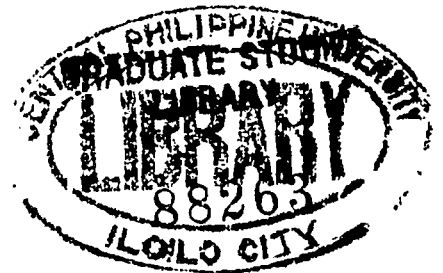


A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DECISION-MAKING
STYLE OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND
THEIR TEACHERS' JOB SATISFACTION IN TWO
DISTRICTS IN THAILAND

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The qualities of leaders and the processes of leadership have long been considered an important field for study and, from the beginnings of social psychology, researchers have repeatedly explored this area. Tannenbaum and Schmidt say, "Earlier in the century. . . the successful executive was generally pictured as possessing intelligence, imagination, initiative, the capacity to make rapid decisions, and the ability to inspire subordinates."¹ Early speculation about the personality traits and qualities of the successful leader, however, has largely given way to the study of actual leadership behavior and analysis of situational factors, such as type of group and the nature of the group's task.

In recent years, there is increased focus on the problem of how the modern leader can be "democratic" in his relations with subordinates and at the same time maintain the necessary authority and control in the organization for which he has responsibility.²

¹Robert Tannenbaum and Warren H. Schmidt, "How to Choose a Leadership Pattern," In Leadership in Action, 1961, Selected Readings Series Two (Washington, D. C.: National Training Laboratories, National Education Association, 1961), p. 83. (Reprint from Harvard Business Review, March-April, 1958.)

²Ibid.

The concept of "group dynamics" which focuses on members of the group rather than solely on the leader for employee involvement and participation in decision-making began to challenge the efficiency of highly directive leadership, and increasing attention was paid to problems of motivation and human relation.³

The continuum of leadership behavior from boss-centered leadership to subordinate-centered leadership which was used in training laboratories in group development, according to Tannenbaum and Schmidt, is as follows:

1. The manager makes the decision and announces it.
2. The manager "sells" his decision.
3. The manager presents his ideas, invites questions.
4. The manager presents a tentative decision subject to change.
5. The manager defines the limits and requests the group to make a decision.
6. The manager presents the problem, gets suggestions, and then makes his decision.
7. The manager permits the group to make decisions within prescribed limits.

Each type of action is related to the degree of authority used by the boss and to the amount of freedom

³Ibid.

available to his subordinates in reaching decisions. The actions "seen on the extreme right" release a high degree of control, but they have limitations.⁴

Several of those who have studied leadership behavior have sought to classify and categorize different approaches to leadership and different ways of exercising the leadership role. In studies of this kind the two leadership styles which have most often been identified and compared are the ones which are usually described as "authoritarian" or "autocratic" on the one hand and "democratic," "consultative," "participatory" or "permissive" on the other.⁵

The classification of styles of leadership proposed by Tannenbaum and Schmidt is:⁶

- (a) The "tells" style. The manager who employs this style habitually makes his own decisions and announces them to his subordinates, expecting them to carry them out without question.

⁴Ibid., pp. 83-85.

⁵P. F. Sadler, Leadership Style, Confidence in Management and Job Satisfaction (Berkhamsted, Herts: Ashridge Management College, 1966), p. 1.

⁶Ibid., pp. 3-4.

- (b) The "sells" style. The manager using this approach also makes his own decisions but, rather than simply announce them to his subordinates, he tries to persuade his subordinates to accept them. Recognizing the possibility of resistance on the part of those who will be faced with the decisions, he seeks to reduce this by "selling" them.
- (c) The "consults" style. Where the manager uses this style he does not make his decision until he has presented the problem to members of the group and listened to their advice and suggestions. The decision is still his but he does not take it until after he has consulted his staff.
- (d) The "joins" style. This approach to leadership involves delegating to the group (which includes the manager himself as a member) the right to make the decision. The manager's function is to define the problem and to indicate limits within which the decision must be made. Normally the decision will reflect majority opinion in the group once the problem has been freely discussed.

These descriptions of four leadership styles were used by Sadler and Hofstede in studies carried out during late 1965-66 in a number of departments within the British subsidiary of a large international corporation. They summarized the results obtained as follows:⁷

- (1) The four descriptions of leadership styles are meaningful to people in that the vast majority are able to express a preference for one of them.

⁷Philip Sadler and G. H. Hofstede, Leadership Styles: Preferences and Perceptions of Employees of an International Company in Different Countries, Ashridge Reprint Series, No. 3 (Berkhamsted, Herts: Ashridge Management College, 1972), p. 44.

- (2) The consultative style of leadership is most often preferred.
- (3) Different patterns of preferences are held by different categories of employee.
- (4) Most people are able to describe their own managers in terms of one of the four styles; approximately one in four, however, feel that their managers do not correspond closely to any one of them. Although three-fifths prefer consultative leadership, only one in four perceive their managers as exercising this style.
- (5) People's allocations of their managers among the four styles fit in very well with the descriptions of the behaviour of the same managers in people's responses to other survey questions.
- (6) In general, managers who are seen as exhibiting a distinctive style of leadership are also considered more effective in promoting confidence and satisfaction among employees than managers who are not seen as having a distinctive style.
- (7) High job satisfaction is associated with perceiving being led in the way one prefers to be led. In interpreting this finding, the possibility that high job satisfaction promotes satisfaction with leadership cannot be discounted.
- (8) Among those who feel they are not getting the type of leadership they prefer, the lowest level of job satisfaction is among those who perceive their manager as using the "tells" approach, together with those who feel that their manager displays no particular style.

The investigator's interest in the problem was aroused by her study of decision-making style under Dr. Macario B. Ruiz, which caused her to recall her own experiences as an elementary school principal in Thailand. She would like to use the style of decision-making which

will enable her to know how to deal with each teacher so as to increase her effectiveness as an administrator.

It has been interesting to observe the way in which the president, the principals, and other administrators at Central Philippine University deal with teachers, parents and students. Perhaps cultural differences between the Philippines and Thailand have influenced the administrators' decision-making styles. Such considerations led the investigator to want to know what decision-making styles of principals in Thailand are perceived and preferred by their teachers in the same culture but different environmental settings. It is proposed to make a comparison between the district called Khate Pratumwon in Bangkok and another district called Amphur Muang Samutsakhon, the capital city of Samutsakhon Province, in relation to the decision-making styles of the elementary school principals as perceived and preferred by the teachers.

To explain the choice of settings, a brief description may be appropriate. In Thailand, provinces (changwat) were made the primary administrative units; and each province was divided into a number of districts (amphur),* each district into communes (tumbon) and each commune into villages (muban). A province usually has five to ten districts: each district, six to ten communes: each

*Some authorities transliterate this as amphoe.

commune, twelve to twenty villages.⁸ Bangkok, the capital city of Thailand, constitutes a social environment completely different from the rest of Thailand; it is an urban center with an increasingly westernized class-structured society.⁹

Thailand into the 80's states that ". . . Bangkok is characterized by heterogeneity, with every type of industrial, trade and cultural manifestation interweaving to form its dense fabric."¹⁰ There are twenty-four districts in Bangkok. Khate Pratumwon, one of these, has an area of 8.32 square kilometers, a population of 235,647. More than 80 per cent merchants and bankers compose the population. There are various types of big shopping centers, big hotels, big hospitals, universities, palaces, several foreign embassies, government departments, etc.¹¹

8

Wendell Blanchard, Thailand, Country Survey Series (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, Inc., 1957), pp. 189-190.

9

Ibid., p. 191.

10

Thailand into the 80's (Bangkok, Thailand: Office of the Prime Minister, 1979), p. 213.

11

Khate Pratumwon (n.p., 1980?) Leaflet (Title transliterated from Thai).

Samutsakhon province, about thirty-five kilometers from Bangkok, has only three districts and less than average population. Amphur Muang Samutsakhon is a district which includes the capital city of this province, the Samutsakhon Provincial office being located there. The area is 480,126 square kilometers and the population is 129,589. The occupations of the population in Amphur Muang Samutsakhon are: 72 per cent fishing, 9 per cent agriculture, 4 per cent salt fields, 7 per cent merchants, 2 per cent industry, 5 per cent laborers and 1 per cent government.¹² Politically, the city would be considered urban, but its population density and its being characterized by extractive occupations such as fishing and agriculture make Amphur Muang Samutsakhon seem more rural than urban.

The urban environment of Khate Pratumwon and the more rural setting of Amphur Muang Samutsakhon might be appropriate for finding out whether there are differences in the decision-making styles of elementary school principals, as perceived by their teachers, and those preferred by the teachers.

¹²Brief Educational Statistics, School Year 2523 (Samutsakhon: Superintendent's Office of Amphur Muang Samutsakhon, 1980), p. 1. (Near print publication in Thai; bibliographic data translated).

THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

The main purpose of this research was to find out the relationship between the decision-making styles of elementary school principals, as perceived by their teachers, and teachers' job satisfaction. More specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. Which decision-making style is most frequently perceived?
2. What is the decision-making style most frequently preferred by the teachers in Khate Pratumwon and Amphur Muang Samutsakhon?
3. Is there a relationship between the decision-making style perceived and preferred by teachers in Khate Pratumwon and in Amphur Muang Samutsakhon?
4. Among the teachers who perceive a given decision-making style, what styles are preferred? Specifically:
 - a) What decision-making styles are preferred by teachers who perceive the "tells" style?
 - b) What decision-making styles are preferred by teachers who perceive the "sells" style?
 - c) What decision-making styles are preferred by teachers who perceive the "consults" style?
 - d) What decision-making styles are preferred

by teachers who perceive the "joins" style?

e) What decision-making styles are preferred by teachers where the principals' style cannot be determined?

5. Is there any relationship between the principals' decision-making styles and teachers' job satisfaction?

¹³Tannenbaum and Schmidt, op. cit., p. 88.