

The Influence of Transformational Leadership-Based Administration on Administrative Effectiveness of Sub-District Municipality Administrators in Sakon Nakhon, Thailand

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Abstract

The influence of transformational leadership on the administrative effectiveness of the administrators of sub-district municipalities in Sakon Nakhon province was investigated in this study, the results of which could be applied for the sake of the development of public administration. The samples were 56 sub-district municipal clerks within Sakon Nakhon province who were administered a close-ended questionnaire soliciting their opinions towards the elements of transformational leadership and administrative effectiveness. Descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis were performed to analyze the data. The results revealed that (1) the transformational leadership and the administrative effectiveness of the administrators of sub-district municipalities in Sakon Nakhon province (henceforth SMSN) were at a high level; (2) Overall, there was a positive and significant relationship between transformational leadership and administrative effectiveness at a moderate level ($p = <.05$, $r = 0.737$); and (3) two elements of transformational leadership-Idealized influence and individualized consideration-could predict the level of administrative effectiveness of the SMSN by 57.90 per cent. Other predicting factors accounted for another 42.10 per cent. The derived raw-score and standardized score prediction equations were as follows: Prediction equation in raw score form

$$Y = .966 + .284(X_1) + .201(X_2) + .010(X_3) + .301(X_4)$$

Prediction equation in standardized score form

$$ZY = .328(Z_1) + .264(Z_2) + .017(Z_3) + .334(Z_4)$$

Recommendations for the development of transformational leadership and administrative effectiveness of the administrators of sub-district municipalities were made with the emphasis on idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and organizational development.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Administrative Effectiveness, Sub-District Municipality Administrators

Introduction

As generally perceived, local administration is a form of administration that is based on power decentralization and public participation. Puang-ngam (2009) summarizes the importance of local administration in the following six points:

- 1) Local administration is a basis for democratic administration since it serves as a central stage for training the general people in administration, making them familiar with their civic duties and the exercise of rights;
- 2) It helps to alleviate the burdens of the central government;
- 3) it raises the public awareness of self-administration because of their direct participation in politics and concerted attempts to address the problems in their own neighborhoods;
- 4) it is more precise and effective in meeting the demands of the local people;
- 5) it fosters the creation of their potential political leaderships;
- 6) it conforms with the concept of rural development based on self-reliance.

In Thailand, municipality is a form of local administration and is a juristic person headed by a mayor. In fact, since the promulgation of the Municipality Act 1953, Thailand has had until now 12 municipality acts, with the Municipality Act 2003 as the latest.

Like other administrative bodies, all the municipalities in Thailand are confronted with global changes pertaining to society, environment, economy, politics, culture, and technology. These factors have both direct and indirect impacts on the effectiveness of the administration within a municipality. However, research has shown that one of the most influential factors is transformational leadership and this leadership is not confined to just one or two levels, but it pervades at all levels.

Transformational leadership is, as put in a nutshell by Vitayaudom (2010), a behaviour of a person in a position of authority which stimulates or encourages the subordinates to be aware of the outcome in the interest of the organization as a whole. In Thailand, a municipality as a form of local administration plays a significant role in the development of the country and enhancement of the well-being of the local people. This fact holds true for the municipalities in Sakon Nakhon province, in the northeast of Thailand. The municipalities in this province which is in the vicinity of a neighboring country are unavoidably confronted with changes and challenges of various types including political, economic, and social situations. In particular, some policies that are posing seemingly huge impacts on the municipalities are associated with the creation of ASEAN Economic Cooperation (AEC), regional partnership of economic activities in terms of human resources development, labour movement, and labour promotion. In addition, the municipalities in Sakon Nakhon province will also have to brace for the challenges to result from being directly involved in the creation of high-quality international communities, prevention of dangers from terrorism and crime, illegal drugs, natural disasters, and disease spread. They will have to prepare themselves for the changes relevant to Thailand's being established as a hub of investment and business of Asia as well as a base for national and international cooperation for the development activities and development networks in the region.

An attempt was therefore made to investigate the influence of transformational leadership on the administrative effectiveness of the administrators of sub-district municipalities in Sakon Nakhon province (SMSN). The results of this study would add to the literature pertaining to the effective ways by which sub-district municipalities in Thailand which are confronting the constant global changes would apply in order to address the issues in their own areas.

Literature Review

Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership does not simply mean something relevant to charisma which is, though quite important, not sufficient for a person to be a transformational leader. Bass (1985) posits that transformational leadership requires three outstanding traits including intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation. Given the foregoing sentence, Bass's definition of transformational leadership is a bit broader than Burn's (1978) transactional leadership as defined by Burns (1978) because of the fact that it is likely that there can be both forms of leadership within one person. However, under a different circumstance, transformational leadership is marked by four inter-correlated characteristics which are further subcategorized variously.

The first characteristic of transformational leadership is idealized influence. Idealized influence can be best exhibited through a transformational leader's consent to take risks and follow a core set of values, convictions and ethical principles in the actions he takes. Because of idealized influence, the leader builds trust among his followers and the followers, on a reciprocal basis, develop confidence in their leader. This can be seen in the way a leader sets good examples or acts as a role model for others. A leader of this type is held in high esteem by his subordinates or colleagues who often feel honoured and proud to have the opportunity to work with him and consequently follow in his footsteps. In order to possess this characteristic, a leader needs to be visionary and get the message of the vision across to his followers.

Next, transformational leadership is exhibited by inspirational motivation. A leader of this type usually acts in the way that generates intrinsic motivation in his followers, and this can be achieved through numerous means such as enlivening up esprit de corps, assigning thought-provoking and challenging tasks, cultivating positive attitudes and thoughts. In addition, the idealized leader is capable of creating an enjoyable image of the bright future among his followers.

The third feature of transformational leadership is intellectual stimulation. Followers are stimulated by this type of leader to address the problems within the organization in an innovative and creative way. This characteristic is clearly marked by the leader's systematic and creative approach to the problems.

The last attribute of transformational leadership is individualized consideration. Individualized consideration means people are included into the transformation process of an organization (Conger, 2014). This brings about the need to diagnose the followers' wishes, needs, values and abilities in the right way. The leader must be able to recognize or determine — through eavesdropping or observation — what motivates each individual. Through one-on-one coaching and mentoring, the transformational leader provides opportunities for customized training sessions for each team member. These activities allow team members to grow and become fulfilled in their positions. The leader is, as a result of this type of activity, trusted. Within this notion of individualized consideration, the leader is deemed as every follower's coach-come advisor who considers individual needs for the purpose of enhancing the performance of his followers (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Municipality Effectiveness

The Department of Local Administration (DLA) organized a project to assess the standard operating procedure (SOP) of the DLA for 2007. A core team was established to supervise and assess the performance of local administrative organizations based on the local performance assessment (LPA) which was a guideline for assessment of the standard operating procedure. The LPA (LPA, 2008) sets forth the following four key areas for assessment.

- 1) Effectiveness of action plans: The evaluation of local performance pertaining to the achieved or implemented action plans is emphasized. It is meant to measure to what extent the plans are implemented according to the allocated budgets. The achievements in terms of the well-being of the people as service recipients are assessed if they are in accord with the strategic planning laid out by the concerned government bodies.
 - 2) Quality of services: The focus of the assessment is on the effectiveness of action plans pertaining to the quality of services, satisfaction of service recipients, and improvement of services as indicated by the recipients' perspectives.
 - 3) Administrative effectiveness: The administrative effectiveness is evaluated in the areas of reducing the time for delivering services and budget efficiency.
 - 4) Organizational development: The evaluation of performance in the aspect of organizational development focuses on the organization's preparation for changes, personnel downsizing, staffing adjustment, decision-making authorization, endorsement, permission, and electronic performance support systems.
- Drawing on the aforementioned literature, the following conceptual framework of the present study was developed.

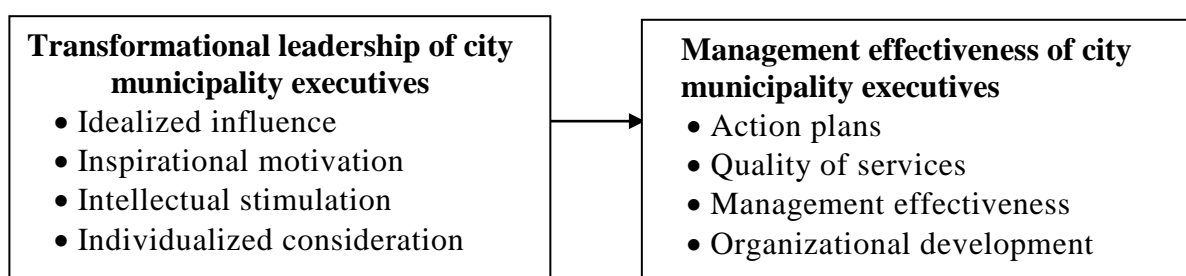


Figure 1 Conceptual framework of the research

Methodology

Population and sample

The population in this study was 65 sub-district municipal clerks affiliated with municipality offices in Sakon Nakhon province. Of the 65 clerks, 56 were thus chosen as the samples in this study, based on the consultation of Krejcie and Morgan's (cited in Sinjaru, 2007) table for determining the sample size.

Data collection tool

A self-reporting questionnaire was used as the tool for collecting the data in this study. The questionnaire was constructed by the researcher and it was piloted with 30 respondents who shared similar demographic characteristics like the samples in the same neighborhoods. The finalized version of the questionnaire was checked for validity (IOC =1.00) and reliability (Cronbach's (1984) alpha = .953) before putting into use. The questionnaire was consisted of three parts: Part I was a check-list for soliciting the respondents' demographic data including gender, age, and educational background; Part II contained close-ended statements about the opinions of the respondents towards the transformational leadership of the administrators of the SMSN pertaining to four themes: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration; Part III contained close-ended statements about the administrative effectiveness of the SMSN covering four themes: effectiveness based on the action plans, quality of services, administrative effectiveness, and organizational development. Part II and III of the questionnaire were of a five Likert-type rating scale, ranging from strongly agree=5, agree = 4, uncertain = 3, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed for descriptive statistics which included frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The analysis of Pearson's correlation was performed to measure the relationship among the variables. In particular, multiple regression analysis was applied to estimate the influence of transformational leadership on the administrative effectiveness of the administrators of SMSN. The significant level of .05 was set for the hypothesis testing.

Results

The respondents' demographic information

Most of the 56 respondents were male (75%). Most of them had an average age of 41-50 years (62.5%). In terms of education, the majority of the respondents were Master's degree holders (67.9%). Pertaining to the posts, it was found that half of them (50%) held the posts of deputy municipal clerks.

Results in relation to the purposes of the study

1. Transformational leadership and the administrative effectiveness of the administrators of SMSN

On the whole, as indicated in Table 1, it was found that the respondents' opinions towards the transformational leaderships of the administrators of SMSN were at a moderate level (mean = 3.50). In detail, it was found that the highest mean (3.79) was for individualized consideration, followed by inspirational motivation (mean = 3.51) and idealized influence (mean = 3.48). Intellectual stimulation gained the lowest mean (mean = 3.23).

Table 1 Transformational leadership of the administrators of SMSN on average

| Transformational leadership of the administrators of SMSN | | \bar{X} | S.D. | Level |
|---|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 1. | Idealized influence | 3.48 | 0.40 | Moderate |
| 2. | Inspirational motivation | 3.51 | 0.45 | High |
| 3. | Intellectual stimulation | 3.23 | 0.58 | Moderate |
| 4. | Individualized consideration | 3.79 | 0.38 | high |
| Total | | 3.50 | 0.35 | Moderate |

As for the administrative effectiveness of the administrators of SMSN, it was revealed that the overall opinions of the respondents were at a high level (mean = 3.84). In further detail, all the aspects of the administrative effectiveness were at a high level, ranging from the effectiveness of action plans with the highest mean (3.86), quality of services (mean = 3.85), administrative effectiveness (mean = 3.85), and organizational development as the lowest mean (mean = 3.80). Table 2 below illustrates the foregoing description.

Table 2 Overall administrative effectiveness of the administrators of SMSN

| Administrative effectiveness of the administrators of SMSN | | \bar{X} | S.D. | Level |
|--|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. | Effectiveness of action plans | 3.86 | 0.50 | High |
| 2. | Quality of services | 3.85 | 0.43 | High |
| 3. | Efficiency of performance | 3.85 | 0.49 | High |
| 4. | Organizational development | 3.80 | 0.48 | High |
| Overall | | 3.84 | 0.34 | High |

2. Relationship between transformational leadership and effectiveness of the administrators of SMSN

The data analysis showed that the overall transformational leadership (LEA) was significantly correlated with the overall administrative effectiveness of the administrators of SMSN (EFF) at the 0.05 level, and they were positively correlated at a moderate level ($r=0.737$).

In order to avoid multicollinearity in which one predictor variable in a multiple regression model can be linearly predicted from the others with a substantial degree of accuracy, in this situation the coefficient estimates of the multiple regression may change erratically in response to small changes in the model or the data, the researcher analyzed the correlation between the variables in the predictor model using the 0.05 significant level to check the relationship between the independent variables to ensure that they can remain in the equation model. As illustrated in Table 2, transformational leadership (LEA) was positively correlated ($r=0.737$) with administrative effectiveness of the administrators of SMSN (EFF) at the significant level of 0.05. The high correlation between the two variables did not have a strong impact on the multiple regression analysis.

Table 3 Pearson Correlation Co-efficient (r) and P-value between transformational leadership and administrative effectiveness of the administrators of SMSN

| Variables | Relationship between transformational leadership and administrative effectiveness of the administrators of SMSN | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | LEA | LEA1 | LEA2 | LEA3 | LEA4 | EFF | EFF1 | EFF2 | EFF3 | EFF4 |
| LEA | | .827* | .812* | .785* | .711* | .737* | .362* | .610* | .535* | .638* |
| LEA1 | | | .756* | .447* | .468* | .691* | .383* | .471* | .625* | .546* |
| LEA2 | | | | .423* | .414* | .657* | .484* | .417* | .580* | .435* |
| LEA3 | | | | | .442* | .423* | .013 | .593* | .140 | .485* |
| LEA4 | | | | | | .604* | .358* | .388* | .444* | .556* |
| EFF | | | | | | | .625* | .736* | .476* | .795* |
| EFF1 | | | | | | | | .099 | .442* | .216 |
| EFF2 | | | | | | | | | .395* | .672* |
| EFF3 | | | | | | | | | | .397* |
| EFF4 | | | | | | | | | | |

3. The influence of transformational leadership on the administrative effectiveness of the administrators of SMSN

As for the factors of transformational leadership that lead to the administrative effectiveness of the administrators of SMSN, it was found that idealized influence and individualized consideration had a significant impact at the 0.05 level.

Inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation did not have a significant impact on the administrative effectiveness of the administrators of SMSN. Idealized influence and individualized consideration could predict the level of administrative effectiveness of the administrators of SMSN by 57.90 per cent. Other predicting factors accounted for another 42.10 per cent.

Therefore, based on the foregoing results, the following raw-score and standardized score prediction models could be generated thus:

Prediction equation in raw score form

$$Y = .966 + .284(X_1) + .201(X_2) + .010(X_3) + .301(X_4)$$

Prediction equation in standardized score form

$$ZY = .328(Z_1) + .264(Z_2) + .017(Z_3) + .334(Z_4)$$

Table 4 Results of multiple regression analysis of the influence of transformational leadership on administrative effectiveness of the administrators of SMSN

| Variables | Regression Coefficient (β) | t | Sig |
|---|------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| 1. Idealized influence | .328 | 2.341 | .023* |
| 2. Inspirational motivation | .264 | 1.951 | .057 |
| 3. Intellectual stimulation | .017 | .169 | .866 |
| 4. Individualized consideration | .334 | 3.215 | .002* |
| R = .781, $R^2 = .609$, $R^{2Adj} = .579$, $F = 19.885$, Sig = .000* | | | |

* statistically significant at .05

Discussion

It was found in this study that idealized influence and individualized consideration were the two factors that had a significant impact ($p < .05$) on the administrative effectiveness of the administrators of SMSN. These two factors could predict 57.90 per cent of the level of administrative effectiveness of the executives of SMSN. Other 42.10 per cent resulted from other factors. This clearly indicated that when the administrators of SMSN had a high level of transformational leadership, their level of administrative effectiveness was on the increase as a consequence. The findings in this study were in accord with Chamung's (2014) study which investigated the relationship between transformational leadership and the performance of agricultural cooperatives in Lampang province and found that the two factors were significantly correlated at a moderate level ($p = 0.05$). Rahothan (2010) also found similar results in her investigation of the relationship between transformational leadership and the administrative effectiveness of the administrators of basic educational institutions affiliated with the Office of Chonburi Basic Educational District Area 2.

The results of the present study uphold Bass and Avolio's (1990) notion of transformational leadership in terms of the development of followers' full potentials. According to Bass (1985) transformational leaders motivate people to do more than they initially intended by: (1) raising awareness among followers of the value of intended outcomes and of the means of reaching them; (2) encouraging subordinates to transcend their individual interests for the sake of the work group or organization; and (3) triggering people's inner motivation by enticing feelings of participation and self-actualization.

Duygulu and Ciraklar (2008) also studied three successful organization types, i.e the amateur sports clubs (football, basketball), theater companies and, regional folk groups to determine the relationship between the type of organization and the role of leadership, using a questionnaire, and the results were that a leader's coaching was positively correlated with the effectiveness of teamwork at the 0.01 level. Also Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) investigated the effects of transformational leadership practices on organizational conditions and student engagement with school. They found strong significant effects of such leadership on organizational conditions, and moderate but still significant total effects on student engagement.

By the same token, Suthampaeng (2011) who investigated the effect of good governance-based administration on the administrative effectiveness of Songdao sub-district administrative organization found that the performance of Songdao sub-district administrative organization was highly influenced by the good governance principles. The researcher made a recommendation that transformational leadership should be highlighted as the core aspect of good governance-based administration of all sub-district administrative organizations. In addition, Chumnum (2014) investigated the elements of transformational leadership and participation among the chairs of local health insurance funds, and the relationship between the transformational leadership elements and the

participation ones among the chairs of local health insurance funds, and found that the elements of transformational leadership and the elements of participation of chairs of local health insurance funds had a significant relationship at the .01 level. Based on the previous studies, a conclusion can be drawn that when the executives of sub-district municipalities in Sakon Nakhon province had a high level of transformational leadership, particularly the elements of idealized influence, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation, the administrative effectiveness of the sub-district municipalities in the area is highly likely to enhance. To this end, organizational development based on the good governance principles will add to the administrative effectiveness.

Implications and Recommendations

1. Idealized influence of transformational leadership could be developed among the executives of Sakon Nakhon sub-district municipalities in the following manners: the executives adhere to the good governance principles, set succinct goals and action plans to achieve them, encourage and help the team to address the problems, cooperate with other partnership agents for effective and worthwhile participation, deregulate and decentralize power, try every possible avenue-both formal and informal, set precedents for the followers in job reviews by adopting both job-centred and employee-centred approaches.
2. Individualized consideration of the transformational leadership can be enhanced among the administrators of SMSN as follows: The administrators provide their followers with good welfare benefits, treat them graciously and with hospitality, boost their morale by offering advice, and expressing genuine concern for them.
3. Approaches to enhancing the intellectual stimulation can include tackling problems wisely, encouraging and creating positive thinking circumstances, engaging in a dialogue, brainstorming as part of knowledge management for innovation creation, exchanging information, and utilizing information technology as well as risk management.
4. Local administration offices and sub-district municipalities in Sakon Nakhon province should promote transformational leadership pertaining to idealized influence and individualized consideration since past research has shown that they have an impact on the administrative effectiveness of sub-district municipality executives. At the same time, the authorities concerned should encourage the development of transformational leadership focusing on inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation.

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