

Behavior and Competence in Leadership of Student Leaders

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ABSTRACT

This research utilizing quantitative non-experimental descriptive correlational design tested the significant influence of public leadership behavior to competence of student leaders in secondary schools in a certain municipality of Davao del Norte Division. Purposive-quota sampling enumerating all officers of the student council except for the president were chosen as respondents and the president as the subject of the study. Statistical tools used to describe both the variables were weighted mean while Pearson-r was used to test the significant influence of public leadership behavior on competence of student leaders. Results showed that both public leadership behavior and leadership competence were very high. It was found out that there is a significant relationship between the two variables.

Keywords: leadership behavior, leadership competence, student leaders

INTRODUCTION

Poor leadership competence among student leaders is a substantial concern within educational settings, often resulting in detrimental outcomes for student organizations and their members. Smith and Smith (2018) highlighted that inadequate leadership skills, such as poor communication, lack of delegation, and insufficient conflict resolution abilities, contribute to ineffective leadership performance among student leaders. These failings can lead to disorganization, decreased morale, and hindered group productivity (Johnson et al., 2019). Furthermore, without proper guidance and mentorship, student leaders may struggle to navigate the complexities of their roles, exacerbating the problem. Thus, addressing the issue of poor leadership competence requires implementing targeted training programs and providing ongoing support to develop the necessary skills and competencies among student leaders.

The importance of leadership competence among students cannot be exaggerated, as it not only impacts their personal development but also shapes the success of organizations they lead. Effective leadership skills equip students with the ability to inspire, motivate, and guide their peers toward shared goals. Research by Day et al. (2014) emphasizes that leadership competence enhances students' capacity to communicate effectively, solve problems collaboratively, and adapt to diverse situations, preparing them for future roles in professional and civic life. Moreover, leadership competence fosters a positive organizational culture, enhances group cohesion, and promotes innovation and creativity (Yukl, 2012). By investing in leadership development, educational institutions can cultivate a generation of competent leaders who are equipped to address complex challenges and drive positive change in their communities.

The connection between leadership behavior and leadership competence among students is a crucial aspect of understanding effective leadership development. Research by Northouse (2018) emphasizes that leadership behavior reflects the competencies possessed by individuals in leading others. Effective

leadership behavior, such as communication, decision-making, and conflict resolution skills, is indicative of leadership competence, which encompasses the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for effective leadership performance.

Additionally, Day et al. (2014) highlights the importance of leadership behavior in shaping the development of leadership competence among students. Through practicing and refining leadership behaviors, students can enhance their competence, leading to improved leadership effectiveness and positive outcomes within student organizations and beyond. Therefore, fostering the connection between leadership behavior and competence is essential for nurturing the next generation of capable and impactful leaders.

Studying leadership behavior and competence is paramount for organizations seeking sustained success and growth. Such studies provide invaluable insights into the traits, styles, and competencies that distinguish effective leaders from their counterparts. By delving into these aspects, organizations can identify and nurture leaders who can inspire, motivate, and guide their teams toward achieving shared goals. Understanding leadership behavior also enables organizations to cultivate positive workplace cultures that foster collaboration, innovation, and employee engagement. Moreover, studying leadership competence facilitates the development of tailored training programs aimed at enhancing leadership skills and addressing areas for improvement. Ultimately, a comprehensive study of leadership behavior and competence empowers organizations to navigate challenges, adapt to evolving environments, and maintain a competitive edge in today's dynamic business landscape.

Statement of the Problem

This study explores the leadership behavior and competence of student leaders in secondary schools in a certain municipality of Davao del Norte. Particularly, this answered the following questions:

1. What is the level of public leadership behavior of Student leaders in terms of:
 - accountability leadership behavior,
 - lawfulness leadership behavior,
 - ethical leadership behavior,
 - political loyalty leadership behavior, and
 - network governance leadership behavior?

2. What is the level of leadership competence of Student leaders in terms of:
 - self-awareness,
 - self-management,
 - social awareness, and
 - relationship management?

3. Is there a significant relationship between public leadership behavior and leadership competence among student leaders in secondary schools in a certain municipality of Davao del Norte.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between public leadership behavior and leadership competence among student leaders was tested using 0.05 level of significance.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Several theories and research studies and claims were used to anchor this study. The following will be used

as basis of this research inquiry:

This study is anchored on the proposition of Eliphaz (2010) who stated that the conduct of research studies on leadership is equally significant as community leader's empowerment. Studies is recommended to start at the foundation level where future leaders in the community are trained in schools. Results will help policy makers, researchers, educational leaders, and government officials and other agencies to formulate programs on student leaders to make them ready as the next breed of leaders. Conducting research on political leadership will inform the community, the Department of Education, and local government unit that the leadership development of from student to actual assumption of government positions is a changing zone of educational training which is required to tie up with the standards of political leadership development in other nations.

In the sense generated from Eliphaz' (2010) claim, the models of local government unit leadership development in the Philippines need to be integrated in the student leadership trainings in schools tailored specifically to the increase in the number of student leaders and dramatic increase of needs and demands of the people and of the students. Therefore, a key means of contributing to the overall process of assuring good governance in the Philippines is by implementing successful leadership development programs starting from the basic training in schools.

Another basis of this study is that leadership development among students is a crucial aspect of education, shaping the future of society. Several theories have been proposed to understand and guide the cultivation of student leadership within educational environments. One prominent theory is the Social Change Model of Leadership Development (SCM) by Komives, Dugan, and Wagner (2009), which emphasizes collaborative leadership aimed at creating positive change within communities. This model identifies seven core values—consciousness of self, congruence, commitment, collaboration, common purpose, controversy with civility, and citizenship—as essential components of effective leadership development among students.

Further, another influential theory in the realm of student leadership is the Transformational Leadership Theory (TLT), initially proposed by Burns (1978) and further developed by Bass (1985). TLT posits that effective leaders inspire and motivate followers to transcend self-interests for the greater good of the organization or community. In educational contexts, TLT underscores the significance of educators and mentors in cultivating leadership potential among students by providing mentorship, encouragement, and opportunities for growth and self-discovery.

Furthermore, the Situational Leadership Theory (SLT) offers valuable insights into the dynamic nature of leadership, particularly applicable in educational settings where students' needs and abilities vary. Developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1969), SLT suggests that effective leadership is contingent upon the readiness level of followers, which encompasses their ability and willingness to accomplish tasks. In the context of student leadership, SLT advocates for a flexible approach that recognizes students' varying levels of readiness, allowing educators and student leaders to tailor their support and guidance accordingly, thereby maximizing students' leadership potential and growth.

The independent variable is the leadership behavior which is the leadership behavior manifested by the student leaders of Tibal-og, Sto. Tomas, Davao del Norte. The indicators are based on the study of Tummers and Knies (2014) entitled *The Public Leadership Questionnaire: The Development and Validation of Five Dimensions of Public Leadership Behaviors*.

The mentioned dimensions are used as indicators which are accountability leadership behavior which refers to the behavior manifested by the leader to stimulate employees to justify and explain actions to stakeholders, lawfulness leadership behavior which refers to the behavior manifested by the leader to encourage employees to act in accordance to governmental rules and regulation, ethical leadership behavior

which refers to the behavior manifested by the leader to promote employees to behave ethically, political loyal leadership behavior which refers to the behavior manifested by the leader to stimulate employees to align their actions and interest of politicians, even when this is costly, and network governance leadership behavior which refers to the behavior manifested by the leader to encourage employees to actively connect with stakeholders.

The dependent variable is the leadership competence which is defined as the competence manifested by the leaders in carrying out their responsibilities. The indicators of this variable are self-awareness which refers to the awareness of the leader to himself, self-management refers to the ability of the leader to manage himself out from pressures and instances, social awareness refers to the consciousness of the leader to his surroundings and people around him, and relationship management which refers to the conflict resolution ability and management skills of the leader in maintaining harmonious relationship.

The independent variable is then correlated to the dependent variable to know the extent of relationship between the two attributes of student leaders.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized descriptive – correlational method which involves collecting data to test and answer question on the hypothesis concerning the current status of the subject of the study. A descriptive study determines and reports the way things are. Descriptive data are usually collected through a questionnaire survey, interviews, or observations (Chiang, 2015).

Further, Curtis, Comiskey, and Dempsey (2016), this method determines the relationship among two or more variables and sought to investigate the extent where one or more relationships may exist among natural phenomena, without trying in any way to alter these phenomena. This was done by gathering data from the respondents through revised and contextualized survey questionnaire adapted from a certain study that evaluate the level of leadership behavior and leadership competence of student leaders.

The research subjects are the presidents of the student council whose public leadership behavior and leadership competence are evaluated by student leaders other than the president who are the respondents of the study. While the respondents considered in this study are the officers other than the president who are considered to have knowledge on the leadership of the president. The researcher considered purposive-quota sampling to make sure that the respondents who will evaluate have basic knowledge of the president. Respondents of the study are the 105 officers other than the president coming from seven (7) secondary schools in a certain municipality of Davao del Norte.

The research instrument used for the independent variable was the public leadership questionnaire formulated by Tummers (2014) which is composed of five indicators. The accountability indicator has seven items, the lawfulness indicator has five items, the ethical indicator has seven items, the political loyal indicator has five items, and the network governance indicator has seven items which has an over-all total of 31 items. In the dependent variable, the questionnaire used was the leadership competency questionnaire with four indicators. The self-awareness indicator has nine items, the self-management indicator has 10 items, the social awareness indicator has seven items, and the relationship management indicator has 13 items with an over-all total of 39 items.

Statistics used to answer the sub-problems are weighted mean which is used to measure the level of public leadership behavior and leadership competence of student leaders and Pearson's r which was used to test the significant relationship of public leadership behavior and leadership competence of student leaders

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As shown in Table 1, the student leaders perceived that the student leaders manifest a very good public leadership behavior ($M=3.71$; $SD = 0.38$). Further, the student leaders are also perceived as very good in stimulating other officers to justify and explain actions to students ($M=4.00$; $SD = 0.49$). In encouraging other student leaders to act in accordance to governmental rules and regulation, they are perceived as good ($M=2.74$; $SD = 0.83$). Officers also perceived the student leaders to be excellent when it comes to behaving in accordance to ethical standards and promote student leaders and officers to behave ethically ($M=4.26$; $SD = 0.42$). Student leaders are also very good in stimulating student leaders and students to align their actions and interest of schools even when this is costly ($M=3.70$; $SD = 0.94$). And lastly, the student leaders are also perceived as very good in network governance leadership behavior ($M=3.86$; $SD = 0.95$).

Table 1. Level of Public Leadership Behavior of Student leaders

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent	Standard Deviation
Accountability Leadership Behavior	4.00	Very Good	0.49
Lawfulness Leadership Behavior	2.74	Good	0.83
Ethical Leadership Behavior	4.26	Excellent	0.42
Political Loyal Leadership Behavior	3.70	Very Good	0.94
Network Governance Leadership Behavior	3.86	Very Good	0.95
Over-all Mean	3.71	Very Good	0.38

Further, student leaders perceived the student leaders to have a very good competence in self-awareness that they know their weaknesses and strengths as student leaders ($M=3.83$; $SD = 0.34$). Self-management competence of the student leaders tends to be good as perceived by the student leaders while social-awareness competence is very good ($M=3.30$; $SD = 0.98$). The relationship management of the student leaders is very good as perceived by the student leaders ($M=3.93$; $SD = 0.79$). Generally, the competence of the student leaders in leading the student leaders is very good ($M=3.71$; $SD = 0.34$).

Table 2. Level of Leadership Competence of Student leaders

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent	Standard Deviation
Self-Awareness	3.83	Very Good	0.86
Self-Management	3.30	Good	0.98
Social Awareness	3.77	Very Good	0.98
Relationship Management	3.93	Very Good	0.79
Over-all Mean	3.71	Very Good	0.42

The entire sample size of 105 student leaders was included in the analysis. As seen in Table 3, results showed that the relationship was statistically low significant $r(105) = 0.273$, $p = 0.000$ since the hypotheses was rejected. The positive low correlation coefficient generally suggests that as the public leadership behavior ($M=3.71$; $SD = 0.38$) increases (resp. decreases), leadership competence ($M=3.71$; $SD = 0.42$), also increases (resp. decreases). Moreover, the coefficient of determination $r^2 = 0.075$ indicated that 7.5% of the variance in leadership competence was explained by public leadership behavior (and vice versa).

Table 3. Significant Relationship Between Public Leadership Behavior and Leadership Competence

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	r-value	p-value	Decision
Public Leadership Behavior	3.71	0.38	0.273	0.000	Reject H ₀
Leadership Competence	3.71	0.42			

Student leaders are recommended to enhance their lawfulness leadership behavior to be manifested so that student leaders will be visibly recognized and evaluate this aspect. Other dimensions in public leadership behavior must be enhanced into excellence for a better performance as local leaders. Also, student leaders are recommended to enhance their self-management skills so that student leaders will be able to recognize it. Other aspects of leadership competence are also recommended to be enhanced to excellence in order to become effective and a better student leader. The student leaders are recommended to possess a high public leadership behavior so that their competence in leading the community will also be enhanced.

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