A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS AT JEYANG AND HKACHYANG MIDDLE SCHOOLS IN LAIZA, KACHIN STATE, MYANMAR

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Abstract: The main purposes of this study were: 1) to identify teachers' perceptions towards principal's leadership behaviors at Jeyang Middle School; 2) to identify teachers' perceptions towards principal's leadership behaviors at Hkachyang Middle School; 3) to compare principals' leadership behaviors perceived by teachers between Jeyang and Hkachyang Middle Schools in Laiza, Kachin State, Myanmar. The researcher designed this study as a quantitative and comparative study using the questionnaire in two parts. Part one was associated with the teachers' demographic profile which consisted of five items in terms of age, educational background, teaching Experience, training experiences, and number of year(s) of teaching at current school. In part two, Path-Goal leadership behavior questionnaire from Northouse (2010) which included four dimensions (Directive, Supportive, Participative, and Achievement-oriented) of leadership behaviors was applied to determine teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership behaviors at the selected schools.

Introduction

The data was collected from all fulltime 59 teachers of Jeyang Middle School and 38 teachers of Hkachyang Middle School in 2017-2018 academic. The collected data was analyzed using means and standard deviation, frequency, percentage and independent sample t-test (two tailed). The finding for research objective one indicated that the total main score of teachers' perceptions towards their principal's leadership behaviors in Jeyang Middle School was 3.54, which was interpreted as high.

The finding for research objective two indicated that the total main score of teachers' perceptions towards their principal leadership behaviors in Hkachyang Middle School was 3.22, which was interpreted as moderate. The finding for research objective three indicated that there was a significant difference between the principals' leadership behaviors perceived by teachers between Jeyang and Hkachyang Middle Schools.

Schooling is a necessary part of conducting education which contributes to the development of a country. At schools, principal is the most important person, and all the functions of a school is under the supervision and management of the principal. Without good leadership, a successful school can never exist (National Association of Secondary School Principals and National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2013). The principal is a person who must lead the school to the targeted goal with clear objectives.

The main responsibility of a school is the achievement of students' learning. Donnelly (2012) also found that the principal's leadership behaviors and organizational routines were the main contributions to high level of students' achievement in school.

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The principal's leadership behavior builds a connection between the school organization culture and instructional climates and in which students' learning achievement takes place. According to Chrispeels (2004), the main factor of a successful school centers at principal's leadership through sharing the leadership with the followers and the community. Apart from the classroom instructions, all the factors that contribute to students' learning at school, are in the first position that require principal's leadership. Principal's leadership behavior can increase teachers' retention and creates a condition in which teachers work productively (National Association of Secondary School Principals and National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2013).

In the past, leadership was mostly relied upon individual activities than group activities, but modern effective leadership has been constructed by leaders' ability of mobilizing and instruct organizational activities. To be able to mobilize the teachers for the improvement of the school, the principal needs to have a beneficial leadership behavior (Guthrie & Schuermann, 2010). Quinn (2002) remarked that through the characters of principal such as words and actions, the students are engaged in their learning. He further discussed that different leadership behaviors including instructional leadership behavior should apply for promoting active learning of students and settings of school.

Principal's leadership behavior is a key for school improvement and the academic achievement of the student (Moffitt, 2007). Collin (2001, as cited in Moffitt, 2007) discussed that the leaders' behavior can shape the culture of the school. It strongly influences other's ambitions and handles the success of a school by administering power and authority to influence. Drake and Roe (2003) recommended that the main task of the principal is to make changes to the school positively in the affairs of student's learning, and to promote the life of every person in the school.

As Myanmar had been under military regime for half a century, authoritarian leadership behavior influences a lot on the leaders of organizations, schools, and the country (Bandow, 2011). According to researcher's experience, the principals lead their school with constricting rules and regulations. Communications between the principal and the teachers, the teachers and the students in the school, was mostly one way and top down system. Although the people-elected government has emerged in Myanmar since 2011, the education system is still in a critical situation (Hays, 2014). For these reasons, the researcher wanted to conduct a study on principals' leadership behaviors and make comparison between the principals' leadership behaviors perceived by the teachers by using relevant research instrument and method of data analysis.

Research Objectives

The research objectives were as follows:
1. To identify teachers' perceptions towards principal's leadership behaviors at Jeyang Middle School in Laiza, Kachin State, Myanmar.
2. To identify teachers' perceptions towards principal's leadership behaviors at Hkachyang Middle School in Laiza, Kachin State, Myanmar.
3. To compare principals' leadership behaviors perceived by teachers between Jeyang and Hkachyang Middle Schools in Laiza, Kachin State, Myanmar.

Literature Review

Leadership
Leadership is the main factor that arouses the emotional and courageous aspects of many people. Under the authorization of the leaders, people build influential and wealthy countries. Scholars and experts have conducted study on the field of leadership in large-scale since the early twentieth century and they defined the meaning of leadership in various different approaches. Bass (2008) defined that the failure and the success solely rely on the leader of an organization so leadership is often seen as the crucially important aspect of the organization. Hoy and Miskel (2013) argued that the success of an organizations relies on the leadership and leader because the leader is the one who is supposed to take the role of leadership and the rest of the group are followers. In a different perspective, leadership is contributed by its member because

it is a social process in a social system and leadership is a property of the organization. Glanz (2002) contended that everybody has the ability to lead to some extent in appropriate situations, but the only difference in quality is the use of critical ideas when leading because people or leaders vary in their skills and abilities. Although the definition is different, it is helpful and valuable for the principal as a leader of the school and its community to lead and manage the school with different types of people in different situations. To be able to cover different meaning, perspectives and purposes, the researcher needs to search more on leadership.

Leadership Behavior Theories

Chance and Chance (2002) described other studies that focused on two types of leadership behaviors which was conducted at Ohio State University in the 1940s. Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) was conducted towards their superiors and subordinates. They asked for two dimensions of consideration and initiating structure. The relationship of the followers and leader in the form of communication channels, and procedure indicates initiating structure through warmth, trust, interest, friendship. The respect between the followers and leaders indicates consideration.

These dimensions were discovered as independent behaviors. According to Ohio State studies a leader could be high in both dimensions whereas another leader could be low in consideration and high in initiating structure. Yukl (2002) noted that researchers at the University of Michigan found leadership behavior as:

(1) task-oriented behavior,

(2) relationship-oriented behavior, *and*

(3) participative leadership, which differentiated effective leaders from ineffective leaders.

Moreover, an effective leader not only focuses on task-oriented behaviors in terms of scheduling, planning, and coordinating but also established constructive relationship with followers by being friendly, building trust, and providing support.

Path-Goal Theory

Northouse (2016) claimed that path-goal theory suggested leaders choose an appropriate behavior of leadership to increase the expectations of the followers towards success and satisfaction. There are different components in path-goal theory and, different types of leader behaviors in the components. Every type of leader behavior provides motivation to the followers. According to House and Mitchell (1975), leaders could exhibit one or all of the four behaviors. Due to this factor, path-goal theory is different from trait approach in which one kind of leadership behavior is suggested. Depending on the situation and the followers need, the leader can change his or her behavior as required.

Directive Leadership

This leadership behavior is useful for school principals in the situation where the followers are uncertain of what and how to get work done. It is probably because of their lack of job experience, or they are inactive in doing their tasks. In this type of behavior, the principals give detailed instruction to the followers by allowing them to know what the school expects from them (Northouse, 2010).

The principals also arrange performance standards for the followers and requests them to follow rule and regulation of the school to reach the standard as well as to achieve the students' academic achievement.

Supportive Leadership

The behavior helps principals attain the designated goal at work setting that is challenging for the followers. In this type of behavior, principals create the work place pleasant and happy. He or she behaves to be the group member by being friendly and approachable to the followers in and out of the school. Moreover, the principal always concerns about difficulty, welfare, dignity, and needs of the followers together with treating them fairly with opportunities (Northouse, 2010).

Participative Leadership
It is best for principals when the task is both questionable and unclear for the followers. The participation of the principals assists the teachers to see the path that guides towards school's objectives. The principals even discuss with the followers regarding work-related matters of the school. The followers' suggestions and opinions are shown value by allowing them to be involved in the decision making (Northouse, 2016).

Achievement-oriented Leadership
When the followers must carry out the ambiguous tasks, achievement-oriented leadership behavior is the most effective to apply in professional work environment. The principal sets challenging objectives and expects the maximum level of the followers' performance.

He or she expresses that the leader believes the followers' capability to raise their confidence, and the capability to achieve the designated goal. Therefore, the effectiveness of this leadership behavior convinces followers that due to their endeavors, the effective performance will occur. However, achievement-oriented leadership behavior is in effective when the task is well structured and less complicated (Northouse, 2010).

Conceptual Framework
This research aimed to compare principals' leadership behaviors perceived by teachers between Jeyang and Hkachyang Middle Schools in Laiza, Kachin Stae, Myanmar. The researcher used the four dimensions of principal's leadership behaviors from Northouse (2010).

The four dimensions of principal's leadership behaviors are directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented. The following figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of this study.
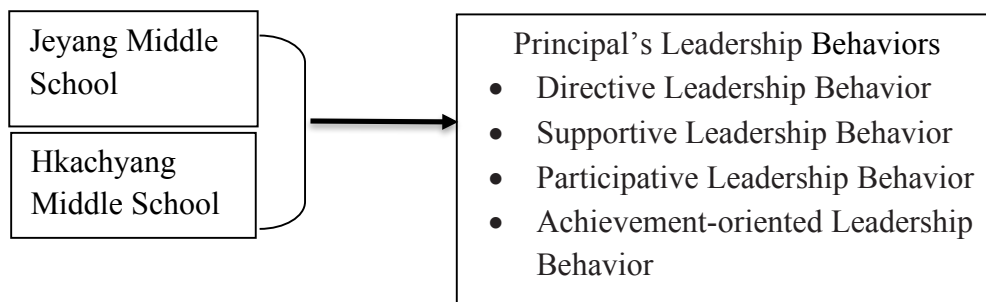

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology
To analyze the data and draw the conclusion of statistical analyses of data, the researcher used a quantitative approach. Aiming to compare the principals' leadership behaviors in the two middle schools, this research was conducted as a comparative study.

Research Instrument
The researcher used the questionnaire to collect data and the questionnaire was divided into two parts.
- Part one was associated with the teachers' demographic profile which consisted of five items in terms of age, educational background, teaching Experience, training experiences, and number of year(s) of teaching at current school.
- In part two, Path-Goal leadership behavior questionnaire from Northouse (2010) was applied to determine teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership behaviors at the selected schools of Jeyang and Hkachyang Middle Schools in Laiza, Kachin State, Myanmar.
    In contrast to the original questionnaire with the scoring system of a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Never to 7 = Always, the researcher adopted Yu's (2014) questionnaire which was based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Never to 5 = Always. The following tables 1 shows the scale scores and interpretation of the scale.

Table 1: Interpretation and Scale Scores

Rating	Score	Scale	Interpretation
Always	5	4.51 – 5.00	Very high
Usually	4	3.51 – 4.50	High
Occasionally	3	2.51 – 3.50	Moderate
Seldom	2	1.51 – 2.50	Low
Never	1	1.00 – 1.50	Very low

Collection of Data
The researcher discussed the research objectives and explained the questionnaire to the teachers of the two schools and distributed questionnaires to a total of 97 teachers from Jeyang and Hkachyang Middle Schools. The researcher collected all 97 (100%) of the survey questionnaires in the same month and started the tabulation and computation of data soon after coming back from Myanmar to the University.

Findings

Part one: findings of teachers' demographic factors
Age: the majority teachers were aged between 18 – 29 years old in Jeyang and aged between 30 – 39 years old in Hkachyang Middle schools. Aged between 40 – 49 years old were the lowest percentage of teachers and there were no teachers whose ages were between 50 and above in both schools. The result of research indicates that a lot of young teachers were teaching at the two schools.
Educational Background: regarding to the educational background of the teachers from the two selected middle schools in Laiza, Kachin State, Myanmar, most teachers had graduated high school while only small numbers of teachers were bachelor's degree holders. There was no master's degree holder teacher in both Jeyang and Hkachyang Middle Schools.
Teaching Experience: the research findings showed that the teachers who had 4 to 6 years of teaching experience were the most in Jeyang Middle School while the teachers who had10 and above years of teaching experience were the most in Hkachyang Middle School.
Training Experience: most of the teachers from both middle schools had received CCA training. It was the second highest number of teachers who had received both CCA and RWCT training in Jeyang while the teachers who had received CCA, RWCT and Other trainings was the highest number in Hkachyang Middle School.
Teaching Experience at current school: in Jeyang and Hkachyang Middle School, most teachers had taught for 3 to 4 years at current school and the second most teachers had taught for 5 to 6 years in Jeyang Middle School while the second most teachers had taught for 11 years and above in Hkachyang Middle School

Part Two: Findings of Research Objectives
Objective 1: to identify teachers' perceptions towards principals' leadership behaviors at Jeyang Middle School. In Jeyang Middle School, the teachers perceived principal's directive leadership behavior as high in the mean score of 3.87, principal's supportive leadership behavior as high in the mean score of 3.53, principal's participative leadership behavior as high in the mean score of 3.58, and principal's achievement-oriented leadership behavior as moderate in the mean score of 3.18. The total mean score of the principal's leadership behavior perceived by teachers in Jeyang Middle School was 3.54 and it was interpreted as high. Objective 2: to identify teachers' perceptions towards principals' leadership behaviors at Hkachyang Middle School. In Hkachyang Middle School, the teachers perceived principal's directive leadership behavior as moderate in the mean score of 3.50, principal's supportive leadership behavior as moderate in

the mean score of 3.02, principal's participative leadership behavior as moderate in the mean score of 3.12, and principal's achievement-oriented leadership behavior as moderate in the mean score of 3.24. The total mean score of the principal's leadership behavior perceived by teachers in Hkachyang Middle School was 3.22 and it was interpreted as moderate.

Objective 3: The comparison of teachers' perceptions towards principals' leadership behaviors: According to the findings, a significant difference was found between the teachers' perceptions towards the principals' leadership behaviors. The comparison of teachers' perceptions towards each of four principals' leadership behaviours was that the significant of directive leadership 186otmail186e was .008, supportive leadership 186otmail186e was .000, and participative leadership behaviour was .012, which were less than .05 level of significant value and achievement-oriented leadership behaviour was .611, which was greater than .05 level of significant.

Discussion

The findings showed that the interpretation of the teachers' perceptions towards the principal's directive, supportive, and participative leadership behaviors was high and achievement-oriented leadership behavior was moderate in Jeyang Middle School. Among them, teachers' perceptions on directive principal's leadership behavior was with the highest mean score. Therefore, based on the data analysis, teachers in Jeyang Middle School perceived their principal's leadership behavior as directive most often and as achievement-oriented less often than other behaviors.

According to the findings, the interpretation of the teachers' perceptions towards the principal's directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented leadership behavior was moderate in Hkachyang Middle School. Among four dimension of the principal's leadership behavior, teachers' perceptions on directive principal's leadership behavior was with the highest mean score. Therefore, based on the data analysis, teachers in Hkachyang Middle School perceived their principal's leadership behavior as directive most often and supportive as less often than other behaviors.

Although the mean score of teachers' perceptions on the principal in Jeyang Middle School was high and the principal in Hkachyang Middle School was moderate, teachers from both middle schools perceived their principals' leadership behaviors as directive most often. The researcher who worked in the area over ten years assumes that due to the situational context the leaders of the schools mostly used directive leadership behavior most often than other leadership behaviors. The people in the school were overwhelmed by the environment in which traditional leadership behavior was very strong and since the school is under the control of Kachin Independent Organization (KIO) which substantially believed that the employees could accomplish the task successfully only when the leader enforced rule and regulation accompanied by obedience. Furthermore, most part of KIO management was based on top down system because it was a revolutionary organization and the largest proportion of its feature was covered by military figure. According to Hkun Seng (2013), all schools and education system in Kachin area of Myanmar were influenced by centralization because top down management style was widely used in all schools. The central education department and local education officers controlled school policies and the result was that management style was based on listening to superior due to respect. House (1971) stated that the characteristic of directive leadership represents a leader as who gives specific instruction to the followers how and what should to be done, makes all followers understood work schedules and follow standards rules and regulations.

As research findings, education background of most of the teachers was high school level and only a few teachers were bachelor's degree holders. There was no master's degree holder. Furthermore, according to Hkun Seng (2013), the teachers in the schools of this area still needed pre-service and in-service training to promote the professional development. He added that although a director of education department mentioned that schools had authority to conduct professional development of teachers, all policies of schools were controlled by the education department and local education officers and no school conducted this activity. This indicated that the principal in the two schools used directive leadership behavior most often because specific instruction to the teachers how and what should be done was required to well accomplish the task and reach designated goal.

This research finding agreed with Yu (2014) who did a comparative study of educational administrators' leadership styles aiming to identify the dominant leadership styles of the educational administrators in three types of universities in China: Normal University, University of Science and Technology, and Medical University. According to her findings, the dominant leadership style of educational administrators in three types of universities in China was directive leadership style. Based on respondents in her study, the educational administrators in the universities used directive leadership style most often and achievement-oriented leadership style less often. Nearly all the respondents perceived that there was a relationship between leadership and power and position. She discussed that controlling and obeying tended to influence on the relationship between the subordinates and their administrators. There was also a strong influence of Chinese traditional leadership style and the directive leadership style in which the educational administrators always gave detail directions on how to accomplish the task successfully was an effective leadership style in the
Universities.

As discussed above, the main score of teachers' perceptions on principals' supportive and participative leadership behaviors of Jeyang Middle School was interpreted as high and Hkachyang Middle School was interpreted as moderate.

When Phyu (2013) conducted a comparative study on the principals' leadership behaviors and school climate at two international schools in Yangon, Myanmar, the finding showed that the interpretation of the mean score of the principals' supportive leadership behavior perceived by the teachers was as high. She found that instead of controlling directly, supportive leadership behavior was the main instrument for the teachers and the staff in the schools for motivation to accomplish the task.

Huang, Iun, Liu, and Gong (2010) described that participative leadership may also induce extra-role work behaviors such as organizational citizenship behaviors through its effect on psychological empowerment. Participative leadership behavior has an impact on subordinates' task performance and organizational citizenship behaviors by inducing trust-in-supervisor.

It is assumed that Hkachyang Middle School was stronger in power distance and the principal seemed to use the traditional leadership style most often. The Kachin schools leaders were hesitate to implement their beliefs and values due to high power distance and cultural value influence (Hkun Seng, 2013). Bainai and Reisel (2007) found that countries with greater acceptance of power distance are likely to find that employees prefer managers who exhibit a more autocratic rather than a participative or supportive leadership style. Huang et al. (2010) identified four task contexts that may shape the meanings and influence leadership behaviors, namely environmental uncertainty, degree of autonomy, accountability, and resource availability. Therefore, depend on the school environment, the school resources, and the domination of centralization from education department, the level of leadership behaviors were not in the same parallel.

According to the research findings, the overall teachers' perceptions on principal's leadership behaviors of Jeyang Middle School was high while the teachers' perceptions on principal's leaderhip behaviors of Hkachyang Middle School was moderate. There can be several reasons which appear to be the main factors of the difference between the leadership behaviors of the principals perceived by the teachers from the two middle schools.
The principal from Jeyang Middle School had graduated in post diploma in education from Majayang Institute of Education whereas the principal from Hkachyang Middle school had just received one-year teacher training course from Maijayang Teacher Training Center which was now upgraded to Maijayang Institute of Education. Different from first phase of the school as a teacher training center in the time the school mainly offered teaching method and teaching instruction, Maijayang Institute of Education designed the courses by focusing educational theory, school leadership and management skill. According to Glanz (2002), different people has difference in quality of leadership although everybody can perform as a leader in applicable situations to some extent because different people or leaders possess different skills and abilities.

Todman (2016) did a study on applicability of health care leadership competence and leadership behaviors for women's achieving health care executive status. The main purpose of his study was to identify relationship between path-goal leadership behaviors and Leadership Skills and Behavior, Organizational

Climate and Culture, Communicating Vision, and Managing Change. Todman (2016) found that directive leadership behavior was the positive predictor for men and for women achievement-oriented leadership behavior was a positive predictor when analyzed with the leadership skills and behavior health care competencies. His study showed that directive and achievement-oriented leadership behaviors were essential part of the professional development for men and women health care administrators. For training and developing future health care executive leaders, applying leadership behaviors and health care leadership competencies was potential factor to be adopted as best applied.

In addition, the two schools were in different situation although they were in the same area. Because Jeyang Middle School was IDPs school in IDPS camp and it was under direct control of IDPs committee while Hkachyang Middle School was under direct supervision of the education department of KIO. Norton, Webb, Dlugosh, and Sybouts (1996) indicated that the intercommunication between the organizational and human dimensions of social system creates the influence on the behaviors of members in organization.

Recommendation

The findings from the study showed that there was a significant difference between principals' leadership behaviors perceived by teachers between Jeyang and Hkachyang middle schools. Based on teachers' perceptions, the principals from Jeyang and Hkachyang Middle Schools applied all four leadership behaviors beside they applied directive leadership behaviors most often. The study made some recommendations to the education department, the principals, and the future researchers.

Recommendation to the Education Department

The researcher suggests that the education department should provide more educational leadership trainings to the principals in the schools. Education department should appoint principals from teachers who studied diploma in education and graduated from Maijayang Institute of Education or relevant course in other institutes and universities.

Recommendation to the Principals

The principals of both schools can review their leadership behaviors perceived by their fellow teachers and choose appropriate leadership behavior which best match with the work setting.

Recommendation to the Future Researchers

As this study is the foremost research in leadership behavior in the schools in KIO control area, it can provide the future researcher with appropriate instrument to do study on principals' leadership behavior in wider scale. If the future researcher can use more research instruments rather than relying only on questionnaire, it would be more productive research on leadership behavior.

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