

# **Toward High Performance Organization Using Path-Goal Theory and Transformation Theories: A Case Study of St.Louis School Chachoengsao**

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## **Abstract**

In this study, the main objectives were : to assess the current levels of leadership skills of the leadership team, staff engagement, and the performance effectiveness of the staff ; to design Organization Development Interventions (ODI) that will enhance the leadership skills, staff engagement and the performance effectiveness; to implement ODI and to evaluate the initial effects of ODI on the levels of leadership skills staff engagement and the performance effectiveness; and to propose a Roadmap that will sustain the initial positive effects of the ODI to further develop SLC as an excellent academic institution. The pretest survey questions on leadership skills and styles by all leaders, and employee engagement questionnaires survey were administered prior to implementing the OD interventions. A SOAR Workshop was also conducted to know the priorities of the school community in its future direction and be the basis for the research study. The research process involved the Pre-ODI, the implementation of OD and the Post- OD were conducted. At the beginning of the process, the 3 workshops were conducted with 248 Thai teachers as participants. The three workshops were on Whole - Brain Based Organization Development, Responsible Gap for Engagement, and Team Building Workshop. Random Interviews with 22 teachers, 10 parents and 15 alumni were also conducted. The results showed significant improvements on the leadership styles and the employee engagements. The performance effectiveness of the teachers showed no significant improvement. The results of the interviews with teachers, parents and alumni were positive on performance effectiveness. The researcher proposed 5 roadmaps for SLC future development on leadership skills, personnel, academic and students development, so that SLC will be the high performing school in the future.

*Keywords:* leadership, transactional, transformational, authentic, path goal, effectiveness, performance, high performance organization

## **Introduction**

St Louis School Chachoengsao aims for the world-class education, with transparency and good governance in administration where the personnel and students are constantly equipped and developed in a climate of affectivity, respect for the community of life, creativity and inner freedom. The study is based on the initial scanning of the strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results/resources of SLC using the SOAR

Model. The researcher with an OD expert conducted a one day SOAR workshop with 25 co-administrators. Using the Strengths-Opportunities-Aspirations-Results (SOAR) process and framework, the following features of the school were identified, namely: good learning environment and facilities, support of the stakeholders, high standard of teaching and learning, use of English in communication, disciplined environment, international faculty and sufficient staff and faculty development. Opportunities such increased enrollment, better stakeholders' support, high academic performance and successful alumni were among those mentioned. The Aspirations were academic excellence for the entire school community where the school becomes a first preference world class school. These aspirations are shown by Results such as increase of students population, more honors and awards for the school and that the students can further their studies in the best universities. Based on the above SOAR results, three priority areas were chosen for this study, namely: Leadership Skills, Employee Engagement and Performance Effectiveness.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To assess the current levels of leadership skills of the leadership team, staff engagement, and performance effectiveness of the staff
2. To design and implement organization development interventions (ODI) that will enhance the leadership skills, staff engagement and performance effectiveness
3. To evaluate the initial effects of the organization development interventions (ODI) on the levels of leadership skills, staff engagement and performance effectiveness
4. To propose a Roadmap to sustain the initial positive effects of the OD Interventions and thus further develop St. Louis School Chachoengsao as an excellent academic institution.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the current levels of leadership skills of the leadership team, staff engagement and performance effectiveness of the staff?
2. What organization development interventions (ODI) can be designed and implemented that will enhance the leadership skills, staff engagement and performance effectiveness?
3. What are the initial effects of the organization development interventions (ODI) on the levels of leadership skills, staff engagement and performance effectiveness?
4. What Roadmap maybe designed to develop the school as an excellent academic institution?

## Research Hypothesis

Ho1: There is no significant difference between the pre-ODI and Post ODI on leadership skills.

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Ho2: There is no significant difference between the pre-ODI and post ODI on staff engagement.

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## Review of Literature

Rutter et al. (1979) and Purkey and Smith (1983) agree that “effective schools” are characterized by factors such as: curriculum-focused school leadership, supportive climate within the school; emphasis on curriculum and teaching; clear goals and high expectations for students, a system for monitoring performance and achievement, ongoing staff development and in-service, and parental involvement and support. (Rutter et al., 1979 and Purkey and Smith, 1983)

Lee & Beard (1994) stated that competency refers to a person’s ability or capacity to undertake a particular task. Competency refers to the capacity of persons to fulfil certain skill-based job requirement. One of the competency approaches is that it focuses on what a person can do rather than on what he or she knows. Furthermore, Wentz (2001) defined that competencies are descriptions of the essential skills, knowledge, and attitudes required for effective performance in a work situation.

Traditional schools have a top-down system of management style where the director/the principal of the school is the highest authority. Katz (1995) suggested that effective administration depends on three basic personal skills, namely: **technical skill** which is the knowledge about and proficiency in a specific type of work or activity; **human skill** which is the knowledge about and ability to work with people; and **conceptual skill** which is the ability to work with ideas and concepts.

Three leadership theories were considered in this study; namely: Path-Goal Leadership Theory, Transformational and Transactional Leadership Theory, and Authentic Leadership Theory.

The Path-goal theory is about how leaders motivate subordinates to accomplish designated goals. According to House and Mitchell (1974), leadership generates motivation when it increases the number and kinds of payoffs that subordinates receive from their work Leadership also motivates when it makes the goal clear and through coaching and direction, removing obstacles and roadblocks to attaining the goal, and making the working itself more personally satisfying . Peter G. Northouse (2010) stated that the path-goal theory is designed to explain how leaders can help subordinates along

the path to their goals by selecting specific behaviours that are best suited to subordinates' needs and to the situation where subordinates work.

Transformational leadership is concerned with improving the performance and developing followers to their fullest potential (Avolio, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1990a). People who exhibit transformational leadership often have a strong set of internal values and ideas. They are effective at motivating followers to act in ways that support the greater good rather than their own self-interests (Kuhnert, 1994). Nemanich and Keller (2007) also found that transformational leadership behaviours such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation were positively related to acquisition acceptance, job satisfaction, and performance.

Transactional leadership differs from transformational leadership in that a transactional leader does not individualize the needs of subordinates or focus on their personal development. (Kuhnert and Lewis, 1987) Transactional leaders exchange things of value with subordinates to advance their own and their subordinates' agendas (Kuhnert, 1994).

Authentic leadership, an intrapersonal perspective, focuses on the leader and what goes on within the leader. It incorporates the leader's self-knowledge, self-regulation, and self-concept (Peter G. Northhouse, 2010). Shamir and Eilam (1993) suggested that authentic leaders exhibit genuine leadership, lead from conviction, and are originals, not copies. Eagly (2005) defined authentic leadership as an interpersonal process. It is relational, created by leaders and followers together. It does not result from the leader's efforts alone but also from the response of followers. It emerges from the interactions between leaders and followers. It is a reciprocal process because leaders affect followers and followers affect leaders.

Early and Bubb (2004) mentioned that continuing professional development is the means by which members maintain, improve their knowledge and skills, and develop the personal qualities required in their professional lives. This development includes all formal and informal learning that enables individuals to improve their own practice. Continuing professional development includes education, training and support activities engaged in by teachers aimed at adding to their professional knowledge, improve their professional skills, help clarify their professional values, and enable to educate students more effectively.

Sarah Cook (2012) defined employee engagement as the passion and energy of the employees to give of their best efforts, talents, abilities to the organization they serve, the customers, co-employees and others. It is the willingness and the ability of employees to give effort to help their organization succeed. Edward and Mannel London (2012) described an engaged employee as someone who feels involved, committed, passionate, empowered and demonstrates these feelings in work behavior. Gibbons (2006) mentioned that engagement is strongly correlated to a number of individual, group and corporate performance outcomes including recruiting, retention, turnover, individual productivity, customer service, customer loyalty, growth in operating margins, increased profit margins, and even revenue growth rates. (Edward and Manuel London, 2012)

Effective performance management system starts with and through goal setting process, followed by regular feedback and review/appraisals. It also identifies employee’s developmental needs and includes robust reward and recognition. The system also should encourage collaboration, teamwork and communication.

### Theoretical Framework

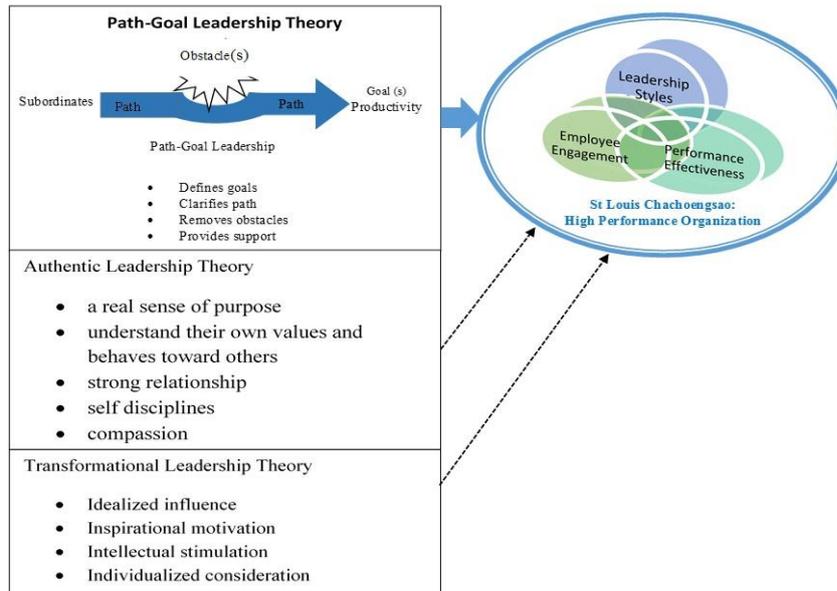


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework of the Study

The Theoretical Framework (Figure 1) shows that leadership styles, employee engagement and performance effectiveness-are the three factors that will lead Saint Louis School to be an excellent school or the High Performance Organization as based on the three leadership theories

The leadership style is dependent on the individual personality, the kind of work they do, the followers they deal with and the circumstance on any given day and hour. What is more important for the leaders are the characteristics such as role modelling, integrity, honesty, perseverance, team spirit, creativity, visionary and managerial skills.

Employee engagement refers to the ability and the power of a leader that influences, motivates, inspires the subordinates to get things done. It is the extent to which people in the organization willingly give of their effort, over and above doing what they have to do-giving their best, displaying creativity, and using their initiative to do work for the organization whole heartedly.

Performance effectiveness is the degree to which an organization or a person has successfully achieved the goals and the assigned duties. Effective performance refers to

the successful operation of an organization that reaches the standard expected by the public and the stakeholders and those involved or affected in team learning, instruction and activities.

### The Conceptual Framework

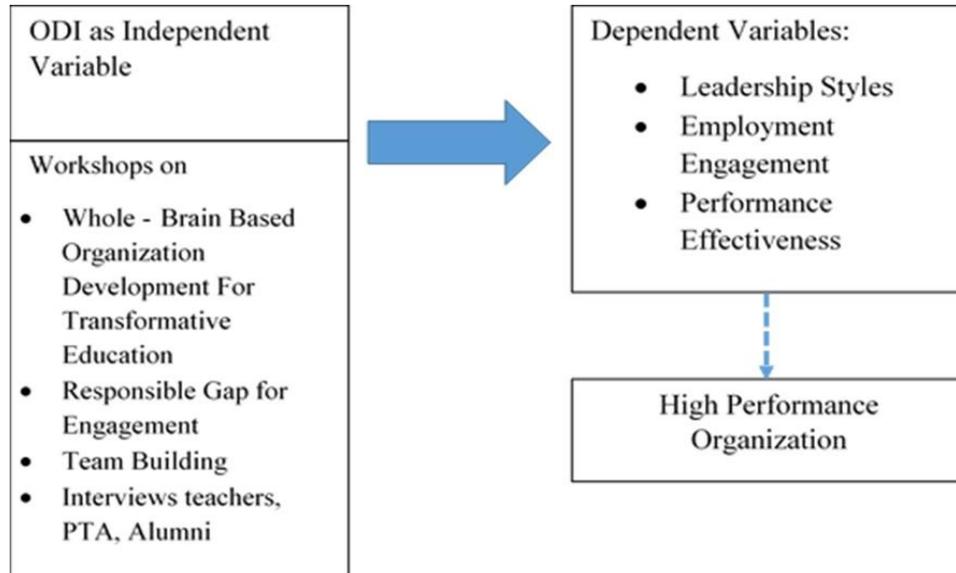


Figure 2. The Conceptual Framework of the Study

The Conceptual Framework (Figure 2) shows the independent variables in the study which are the set of the Organization Development Interventions (ODI) to be utilized in the study while the dependent variables are leadership skills, employee engagement, and performance effectiveness. The improvement of these dependent variables through OD Interventions will further St. Louis School Chachoengsao to the goal of achieving the status of an excellent school as a high performance organization.

## Research Methodology

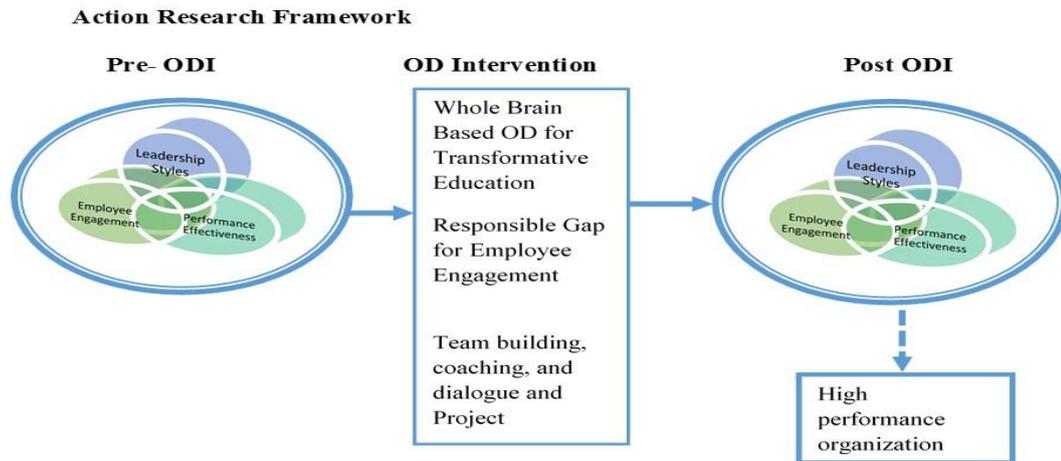


Figure 3. Action Research Framework

The entire population (N= 248) of the Thai teaching and non- teaching staff of St. Louis School, Chachoengsao participated in the study. Selected parents from the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) and alumni were interviewed to gather further data relevant to the study.

Primary data was gathered using a survey questionnaire. The researcher obtained permission from Sunanta Vejchalernjit Ph.D. to use the MLQ Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire which she translated into Thai language . Interview guides in English and Thai language were utilized for the interviews with various stakeholders such as teachers, parents and alumni.

Data collection (Pre and Post) were employed with the assistance of a team of co-researchers from the school team to lessen research bias, as the researcher is also the School Director. Third party providers and experts were employed to deliver the various seminars and trainings in the ODI phase to lessen research bias as well. Data collection was conducted by the researcher's team of co-researchers. Secondary data were obtained from the Institutional Performance Evaluation administered annually and were utilized to measure performance effectiveness.

Three workshops were conducted as Organization Development interventions, namely:

1. Whole-Brain Based Organization Development for Transformative Education aimed to help the teachers and staff to understand and realize personal values. Whole-Brain based organization development interventions unleash the sources of possibilities from within and multiply where possible, understand and appreciate the cultural differences and connect your personal values; and mindfully make choices of C.A.R.E. (Commitment, Awareness, Readiness, Engagement) .
2. Responsible Gap for Engagement aimed to clarify the teachers roles in the school so that they grow in their sense of of responsibility and commitment in relation to their

mission in the school; apply the Peter Drucker's Five Questions to define the right project to maintain a healthy society within the school; and set up a creative project for the school development.

3. Team-building, Coaching, Dialogue and Projects which aimed to create better relationships; school leaders learn the techniques on how to be a good coach; how to listen to group members ; and that teachers learn how to exchange ideas and dare to give opinions at the proper times

Quantitative data from survey questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics: mean and standard deviation and t-test. Qualitative data from interviews and workshops were analysed using key categories. Secondary data (Annual Institutional Performance Evaluation) was utilized to assess the variable on Performance Effectiveness. Findings were used to craft a Roadmap to sustain the initial positive effects of the OD Interventions.

## **Results and Discussion**

During Pre-ODI, the researcher used the questionnaires from Dr.Sunanta Vejchalernjit to find out the insights of school leaders ad teachers as regards the leadership styles, leadership skills, and employee engagement.

The results of the Pre-ODI survey are as follows:

Leadership style and skills as rated by school leaders:

- The highest mean score obtained for leadership styles = 8.73 *"I re-examine critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate"*, the lowest mean score = 6.84 *"I avoid getting involved when important issue arise"*. The total mean for leadership style is 7.82 with an SD =2.03 (sometimes-very frequently)
- The highest mean obtained for leadership skills = 8.91 as rated by the school leaders which was *"I share wins and successes with my team."* The lowest mean = 6.48 *"I often delegate important tasks to my staff."*The total sample mean is 8.03, SD 1.42 ( fairly often to very frequently)

Leadership style and skills as rated by the teachers

- The lowest mean scores in leadership styles is 6.74 *" The leaders focus attention on irregularities, mistakes,exceptions, and deviations from standards"*. The highest means scores in leadership styles is 7.63 *"The leader fails to interfere until the problems become serious."* The total sample mean is 7.05, SD = 2.20 (occasionally to very frequently)
- The teachers' highest mean score for leadership skills was 7.56 *"I discuss with each of his/her staff what is needed to exceed work expectations"*and the lowest mean score for leadership style was 5.30 *"The leaders provide rewards based equally on results and the*

*actions taken*". The total sample mean is 6.59 , SD 2.24 (once in a while –usually practiced)

Employee engagement as rated by leaders and teachers

The highest mean score on engagement = 7.75 *"My job makes me good use of my skills and abilities"*, the lowest mean score = 6.51, *"My supervisor really cares about me as a person"*. The total sample mean = 6.95, SD = 2.249 (once in a while- usually practiced)

The researcher set up the objectives to improve the leadership style and skill and the employee engagement in order to develop the leadership skills and styles, the engagement of employees by inviting the facilitators to conduct sessions on: 1) Whole-Brain Based Organization Development for Transformative Education, 2) Cross Functional Cooperation: team building and coaching, and 3) Responsible Gap Engagement. These three sessions served as the organization development interventions.

Organization Development experts were invited as facilitators to help as the external practitioners to facilitate the OD Interventions through training, educating and designing the new ways in order to improve and develop the leaders and the teachers .

**Post-ODI session:** The researcher again asked all the school administrators and all teachers to evaluate themselves with two set of questionnaires and interview teachers, parents and the alumni at random by appointing some senior teachers to be the interviewers.

The set of survey questionnaires used at Pre-ODI stage were readministered in order to compare the results before and after the interventions.

The results of the interviews with some teachers, parents and alumni gave the researcher suggestions to better improve St. Louis School Chachoengsao. All the data obtained were utilized by the researcher to come up with a set of recommendations for the school board, the administrator and the personnel.

The t-test results reveal that the OD interventions had a significant effect on leadership styles and leadership skills as indicated by the values obtained .012 for Leadership Styles and .004 for Leadership Skills. These values were derived from both the ratings of the teachers and the school leaders. The effect of interventions on leadership styles and leadership skills as rated by the leaders and teachers

The effect of intervention on leadership styles and leadership as rated by the leaders and teachers.

	Pre-Test		Post-Test		t-test	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
<b>Leadership Styles</b>	7.14	1.60	6.81	1.74	.012	Significant
<b>Leadership Skills</b>	6.77	1.64	7.22	1.73	.004	Highly Significant

Significant at t-test value is  $p < 0.05$

From the survey of teacher engagement, the effect of the intervention on teacher engagement as rated by the leaders and teachers.

	Pre-Test		Post-Test		t-test	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
<b>Engagement</b>	6.95	1.78	7.49	1.58	.003	Significant

The t-test value of .003 reveals that the interventions conducted had an overall significant effect on the level of engagement.

For the organization to be the High Performance Organizations (Beer, M. 2009) proposed 5 Qualities as:

1. Commitment to Excellent.
2. Clearly stated purpose and desired results.
3. Effective change management processes.
4. Open-Minded Directional Communication.
- 5 Culture of Continuous Learning.

### **What Roadmap maybe designed to develop the school as an excellent academic institution?**

The following Roadmap for Development was crafted based on the data from survey and interview results.

#### **Theme 1: Leadership Development Course**

##### **Objectives:**

- To build efficient leaders in various skills needed for leaders
- To know how to conduct meeting
- To have good technique in dealing with subordinate and the public
- To know IT skills needed for the job
- To have basic English language communication
- To know well the vision, mission of the Foundation and the school
- To improve team building for effective work relationships

**Indicators of success:**

- Less problems and mistakes in the delivery of tasks
- Reduced complaints from the stakeholders
- The subordinates are happy and good cooperation from the subordinates
- Reduce waste and supply of water and electricity
- Low turnover of staff and teachers
- Sign of satisfaction
- More time for school and children
- Improved team work

**Strategies:**

- Explain the plan to the present and future leaders
- Contact the experts
- Approval by the school board
- Set up the budget
- Evaluation every month
- Certificate distribution at the end of the course
- Team-building activities
- Follow up

**Budget:** from school fund

**Action by:** School director and advisory board.

**Timeline:** Monthly training, starting from October – April every year.

**Theme 2: Professional skills development for personnel****Objectives:**

- To work as a team among personnel
- To have dedication and commitment spirit for personnel
- To enhance the personnel to be more responsible to the job
- To have good communication system and channel
- To be more effective and efficient in service

**Indicators of success:**

- The personnel are more responsible to the work
- Less problem arising in each departments
- More unity and harmony in the department and among departments
- The environments are save and clean
- The school has positive image in all areas
- Less complaints from parents and the public

**Strategies:**

- Training the personnel in all levels once a year before opening the school.
- Meet all parents and students during the opening of the academic year.
- The school director and the head departments speak to the personnel at the end of each month in order for them to be conscious of their duties

**Budget:** School development budget

**Action by:** The school director, school board and department heads

**Time scale:** Every month and before opening the academic year

**Theme 3: English Communication training course for teachers and students****Objectives: (Teachers)**

- Teachers are fluent in English Communication.
- Teachers are able to listen to English conversation from foreigners
- Teachers understand well while watching cinema.
- Teachers feel good while speaking with foreigners.

**Indicators of success:**

Teachers are not shy while being with foreigners

Teachers have self-confidence during English classes and seminar

Teachers are not afraid to meet foreigners

**Strategies:**

- Appointment of teachers responsible for the program.
- Searching for the experts to take the course.
- Sending teachers to attend the course in-out of the country.
- Provide materials and English cinema for teachers to watch.

**Objectives: (Students)**

- Students are able to speak English well and fluent.
- Students are able to understand conversation while speaking with foreigners
- Students are able to understand English cinema.
- Students are fluent in English speech contest and English quiz

**Indicators of success:**

• Students have self-confidence while being with foreigners.

• Students can converse with foreigners happily.

• Students understand after watching English cinema.

• Students have high scores in interview.

**Strategies:**

- Searching experts to take the course in the school.
- Encourage students and parents to join the program.
- Organize educational trip aboard or English camp during holidays.
- Provide material rooms and English cinema for students

**Budget:** From school development fund

**Action by:** English subject Head and English teachers.

**Timeline:** During semester holidays

- **Timeline:** Throughout the year and especially during holiday.

#### **Theme 4: To improve performance of students and teachers in education quality**

##### **Objectives:**

- To enhance teaching techniques and using IT for teaching core subjects.
- To encourage teachers and students to perform at their best in teaching and learning.
- To prepare students for various competitions in and out of the country.
- To have more excellent students stay on at the end of each school year, and excellent students from other schools to come in.

##### **Indicators of success:**

- Teachers and students receive awards from recognized competitions.
- More secondary students could go to popular faculties and famous universities.
- Teachers are recognized in quality and good teaching by parents.
- Increase enrolment each year.

##### **Strategies:**

- Choose teachers and students who are ready to join the program.
- Short test to choose those who are ready to improve the performance.
- Find experts from PTA, alumni and Universities to train teachers and students to improve the education performance.
- Set the time for training and the budget needed.
- Periodical evaluation

**Budget:** School development plan

**Action by:** Head of Academic dept. and subject heads

**Time scale:** Starting October and March – April during semester break, and every morning

#### **Theme 5: Effective teaching program for teachers**

##### **Objectives:**

- To uplift the education standard in the school.
- To help teachers in using different media in teaching.
- To provide teachers techniques in teaching.
- To help teachers to develop different skills in the students, such as, creative, critical and analytical thinking skills.

##### **Indicators of success:**

- Teachers are using varieties of media in the classes.
- Students show different skills in doing works and conversation, such as creative, critical and analytical thinking.

- Teachers are teaching with various techniques.
- Students are happy in learning and eager to come to school.

**Strategies:**

- Search for experts to meet the above objectives.
- The school provides materials and media for training course.
- Provide motivation for teachers who are successful and meet the objectives.
- Share experiences among teachers who are successful in teaching.

**Budget:** PTA supports the budget

**Action by:** School director, PTA president and Academic Head.

**Timeline:** Training during semester break October and April, every year.

### **Conclusions**

Based on the quantitative data analysis, the following conclusions for the hypothesis are presented:

1. Ho1 is rejected, there is a significant difference between Pre and post ODI on leadership skills
2. Ho2 is rejected, there is a significant difference between Pre and post ODI on staff engagement

The results of the present study indicated that the following factors will lead St. Louis School Chachoengsao to be a High Performing Organization.

**Leadership.** The transformational leadership is preferred to transactional leadership .Transformational leadership leads to superior leadership performance, which has shown to be positively related to the following subordinate outcomes, stimulates subordinates to accept the mission of the group, stir subordinates to realize the important meaning of their tasks they are responsible to look beyond their own interest and show increased concerns for achievement, self- actualization and ideals (Bernard M. Bass, 2000; Michel, et al., 2010; Sosik & Jung, 2010).

On the contrary, transactional leadership style is a leadership where the leaders promote compliance of his/her followers through both rewards and punishments; the leaders emphasize details and short-term goals, standard rules and procedures. The leader does not make an effort to enhance followers' creativity and the generation of new ideas. Transactional leaders tend to be directive and action-oriented. They tend to think inside the box when solving problems, it is primarily passive. The followers are willing to risk pain and injury to obtain the results that leader is asking for, and exchanging rewards for performance, day to day operation.

Path-goal leadership is designed to explain how leaders can help subordinates along the path to their goals by selecting specific behaviors that are best suited to subordinates'

needs and to the situation in which subordinates are working, such behavior are directive, supportive, participative and achievement-oriented leaderships. (House and Mitchell, 1974). In the path performance, the goals are defined, classified, obstacles are removed and the leaders provide support to followers. The goal of this type of leadership is to increase employees' motivation, empowerment, and satisfaction so that the employees become productive members of the organization. Leaders clarify the path so followers know which way to go.

**Employee engagement:** An organization that has employees with high engagement level, the work results of the organization are also high because the employees' involvement, commitment and dedication to duties are greater.

As part of the conclusion, the researcher proposed a model for enhancing and training leaders development as in Figure 4, especially on the skills and styles of effective leaders that lead to high employee performance and employee job satisfaction that further results to enhanced employee engagement, and effective performance. As a result, the organization would be the high performing organization as proposed in the Theoretical Framework and vice-versa.

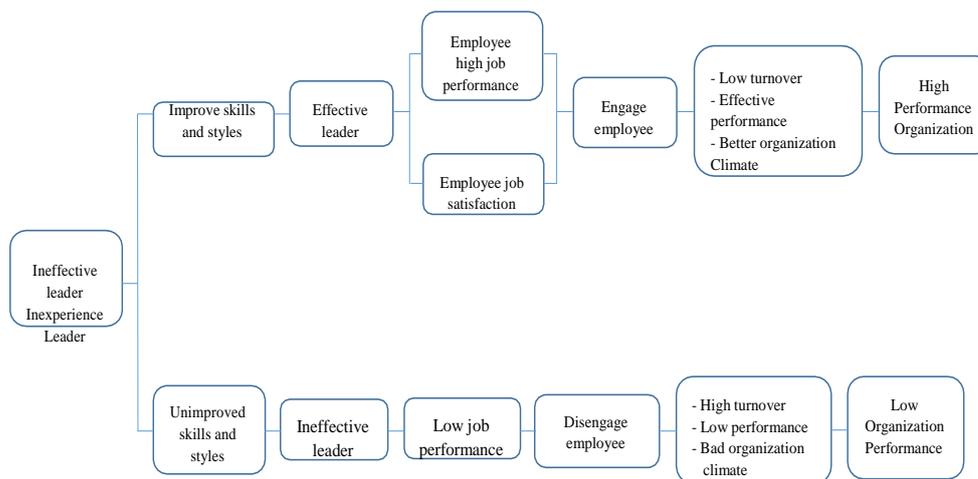


Figure 4. Proposed Model for Enhancing and Developing Leaders

The proposed roadmap and model will be implemented with a team working among other personnel in the school, such as the personnel in Director's office, Finance and Registration office and General Management office. They are supporting each other as a cross-functional team, cooperating together to build St. Louis School Chachoengsao as an Excellent Organization. This will encourage and support St. Louis School Chachoengsao to be an ideal working place: happy family with happy heart, happy soul, happy brain and when all the personnel are happy, the parents and the students will also be happy when coming to school.

From the point of view of the researcher who has two years' experience with the personnel of St. Louis School Chachoengsao, coaching is a must for the St. Louis School Chachoengsao leaders and the personnel at all levels and all department personnel. It is

good that St Louis School Chachoengsao have many experts with various expertise in many subjects coming from alumni, parents, the people in the community, and from the schools that belong to the Saint Gabriel Foundation. They can be tapped to help develop the personnel of St. Louis School Chachoengsao. The school teachers are eager and very willing to develop themselves, but they need someone to direct and guide them. So, I as a researcher may say that, if St. Louis School Chachoengsao personnel and leaders are working and teaching as a team and with proper coaching that will give them the excellent direction, together with the support and encouragement, St. Louis School Chachoengsao will be the high performing school.

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