

A Study of Effective Leadership in Kindergarten in Sichuan, China

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Abstract

The leadership research in the last two decades evolved mainly under the following perspectives: leadership style, leadership theory, leadership model, questioned the existence and need of leadership. In China, leadership became the very important part in educational field. The study is to research the influence of leadership style on effective leadership of kindergarten in Sichuan, China. The research adopted the quantitative approach to investigate 353 principals in kindergarten. The research employed One-way ANOVA and linear regression to test variables and to test hypothesis. From the analysis results, the variables of authoritative leadership, benevolent leadership, and management skills have significant effect on the effective leadership of kindergarten principal. But democratic leadership has no effect on management skills. It was concluded that kindergarten principal who manage the kindergarten with leadership style and management skills would help the development of kindergarten. The study recommended principal make authority structures clear to employees, learn the social rules for compliance, maintain proper relationships with other colleges. This effort is the important objective for kindergarten principal.

Keywords: Kindergarten; Leadership; Principal

Introduction

With the economic globalization and the rapid development of science and technology, today's world changes constantly. Kindergarten, as the cornerstone of the entire education system, has experienced profound and rapid changes both interiorly and exteriorly. The kindergarten principals have overall responsibility for the work of the kindergartens and are playing a decisive role in promoting the reform and development of the kindergarten (Hu yan,2018). To study the leadership issues of kindergarten principals in depth, the author has conducted literature analysis to study the principal leadership issues in-depth and has mastered the development condition and the plight of kindergarten principal leadership.

A healthy environment facilitates high levels of teacher morale. There are many private kindergartens in Sichuan province, the leadership of a principal can drastically affect every aspect of the kindergarten, so how to improve the principal leadership in order to make the effective leader of kindergarten. Based on the research, the author also summary to promote the leadership of kindergarten principals. This paper focuses on the leadership style to manage kindergarten smoothly and successfully.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this research were to investigate style of leadership effect on the principal leadership of private kindergarten in Sichuan province.

- 1 To examine the effect of LES (Authoritative leadership) on management skills
- 2 To examine the effect of LES (Democratic leadership) on management skills
- 3 To examine the effect of LES (Benevolent leadership) on management skills
- 4 To examine the effect of LES (Authoritative leadership) on effective leadership
- 5 To examine the effect of LES (Democratic leadership) on effective leadership
- 6 To examine the effect of LES (Benevolent leadership) on effective leadership
- 7 To examine the level of management skills mediates the relationship between LES and its effectiveness

Hypothesis of Research

Based on the analysis, there were seven hypotheses formulated to guide the objectives of the paper and strengthen the analysis.

- H1. LES (Authoritative leadership) has positive and significant effect on management skills
- H2. LES (Democratic leadership) has positive and significant effect on management skills
- H3. LES (Benevolent leadership) has positive and significant effect on management skills
- H4. LES (Authoritative leadership) has positive and significant effect on effective leadership
- H5. LES (Democratic leadership) has positive and significant effect on effective leadership
- H6. LES (Benevolent leadership) has positive and significant effect on effective leadership

H7. The level of management skills mediates the relationship between LES and its effectiveness.

Conceptual Framework

Leadership is a long-running topic that exit the field of business, philosophy, psychology, management, and education. The study of leadership extends different stages in education, from the kindergarten to university. In the late 1930's, the studies of leadership were conducted. The changes of leadership result by the development of society and economy. A few issues arise from the idea that leadership is a process of influencing others. Leadership is a relationship between leaders and followers that changes in different contexts. (Joseph S. Nye, Jr, 2016). Without specific context, without right leadership, that is mean, the leadership should work in exact range. The leadership styles involving autocratic, democratic, and benevolent leadership effect on the business and management; Additionally, the research explored the nature and identified what makes the leadership effectively and successfully. (Mitra Madanchian, 2017; Nave, 2005); However, many propositions turned out that there is no single trait or characteristic to ensure the leadership success (Yukl, 2002). Different contributions highlight significant dimensions of strategic management (Rabindra N. Kanungo,1992). Further study is a framework of distinguish between managerial skills and competency.

Therefore, in this study effectiveness of leadership can be regarded as the outcome variable of leadership style to study the influence of leadership style on its effectiveness.

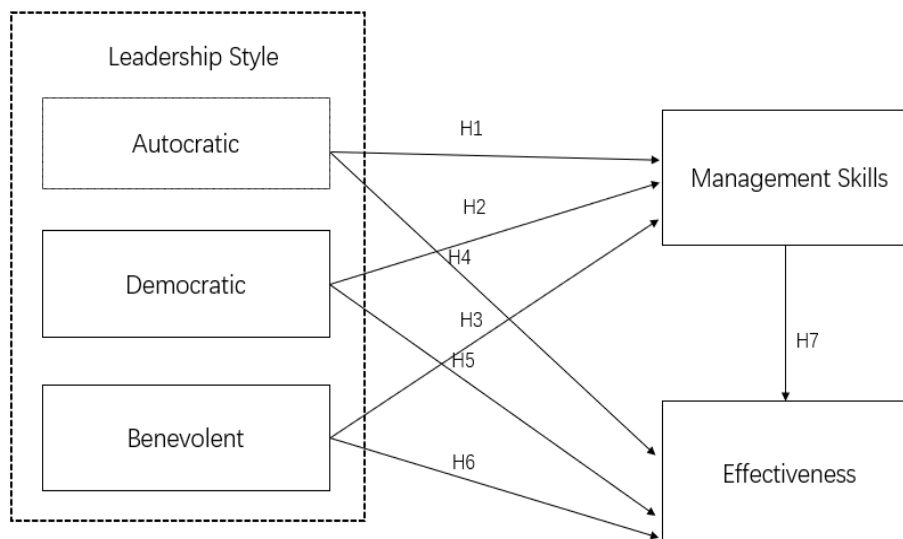


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

The research was employed the quantitative research design with questionnaire to collect data from kindergarten principals who currently work in different kindergartens in different regions in Sichuan province. The sample size was calculated according to Yamane (1973), which was 353 according to Yamane's Equation Formula. The author applied purposive sampling to collect the data from the samples. This research employed descriptive statistics to analyze the data, and employed inferential statistics including One-way ANOVA and Multiple Regressions to test hypothesis.

In this study, questionnaires were used as data collection tools. Scales are prepared as research tools, such as authoritative leadership scale, democratic leadership scale, benevolent leadership scale, Management skills scale and Effective leadership scale, which were measured by using the Likert-5 scale (Likert, 1967).

The following part, regression and mediation analyses were conducted to examine whether the relationships between the variables were as expected. The effects of LES (authoritative leadership, democratic leadership, and benevolent leadership) on effectiveness

are proposed to be mediated by management skills. According to the Baron and Kenny's (1986) four-step process to test the mediational hypotheses, since it is most popular method to test mediation in the social sciences (MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman, West Sheets, 2002). Next, the four steps will be conducted. The first step is to show authoritative leadership, democratic leadership, benevolent leadership are correlated with leadership effectiveness (see Path c in Figure2). The second step is to show authoritative leadership, democratic leadership, benevolent leadership are correlated with the mediator, management skills. (see Path a in Figure2). The third step is to show management skills is correlated with leadership effectiveness (see Path b in Figure2). The last step is to show the mediator effects of management skills on the leadership style-effectiveness relationship, (see Path a in Figure2)

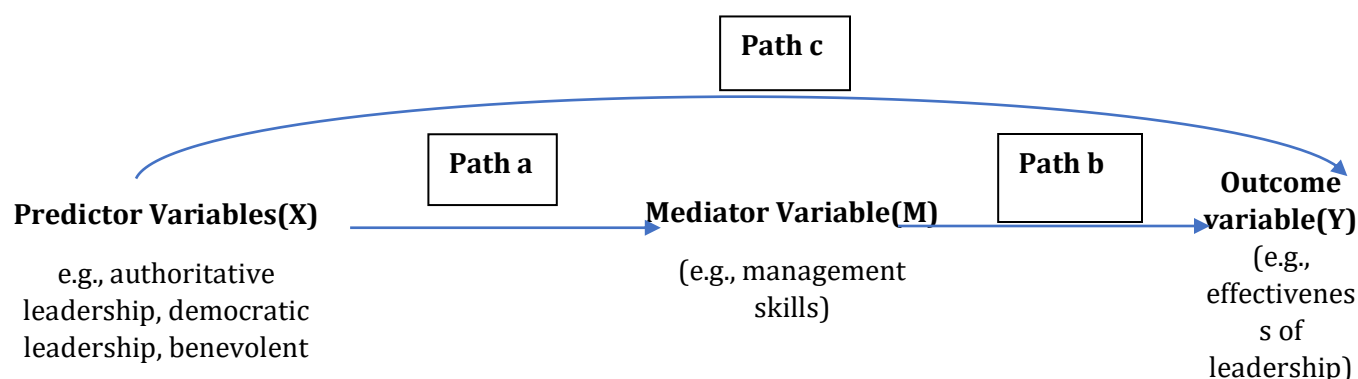


Figure2 The Diagram of paths in the model

We also calculated the Cronbach's Alpha reliabilities of the scales used in our study. All scale reliabilities were greater than 0.70; AUT (0.95), DEM (0.95), BEN (0.94), MAS (0.91), EFC (0.94), See Table 1 for a depiction of these results.

Table 1 Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient

Dimensions	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
AUT (5items)	0.950
DEM (5items)	0.949
BEN (5 items)	0.943
MAS (3 items)	0.906
EFC (4 items)	0.944

Research Results

Table 2 Standardized Latent Variable Path Coefficient

			B	S.E.	C.R.	P
MAS	<---	AUT	.146	.052	2.820	.005
MAS	<---	DEM	-.041	.061	-.690	.490
MAS	<---	BEL	.122	.052	2.437	.015
EFC	<---	AUT	.129	.047	2.513	.012
EFC	<---	DEM	.117	.054	2.014	.044
EFC	<---	BEL	.167	.046	3.350	**
EFC	<---	MAS	.127	.055	2.060	.039

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level, (** p < 0.01.)

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level, *(p < 0.05)

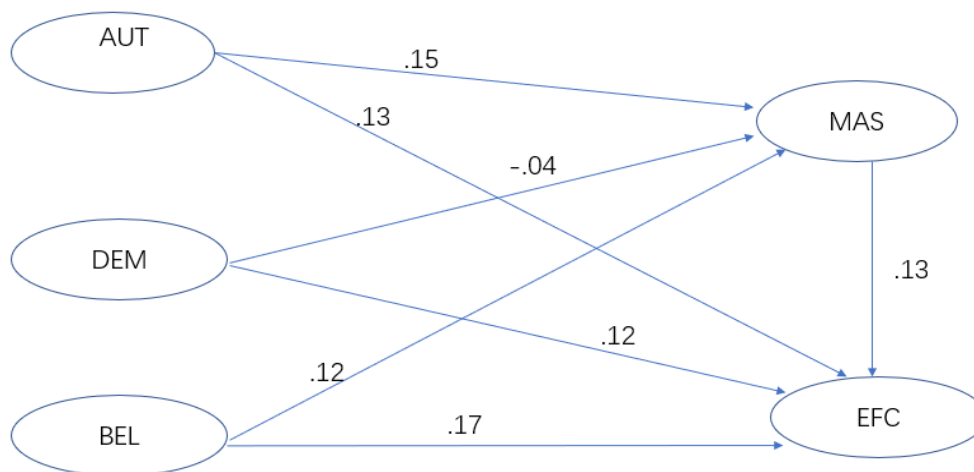


Figure3 Final Models: AUT, DEM, BEL, MAS, EFC with significant paths Conclusion.

Table2 contains the results from the hypotheses tests. For hypothesis 1, it states that LES (Authoritative leadership) has positive and significant effect on management skills. The results indicates authoritative leadership was related to management skills as the unstandardized regression coefficient ($B=0.146$) associated with the effect on management skills was significant($P < 0.05$).

Hypothesis 2 states that LES (democratic leadership) has positive and significant effect on management skills. The results indicate that democratic leadership was related to management skills as the unstandardized regression coefficient ($B=-0.41$) associated with the effect on management skills, but not significant($P > 0.05$), which means democratic leadership has no effect on management in the study.

Hypothesis 3 states that LES (benevolent leadership) has positive and significant effect on management skills. The results indicate that benevolent leadership was related to management skills as the unstandardized regression coefficient ($B=0.122$) associated with the effect on management skills was no significant($P < 0.05$).

Hypothesis 4 states that LES (authoritative leadership) has positive and significant effect on effective leadership. The results indicate that authoritative leadership was related to

effective leadership as the unstandardized regression coefficient ($B=0.129$) associated with the effect on effective leadership was significant ($P < 0.05$).

Hypothesis 5 states that LES (democratic leadership) has positive and significant effect on effective leadership. The results indicate that democratic leadership was related to effective leadership as the unstandardized regression coefficient ($B=0.117$) associated with the effect on effective leadership was significant ($P < 0.05$).

Hypothesis 6 states that LES (benevolent leadership) has positive and significant effect on effective leadership. The results indicate that benevolent leadership was related to effective leadership as the unstandardized regression coefficient ($B=0.167$) associated with the effect on effective leadership was significant ($P < 0.01$).

Hypothesis 7 states that the level of management skills mediates the relationship between LES and its effectiveness. The results indicate that level of management skills was related to effective leadership as the unstandardized regression coefficient ($B=0.127$) associated with the effect on effective leadership was significant ($P < 0.05$).

In summary, all the hypotheses had been concluded in the following table.

Table 3 The results of testing hypothesis

Hypothesis	Results
H1. LES (Authoritative leadership) has positive and significant effect on management skills.	Accepted
H2. LES (Democratic leadership) has positive and significant effect on management skills.	Deleted
H3. LES (Benevolent leadership) has positive and significant effect on management skills.	Accepted
H4. LES (Authoritative leadership) has positive and significant effect on effective leadership.	Accepted
H5. LES (Democratic leadership) has positive and significant effect on effective leadership.	Accepted
H6. LES (Benevolent leadership) has positive and significant effect on effective leadership.	Accepted
H7. The level of management skills mediates the relationship between LES and its effectiveness.	Accepted

Conclusion and Discussion

In this section, the research findings will be discussed based on the results of the test of hypotheses.

The result of the first test of hypothesis showed that the authoritative leadership has positive effect on management skills when principal run the kindergarten, because the authoritative leader has not only strong legitimate authority and technical expertise, but also better educational administration acumen (Redding, 1990). Authoritative leadership promote the management skills in running the kindergarten.

The result of the second test of hypothesis showed that the democratic leadership has no effect on management skills. Since democratic leadership can foster creative environments since they stimulate the innovation of team members. While in certain situations, especially in a crisis, democratic leaders do not give the directive decision. Thus, the democratic leadership is not function well in authoritative role in kindergarten.

The result of the third test of hypothesis showed that benevolent leadership has no positive effect on management skills. Benevolent leaders are those who create observable benefits, actions, or results of the common good. (Fahri Karakas& Emine Sarigollu,2012). The type of leader wants to share and do more benefits for team member, demonstrating individualized in working and holistic concern for subordinates' personal and familial well-being, thus it will accelerate management and effect on management skills.

The result of the fourth test of hypothesis showed authoritative leadership has positive and significant effect on effective leadership. The effectiveness leadership and increased group output were function of the interaction between managers and their subordinates. (Sweetland's 1978). According to the statistics, the authoritative leadership effect on its effectiveness

The result of the fifth test of hypothesis showed democratic leadership has positive and significant effect on effective leadership. Because the democratic leader can guide the supportive and powerful team. The leader will be popular in the kindergarten, and creating more profit.

The result of the sixth test of hypothesis showed benevolent leadership has positive and significant effect on effective leadership. Because the benevolent leader will know and communicate with the employees more, to some degree, the employees would help the development of kindergarten.

The result of the seventh test of hypothesis showed management skills mediates the relationship between LES and its effectiveness. Because the level of management skills help kindergarten avoid trouble and reduce management costs, so the kindergarten will run smoothly and make profits (Westwood, 1997). According to the analysis, the principal of kindergarten must grasp the skills and strategies to deal with the problem of work.

In summary, the different style of leadership will effect on the management skills and effectiveness.

Authoritative leadership and benevolent leadership play an active role in the management skill. Authoritative leadership, democratic leadership and benevolent leadership will promote the effectiveness of leadership. The management skills also mediate the relationship between LES and its effectiveness.

The leadership of principle will effect on the management skills and its effectiveness respectively. The principle of kindergarten should pay attention to the strength of each member in the management process, synergy of leadership, and exploring the potential of members.

Suggestion

Based on the discussion of findings and conclusion, we made the following suggestions:

The management is a dynamic process; the style of leadership will be shifted in different situation. The principal of kindergarten must make authority structures clear to employees, learn the social rules for compliance, maintain proper relationships with other colleges. This effort is the important objective for kindergarten principal.

As the principal, creating a smooth communication channel in the kindergarten. “As an activity that affects people, leadership is a human communication that changes the attitudes and behaviors of others in order to meet common group goals and requirements.” The basis

for communication between the principal, the faculty and parents are equality and trust. Through the diversified and multi-level communication with faculty and parents, the principal can make them understand the reality of change more clearly, and then reach a consensus in the change.

1. Suggestion for use

Facing more and more profound educational changes, upgrading the leadership of the kindergarten principal is very important. The current development of preschool education has put forward higher requirements for leaders. As the person in charge of kindergarten, the principal must shift from a single manager to a leader and play his own leadership role in the organization. The results of empirical research can help us to understand the current situation and problems of the leadership of the kindergarten principal. Thus, proposing the solutions in a targeted manner, promoting the leadership of the principal in the practice, and ultimately achieving the purpose of improving the quality of preschool education.

2. Research Suggestion

A further extension of the study is to examine the external factors of effectiveness of leadership, such as Chinese policy, culture, which might indicate clearly and deeply. In addition, the qualitative will be employed to explain the data. Analysis the principal's behavior in accordance with mind, making supplement.

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