related problems, directly engaging students in policy development and problem resolution.

5.Formulate and disseminate a standardized dispute resolution policy that is clear and accessible for educators and students. Consistent seminars on conflict management for staff and students enhance a culture of transparent communication and equitable resolution.

6.Establish a conflict resolution task force to manage conflicts according to well-defined protocols. Ensure personnel and students know the process via handbooks and orientation workshops.

7.Enhance openness in resource distribution by conducting monthly budget meetings or disseminating resource allocation reports to students and staff. This will resolve student apprehensions about resource management and equality.

8.Disseminate a yearly report on the school's resource allocation, including buildings, instructional materials, and student services, to enhance transparency and cultivate confidence.

9.Implement recognition programs for students and

instructors to celebrate their successes and efforts, enhancing engagement and motivation. This may include rewards, certificates, or just public recognition at assemblies.

10.Initiate a quarterly "Achievement Awards" event to honor students and staff for academic excellence, extracurricular involvement, or actions that enhance the school community.

11.Facilitate informal engagements, such as leadership-student meet-and-greet events, mentorship initiatives, or open-door office hours with school administrators. This will facilitate relationship-building and make leadership more accessible to students.

12.Organize monthly "Leadership Coffee Mornings" for students to engage with school leaders in an informal environment to share ideas, issues, and solutions, fostering openness and accessibility.

13.Establish formal feedback mechanisms for students and staff to contribute insights on several facets of school operations, such as strategic planning and resource management. Utilize this input to implement data-informed enhancements.

14.Establish a digital feedback platform that enables students and staff to give input on school policies and procedures anonymously. Evaluate comments biannually and integrate the insights into the school's operational strategies.

15.Implement leadership training programs emphasizing diversity, communication, and empowerment to ensure leaders are prepared to meet the diverse needs of students and staff.

16.Collaborate with leadership training specialists to provide yearly seminars for school administrators, emphasizing participative leadership and conflict resolution, so assuring ongoing growth and alignment with the institution's objectives.

17.Vocational schools need to allocate resources to extensive leadership development programs emphasizing transformational leadership. These programs enable leaders to inspire, motivate, and promote inclusive decision-making processes, immediately improving organizational performance.

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