



Conference Proceedings

LEADERSHIP SKILLS ASSESSMENT IN TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL INSTITUTION MANAGEMENT

David Edward G. Jimenez¹

DOI: 10.5937/EEE24015J

JEL: M12

Review Scientific Paper

ABSTRACT

With numerous challenges for leaders of educational institutions, it is important to identify and develop the necessary skills for a leader to bring one's organization to fulfill its mission, vision and objectives for success. This study identified which among the 21st century leadership skills are expected to be had by educational leaders as perceived by their subordinates. Faculty members and staff were asked to rate 21st century leadership skills of educational leaders in general and specific to their own management. All 21st century leadership skills, as well as identified culturally contextualized characteristics, are necessary factors for educational leaders. . The results will help leaders adapt to these expectations to gain the support and to motivate their employees towards organizational productivity and effectiveness. This study as well develops and tests a leadership quality assessment tool.

KEYWORDS

leadership, skills, TVET, management

INTRODUCTION

With numerous technical and vocational institutions in the industry today, there are various challenges and opportunities to manage and operate such enterprises. As leaders are an institution's models, their work attitudes, beliefs and actions are reflected into the beliefs and values of the school, which will affect the organization's performance. Staff satisfaction and company performance will be affected by a leader's manner of managing varying concerns and issues. It can make or break a company.

Given this situation, what makes a great leader? What specific qualities should a leader have, one might ask. Typically, the basis for leader qualities and characteristics might be assumed from his or her educational background and work experiences. Another basis might simply be how the previous leaders were and how they managed their institutions. However, with the ever changing environment and the challenges of the 21st century, more and more qualities are necessary to achieve an institution's mission and vision amidst changes and demands from the customers and the industry. The skills of the past may no longer be enough to perform in the world today. How then will we know what these are and how do we assess whether are leaders are in fact fit for these times?

¹ Atenao de Manila University, John Gokongwei School of Management, Manila, Philipini, djimenez@ateneo.edu, ORCID: 0000-0002-4571-7721



Conference Proceedings

This study aims to answer the question- With the challenges of the 21st century, while aiming for the fulfillment of an institution's mission and vision, how is the leader expected and perceived to be as having the right leadership skills for today and the future? Is he or she the right one?

The objectives of the study then are the following:

- To determine which among the 21st century leadership skills employees look for in their leaders;
- To find the gaps between staff expectations from educational leaders and staff perceptions from their specific educational leader to provide a proper leader assessment;
- To develop a leader's qualification assessment tool for technical vocational institutions for use in their operations.

The study will be able to help identify the leadership qualities are important factors for employees to be motivated and for organizations to perform well. The establishment of a leader qualification assessment tool will also guide current and future administrators in developing and maintaining their leaders.

For the limitation of the study, data was collected from only one technical vocation institution in the province of Pampanga in the Philippines. Respondents of the study were both from the administrative and academic departments and covers the entire population of the institution, although statistical minimum count was not met. Results and conclusions of this study then reflect this limitation.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

Leadership and organizational development go hand in hand. As educational administrators go about their daily tasks, their actions and modes of decision making can be seen by all and be used as a basis of their performance. Staff then look up to their superiors as models and their leaders' actions will motivate or demotivate them toward working productively. Their characteristics as well will be the basis for personal and professional development for other potential future leaders in the organization. Together with this ever changing external environment and internal challenges, a leader must have a certain set of leadership skills to be able to adapt and perform accordingly.

By definition, Leadership is "The ability to influence a group toward achievement of goals" (Stephen P. Robbins, 2015). The person in position then must be able to steer his or her team into the direction of which the institution must go towards to, to be successful.

Also, according to the study of Day and Sammons (2016), in Australia, the thematic results for educational leaders would be to have influencing, learning, facilitating and creative skills. However, it did not present specific definitions and skill sets for each. Irish (2014) also identified the type of leadership by educational administrators. These were to be a visionary leader, an instructional leader, a situational leader, a collaborative leader, a persistent leader, among others. Still, no specific skill sets per type. Another research also presented the responsibilities of administrators, specifically principals, as someone shaping an institutional vision, creating a hospitable climate, cultivating leadership, improving instruction and managing people. These, however, defined more the type of leadership and responsibilities rather than the specific skill sets.

Referencing from thinkstrategicforschools.com (2015), it suggested a list of qualities for the 21st century educational leader. It states that there are 9 essential set of characteristics for this time.



Conference Proceedings

These are:

1. 21st Century School Leaders are visionary.
2. 21st Century School Leaders are emotionally intelligent.
3. 21st Century School Leaders master self-leadership.
4. 21st Century School Leaders embrace change and innovation.
5. 21st Century School Leaders welcome and value diversity.
6. 21st Century School Leaders develop a 21st Century Mindset.
7. 21st Century School Leaders are learners.
8. 21st Century School Leaders are connected with the world.
9. 21st Century School Leaders take action.

Based on this then, it can be seen that for the 21st century, there are a lot of specific skills and characteristics needed by leaders to be responsive to the needs of this time. This list could be the basis for a theoretical framework for assessing an educational leader on their readiness and performance.

In the Philippines, studies on educational leaders focused on what has to be done or what the challenges are to be able to manage an educational institution. A study by Brooks and Sutherland (2014) mentioned that principals in the public school system must establish and maintain networks, practice ethical leadership, create communication channels and be transparent in implementing programs. Although this touched on certain skills and characteristics, skills sets in relation to the 21st century setting was not mentioned. Furthermore, they talked about how kinship and emotional relationships should be managed by principals. This shows certain skills needed in the context of the Filipino culture. Another study mentioned that certain skills like listening skills are important in the Filipino context. "Listening is a skill that principals need to nurture. This skill makes the principal's decisions needs-based. As a skill to be practiced by principals, listening is a two-way endeavor that makes a school a caring community" (de Guzman & Guillermo, 2007). Further it mentions that skills are generally just learned and determined as they become immersed in the job. No such identification of leadership skills then has been presented in detail.

In situations where there are gaps found in the leadership skills of educational leaders, professional training methods, typically done by organizational development organizations, are the interventions suggested. For example, Leslie (2016) suggests the following steps in determining leadership gaps: reviewing the organizational strategy, identifying competencies needed to drive the successful execution of the organizational strategy, reviewing and finalizing a list of competencies needed, deciding which managers to survey and collecting their opinions. In doing so, an organization can try assessing their leaders themselves. Training companies as well may offer services in determining leadership gaps, such as the center for creative leadership, among many others. In the Philippines, where there are gaps in leadership skills in educational leaders, not a lot of studies have been done nor any specific methods suggested to deal with such.

A considerable amount of research has been done about leadership qualities in educational institutions and its impact on organizational performance. However, not much has been done to study the specific 21st century leadership skills needed, especially in the Philippines. Also, not much studies have been done about determining the leadership gaps nor a tool for identifying and assessing them. Are the 21st century characteristics necessary leadership qualities in the Philippines and how are the gaps identified? Can a tool be crafted to help in identifying the gaps in expected and perceived skill sets from educational leaders?



Conference Proceedings

FRAMEWORK

In the services industry, a quality gap model was crafted by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) to measure the level of quality in the service sector. Based on a number of categories with specific definitions, the difference between the average ratings of service expectations of customers from a generic service institution type against their perceptions of a specific service provider are computed. The results then determine whether there are gaps in the quality of the service and as to which categories these are. From here, an institution can then identify programs and projects to implement to increase their level of service quality.

Similarly, since leadership is an interaction between a provider (leader) and a receiver (employees), it may be considered as a service. Thus, the manner of identifying any gaps in leadership qualities may be based on general expectations of educational leaders of the staff and the perceptions of subordinates of a specific educational leader.

The leadership quality framework will provide a way to be able to identify the leadership qualities that employees expect from educational leaders and how different it may be from an assessment of a particular leader. A comparison relationship should be reflected (greater than, equal, or less than) to show where the gaps are. Using the 21st century leadership skills as the categories, as such, from the results, leaders will be guided as to which characteristics they have to maintain or develop to positively affect the worker's performance at work.

Expectations from educational leaders (general)	Measure Less Than (–) Equal (0) Greater Than (+)	Perceptions from an identified educational leader (specific)
Visionary.	<, =, >	Visionary
Emotionally intelligent	<, =, >	Emotionally intelligent
Master self-leadership	<, =, >	Master self-leadership
Embrace change and innovation	<, =, >	Embrace change and innovation
Welcome and value diversity	<, =, >	Welcome and value diversity
Develop a 21st Century Mindset	<, =, >	Develop a 21st Century Mindset
Learners	<, =, >	Learners
Connected with the world	<, =, >	Connected with the world
Take action	<, =, >	Take action

METHODOLOGY

All 10 employees (administrative staff and full time faculty members) were asked to answer a questionnaire to find out the following:



Conference Proceedings

- What 21st century leadership skills are expected from all educational leaders (expectations)?
- What 21st century leadership skills are perceived to be seen in the institution's leader, specifically its Managing Director (perceptions)?

These questions were answered by giving a list of the 21st century skills definitions as listed above and the staff were asked to rank them with values between 1 and 7, 7 being the highest. The first set asks them to rate leaders in general and the second set asks them to rate the particular institution's Managing Director.

Upon collation of the questionnaires, the average rating was computed per set of statements corresponding to each of the 21st century leadership skills for both the generic (expectations) and specific (perceptions) sets. Further, based on the average ratings between the perceptions and expectations, the gaps were computed by getting the difference between expected and perceived values. This gap value will be known as the Leadqual rating.

$$\text{Leadqual} = \text{Perception score} - \text{Expectation score}$$

Positive result = specific leader exceeds the expectations from educational leaders

Negative result = specific leader does not meet the expectations from education leaders

Also, rankings on the 21st century leadership skills were identified, especially to present which ones are the high and low characteristic values.

Further, open-ended questions, such as the following were also asked:

1. What characteristics, actions and/or habits of your educational leader motivate you to do your work?
2. What characteristics, actions and/or habits of your educational leader demotivate you to do your work?

These open ended questions were used to identify other skills or characteristics that are not part of the 21st century leadership skills list, if there are any.

RESEARCH SUBJECTS

The school is a technical and vocational educational and training institution in the province of Pampanga in the Philippines. It has produced graduates productively working and placed in various industries locally and internationally. It is a registered school offering various qualifications under the areas of Hospitality and Tourism, Information Technology, and the Retail and Wholesale Sector. It offers two-year diploma courses to its clientele.

The Managing Director is a college graduate and considers himself as an entrepreneur. For over 25 years, he has experience in various businesses such as in Real Estate, Banking, Health and Wellness and Education, among others. He is also an active contributing member to the local community by holding various positions in civic organizations. He has held the position in the institution since its inception back in 2005.



Conference Proceedings

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

All the questionnaires answered by the staff were encoded and collated. As mentioned, ratings for each 21st century leadership skill were averaged for both expectations and perceptions. Further, a gap score (leadqual) was computed. Below is the summary of the results of the survey, categorized by source-overall, administrative staff and faculty members.

Table 1. Results (Overall)

SKILL	PERCEPTION Score	EXPECTATION Score	Leadqual
1.	6.775	6.4	0.375
2.	6.525	6.25	0.275
3.	6.575	6.125	0.45
4.	6.55	6.625	-0.075
5.	6.57	6.4	0.17
6.	6.575	6.425	0.15
7.	6.425	6.4	0.025
8.	6.5	6.45	0.05
9.	6.475	6.375	0.1

Overall, the highest leadqual rating is Skill 3: 21st century leaders master self-leadership. This means that the leaders are driven by a purpose of making a difference in the lives of others, more than their own ego or for profit. Considering the institution is in the service of education, this seems fitting. One staff actually mentioned, "I like it or agree with him (the leader) that even with a small number of students, we can make a difference." Another mentioned, "He (the leader) wants the world to be a better place." Also, this skill assumes the leaders have grit and commitment to see tasks through, conquering any fears or limiting thoughts.

On the other hand, the lowest leadqual rating is Skill 4: 21st Century School Leaders embrace change and innovation. The expectation here is that the leaders see opportunities and possibilities in everything, manages organizational change and the desire to innovate their teams. One comment says, "Always saying 'no' rather than 'I'll think it over'" is a contributing factor to this finding. One other comment says, "No support for personal growth and concern for sustainability of the company". By these statements, the vigor for change and openness to development is clearly perceived to be by the staff.

Table 2. Results (Administrative Staff)

SKILL	PERCEPTION Score	EXPECTATION Score	Leadqual
1.	6.875	6.5	0.375
2.	6.875	6.6875	0.1875
3.	6.8125	6.375	0.4375
4.	6.9375	6.8125	0.125
5.	7	6.75	0.25
6.	6.9375	6.9375	0
7.	7	6.8125	0.1875
8.	6.9375	6.875	0.0625
9.	7	6.6875	0.3125

Based on the average rating of the administrative staff, the highest leadqual rating is Skill 3: 21st century leaders master self-leadership. This is consistent to the overall rating discussed above.



Conference Proceedings

On the other hand, the lowest leadqual rating is Skill 6: 21st Century School Leaders develop a 21st Century Mindset. This means that the leaders has a positive, growth mindset, thinking outside the box and pushing themselves outside that box while using data analysis for decision making. Contributing to this, one staff says, “Quickly to judge based on what they feel” rather than what might is possibly objective or based on data findings. Also, a concern on “sustainability of company” may reflect the lack of thinking strategically and a lack of the growth mindset. It may appear that there a certain sense of comfort with the current status of the organization.

Table 3. Results (Faculty Members)

SKILL	PERCEPTION Score	EXPECTATION Score	Leadqual
1.	6.7083	6.3333	0.375
2.	6.2917	5.9583	0.3334
3.	6.4167	5.9583	0.4584
4.	6.2917	6.5	-0.2083
5.	6.2778	6.1667	0.1111
6.	6.3333	6.0833	0.25
7.	6.0417	6.125	-0.0833
8.	6.2083	6.1667	0.0416
9.	6.125	6.1667	-0.0417

Based on the average rating of the faculty members, the highest leadqual rating is Skill 3: 21st century leaders master self-leadership. This is consistent to the overall rating discussed above, similar to that of the administrative staff.

On the other hand, there are three negative leadqual ratings. These are Skill 4: 21st Century School Leaders embrace change and innovation, Skill 7: 21st Century School Leaders are learners and Skill 9: 21st Century School Leaders take action. Skill 4 is consistent to the overall rating discussed above. However, for Skill 7, it assumes that leaders learn for themselves and their organizations, seek different perspectives and are reflective lead learners. A comment related goes, “rigid in making decisions” and “always in a hurry- no time to check what is happening”. It may appear that physically moving up and about may be perceived as related to a leader’s manner of decision making. Further, it might be assumed that since the result comes from the faculty members, there are higher expectations towards further studies and higher learning. Finally, Skill 9, requires solving problems efficiently, operates with a strong results focus and creates the future. One staff commented, “Inconsistency (sometimes his decisions are being compromised).” Another mentioned about “no concrete plans for the future.” Thus, with this lack of focus and vision planning as perceived by the faculty members, it appears that they feel not much action is being done.

RESULTS: OTHER CHARACTERISTICS

- Humor and warmth as well are important for leaders to have.
- “Love” and Harmonious relationships between leaders and staff are also given importance.
- Leaders who understand you always and who is sensitive as ‘words and actions sometimes hurt’.



Conference Proceedings

Besides the list of the 21st century leadership skills, additional leadership characteristics were identified. It appears that there is a set of personal relational skills expected. Leaders are expected to show more feelings of warmth and “love” towards their staff. The “family” treatment seems to be appreciated together within a professional environment. Staff members are not simply people one works with, but a part of a small knit community. Also, feelings of the staff members seem to be important to be managed by the leader. The leader must be sensitive to a staff’s personal situation, even if certain situations can be dealt with objectively. It appears then that the staff take things “personally” even in a professional environment. There is obviously a fine line between personal and professional realms of work. This may be a cultural nuance as Filipinos tend to mix their personal lives into their professional practices.

In summary, the implication is that most, if not all, the 21st century leadership skills are found to be important factors for employees for their leaders to have or practice. Furthermore, additional characteristics beyond the list have been mentioned as well, which may reflect a cultural aspect of the respondents of this study. It is now a challenge to leaders to be able to imbibe and to practice all 9 21st century leadership skills and more to bring their institution to higher productivity.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

With the challenges of the 21st century for leaders of educational institutions, it is important to practice and develop the necessary skills to bring one’s organization to meet its vision and objectives for better performance. The study focused on identifying which 21st century leadership skills are applicable to their specific educational leader and if there are any other characteristics expected. This in the end will help leaders adapt to such expectations to gain the support and to motivate their employees towards organizational productivity and effectiveness.

Staff members were asked to rate qualities of educational leaders in general and specific to their Managing Director. It was deduced that all 9 21st century leadership skills are necessary factors to them. In fact, there were even additional characteristics identified based on a cultural context. This poses a challenge to educational leaders as to how they will be able to oversee the operations and manning the ship of their institutions as they voyage to the future.

Furthermore, below are some other findings and further recommendations of the study.

Findings	Conclusion	Recommendation
All the 21st century leadership skills were rated between 6.125-6.625 (88% - 95%). Highest is: Skill 4: 21st Century School Leaders embrace change and innovation. Lowest is: Skill 3: 21st Century School Leaders master self-leadership.	The 21st century leadership skills are applicable characteristics for an educational leader as expected by employees of a TVI. Even in the local context, the 21st century leadership skills are a must.	For HR policies to incorporate ways to find these characteristics in leaders in their hiring process and develop programs for leadership development in their training.
Overall results show that our leader is negative in only one skill. This is: Skill 4: 21st Century School Leaders embrace change and innovation	It appears that the leader is meeting if not exceeding most of the expectations from the staff. This can serve as an example or model for other leaders of TVIs.	HR should regularly evaluate their leaders based on the 21st century leadership skills to determine ways to develop and/or maintain skills as



Conference Proceedings

Faculty member results have 3 negative skills while administrative staff have none. These are: Skill 4: 21st Century School Leaders embrace change and innovation. Skill 7: 21st Century School Leaders are learners. Skill 9: 21st Century School Leaders take action.	Faculty members and administrative staff have differing expectations from their leaders. These may stem from the varying levels of their scope of work and their level of interaction with the leader.	expected by employees for organizational performance. Leaders should be given leadership assessments for them to adapt and practice identified skills that they do well at and improve on those that they are weak at. They should be aware of how these can be practiced based on the type of work and interaction with various staff.
Faculty members and administrative staff expected their educational leaders to be more relational and personal with their relationships.	Other skills expected from leaders were identified aside from the list based on a cultural context.	The list of skills for educational leaders should include the Filipino contextualized skills. Human Resources should adapt correspondingly as mentioned above and the Leadership Quality tool should include it in its list as well as will be discussed below.
The Leadership Quality Tool provided results of any gaps between expected skills in an educational leader and perceptions of a specific leader.	The Leadership Quality Tool can be used to assess leadership skill sets based on 21st century leadership skills and the Filipino context.	Similar studies should be done in other TVIs using the tool for comparison of results and tool evaluation.

REFERENCES

- Leadership for 21st Century Learning. RSS. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/edu/cei/leadershipfor21stcenturylearning.htm>. Accessed: January 30, 2024.
- Bentea, C. C., Anghelache, V. (2012). Teachers' motivation and satisfaction for professional activity. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 33, pp. 563-67. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.01.184.
- Brooks, J. S., Sutherland, I. E. (2014). Educational Leadership in the Philippines: Principals Perspectives on Problems and Possibilities for Change. *Planning & Changing*, Vol. 45, no.3-4, pp. 339-355.
- Brooks, J. S., Sutherland, I. E. (2013). School Leadership in the Philippines: Historical, cultural, and policy dynamics. *Advances in Educational Administration*, 20, 199-213.
- Day, C., Sammons, P., Gorgen, K. (2016). Successful school leadership. Education Development Trust, Berkshire.
- Dessler, G. (2010). Human Resource Management. Prentice Hall, New Jersey.
- Driscoll, M. (2016). 9 Essential 21st Century Leadership Skills. Think Strategic for Schools. Available at: <http://thinkstrategicforschools.com/9-essential-21st-century-leadership-skills/>. Accessed January 30, 2024.



Conference Proceedings

- Heizer, J., Render, B. (2013). Operations Management. Upper Saddle River, Prentice Hall, New Jersey.
- Irish, S. C. (2024). Leadership Qualities Necessary for Educational Leaders to Become Effective Turnaround Principals: A Grounded Theory Study. Dissertation, Liberty University.
- Krassnoff, B. (2015). Leadership Qualities of Effective Principals. Northwest Comprehensive Center. Portland.
- Leadership Gap Indicator. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.ccl.org/lead-it-yourself-solutions/team-organizational-assessments/leadership-gap-indicator/>
- Leslie, J. B. (2016). How to Identify Leadership Limitations Through a Gap Analysis. Training Mag. Available at: <https://trainingmag.com/how-identify-leadership-limitations-through-gap-analysis/>. Accessed January 30, 2024.
- Nader, R. Leadership and Motivation. Available at: www.btcrd.gov.nl.ca/regionaldev/ccb/leadership/ccb_leadershipguide.pdf, Accessed January 30, 2024.
- Parasuraman, A, Ziethaml, V., Berry, L. L. (1988), SERVQUAL: A Multiple- Item Scale for Measuring Consumer Perceptions of Service Quality. Journal of Retailing, Vol. 64. No. 1, pp. 12-40.
- Robbins, S., Judge, T. (2013). Organizational behavior. Pearson, Boston.