

Teachers' Leadership Styles in China's Higher Vocational Colleges

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[Abstract] China's higher vocational colleges provide vocational education to high school graduates who cannot enter universities. Teachers in higher vocational colleges interface with students, who as a cohort, have different characteristics from those entering university but also vary greatly on an individual level. The present study investigates the efficacy of teachers' leadership styles in higher vocational colleges in Beijing, Qingdao, Hangzhou, and Ningxia, located in the north, south, east, and west of China respectively. A Blanchard Situational Approach was used and data were collected from 100 teachers and 200 students at these colleges. Quantitative analysis was used on the responses to the questionnaires for the teachers and students. The results show that although the students in different colleges vary from each other, the teachers' leadership styles were adapted according students learning journey; in essence, teachers' leadership styles are dynamic and develop from directing to coaching to supporting and then delegating.

[Keywords] leadership; leadership styles of teachers; Blanchard situational approach; vocational college

Introduction

Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2013). Hence the teacher's leadership is the process whereby a teacher influences a group of students to achieve a common goal. It has the following components: first, it's a process; second, it occurs in groups; third, it involves the teacher's influence on students; fourth, its purpose is to complete a task or achieve a goal. Prior to beginning an investigation of teachers' leadership styles in higher vocational colleges it is first necessary to describe the characteristics of students and to consider profiling the teachers' leadership styles.

The students entering higher vocational college are distinctly different from university students, higher vocational college students have their own characteristics. Their scores on the national higher education entrance examination are low. So is their learning ability. But they have high desires for knowledge and creativity. And they have their own opinions on everything and prefer practical knowledge to theoretical knowledge. The students' expectations are high but they don't want to work hard. They are used to the subject-oriented, teacher-centered, information-based and test-driven education. Most of them like being "crammed", and are accustomed to being passive in learning. But since they will be technical workers right after graduation, they need to be active and learn more practical skills while they are at college. Qingsheng Xu summed it up as follows: There are big varieties among students, and their basic knowledge of the subjects is poor; they have many hobbies, but lack of self-control; they are not self-confident and have some psychological problems (Xu, 2011).

Turning attention to the characteristics of vocational college teachers, most of higher vocational college teachers may be classified into two main groups according to their attitude towards the students. Some teachers, especially some young teachers, they lack of care for the students and love for teaching (Su & Wang, 2006). They think since the students are not of a high caliber, there is no need to devote much into the education of them. They don't consider the students situation, they don't care a lot about the student's development. They adopt Drifting Mode (Guo & Zhang, 2000). They teach what they like and what is related to exams in their own way. While some other teachers think they should direct the students and supervise their behavior all the way because the students are not active-learning students. And only by this way the students could make some progress. Teachers in this group usually devote more time and energy into teaching. They adopt Controlling Mode or Super Controlling Mode (Guo & Zhang, 2000). They focus on the students all the time trying to make everything clear to the students and always

be there to offer some help. Both of the two kinds of teachers often apply their way of teaching and education from the beginning to the end of the six semesters (three academic years). Besides the two main groups of teachers, there may be some other teachers in China's higher vocational colleges who feel it's not proper to teach in the above two ways and they try to adjust and make some changes but they don't know what to do or how to do it.

Given the variation in teachers' leadership styles to which students with varying characteristics are exposed, it is useful to investigate the efficacy of the styles for groups of students. Blanchard's theory, (1985, 1999) addresses leadership styles that change according to the people and task provides a useful framework for the study. Therefore, when investigating teachers' leadership styles in China's higher vocational colleges, the following research question emerged: Is the development of higher vocational college students is congruent with Blanchard's theory from D1 to D4? If so, how are the phases best divided? Do higher vocational college teachers use appropriate leadership styles with the students according to their level of development?

This research has two areas of potential significance. The first is for the teachers to know the student's development characteristics and adapt their leadership styles according to the student's development so that they can guide the students more effectively and more proficiently. The second is for the students to adjust their attitude and pace of progress during the time at college. Before describing the research that seeks to address the aforementioned questions, a brief review of related literature.

Review of the Literature

Literature related to Blanchard's Situational Approach and to China's higher vocational education are pertinent to the present study and are thus now briefly discussed.

Blanchard's Situational Approach

The situational leadership theory is a leadership theory developed and became popular in the 1970s, when Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard released the first, edition of "Management of Organizational Behavior" (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). The theory was first introduced as "Life Cycle Theory of Leadership" and was renamed "Situational Leadership Theory". The situational approach is one of the most recognized approaches to leadership. It focuses on leadership in situations, and it is widely used in organizational leadership training and development. Situational leadership stresses leadership as being composed of both a directive and a supportive dimension, and that each component needs to be applied appropriately in a given situation (Figure 1) (Northouse, 2013). That is to say, according to situational leadership theory, different situations demand different kinds of leadership. Subsequently, leaders must match their style to the competence and commitment of subordinates.

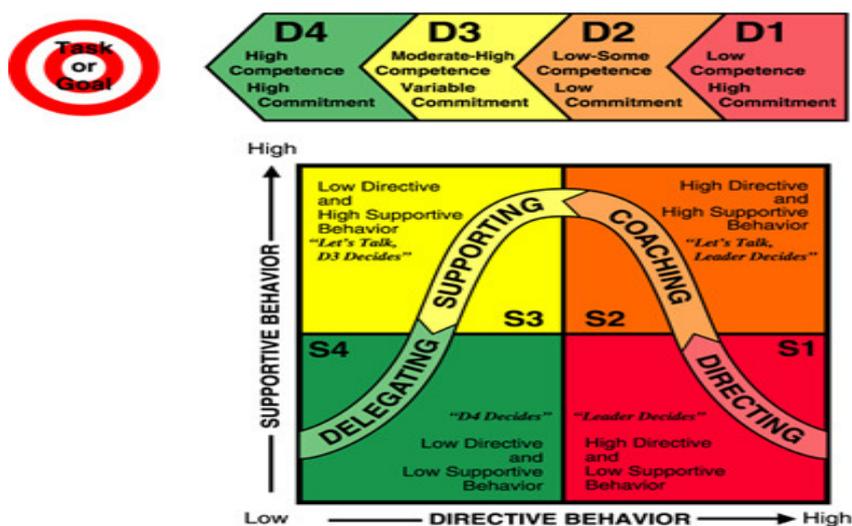


Figure 1. (Adapted from Northouse, 2013)

Figure 1 shows the four categories of leadership styles and the development of subordinates. The first style (S1) named Directing Style, is a high directive and low supportive behavior. The leader focuses more communication on goal accomplishment, and spends less time using supportive behaviors. When the subordinates cannot complete the task but are willing to do the job, that is, when they have low competence and high commitment (D1), this leadership style is most appropriate. The Directing approach requires the leaders to define the roles and tasks of the subordinate (i.e., student), and determine what to do, how it will be done and who will do these things? And to supervise them closely to ensure all required actions are completed. Decisions are made by the leaders and communication is one-way.

The second style (S2) is Coaching Style, which is highly directive and involves highly supportive behavior. The Leader focuses communication on both goal achievement and supporting subordinates' socio-emotional needs. It requires leader involvement through encouragement and soliciting subordinate input. When the subordinates have some competence but low commitment (D2), this approach is more suitable. Like Directing, Subordinates still need direction and supervision, and at the same time, they need support and encouragement to build their self-confidence. The leader still defines roles and tasks clearly, but the leader seeks ideas and suggestions from the subordinates. They spend more time listening, advising, and helping the subordinates obtain necessary skills to achieve the goal. Like S1, S2 is also leader decision. The leader will decide on what and how to achieve the goal. But communication is much more two-way.

S3 is called supporting approach. It's low directive and high supportive behavior. Leader does not focus solely on goals; rather the leader uses supportive behaviors to bring out employee skills in accomplishing the task. The Leader delegates day-to-day decision-making control, but is available to facilitate problem solving. This leadership approach is the best choice when the subordinates have moderate competence but may lack commitment (D3). Instead of clarifying the details of the work, the leader is more concerned with why the subordinates are not active in the job and try to motivate them by listening, praising and encouraging.

The last leadership style S4 is delegating approach. It is low directive and low supportive. The leader offers less task input and social support when facilitating subordinates' confidence and motivation in relation to the task. The Leader lessens involvement in planning, control of details, and goal clarification and gives subordinates control and refrains from intervention and unneeded social support. This leadership approach is most appropriate when the subordinates have high competence and high commitment (D4) to do the job and require little supervision or support to them. Delegating still keeps the leader involved in the decisions and problem-solving, but execution is mostly in the hands of the subordinates. Both S3 and S4 are the subordinate decision.

China's Higher Vocational Education

Vocational ("Vocational Education," 2007) or career and technical education is education specifically designed to prepare one to enter into or advance in a specific vocation or career. (Wang, 2008)The Chinese government has attached greater importance, and will provide more support to higher vocational education. In 2006, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance announced a joint project "Tertiary VET 211"to make sure available an additional RMB 2 billion by the end of 2009 to upgrade 100 state exemplary tertiary vocational colleges" (Hao, 2010). The State Council made the decision of accelerating the development of modern vocational education (Document [2014] 19) and it was approved on February 26, 2014. It said that by taking a series of measures, extending to 2020, a modern world class vocational system with Chinese characteristics will be formed, which will meet the development requirements of China; deeply integrate industry and education; increase communication between secondary vocational schools and higher vocational colleges; increase intercommunication between vocational education and general education ; and cater to life-long education. Lu Xin, vice minister of Education, delivered a speech on the 2014 Annual Conference of China Development Forum. She said that the key to solve the problem of employment structural contradiction in China lies in the modern vocational education reform.

Higher vocational education in China has a bright future. It is valued for its high employment, because China's economy suffers from the lack of qualified technicians and skilled workers. The Annual Report of China Vocational Education Personnel Training Quality 2013 revealed that the employment of higher vocational college graduates is just lower than "985 universities". It's even higher than "211 universities". In the press conference of the State Council Information Office of PRC on June 26, 2014, Lu Xin (2014), the vice minister of education said that the total enrollment of higher vocational college students reached to 9.736 million which accounted for 39.5% of total higher education enrollment. However, higher vocational colleges face a lot of problems, among which the falling teaching standards and lower quality of graduates are the most frequently mentioned side-effects of enrollment expansion. It is critical to improve the quality of education. Quality is vital to the growth of higher vocational colleges and the employability of their graduates. Teachers play the most important role in solving the above problems. This research aims to improve the teachers' leadership suitability and efficiency by investigating the teachers' leadership styles and the students' development at China's higher vocational colleges.

Methodology

A survey was used as the primary data collection tool for the present study. The broad area of survey research encompasses any measurement procedures that involve asking questions of respondents. A "survey" can be anything from a short paper-and-pencil feedback form to an intensive one-on-one in-depth interview. Survey research is highly valued because it can be made about some characteristic, attitude or behavior of this population. And by studying a sample of that population, we can see the opinions or trends of a population. Developmental research is an observational descriptive type of research that either compares people in different age groups or follows a particular group over a lengthy period of time. Such studies are appropriate for looking at development trends (Trochim, 2006).

The researcher distributed online questionnaires to 100 teachers and 200 students. The questionnaire for teachers was adapted from *Leadership Theory and Practice* Sixth Edition by Northouse (1999, pp. 116-117). It provided four teaching related situations and asked the 100 teachers from four higher vocational colleges to choose their behavior for each situation from the four alternatives. The instruction to teachers read "*Instructions: Look at the following four leadership situations and decide which leadership style is needed in the situation (i.e., action A, B, C or D) according to the development level of the students.*"

The situations and leadership styles were written to directly represent the leadership styles of the four quadrants in the model (Northouse, 2013). For each of the four situations, the teachers must identify the development level of the student (students) in each situation, study the four alternatives to make sure the leadership style of each one, and according to S1 to D1, S2 to D2, S3 to D3 and S4 to D4, select the right response. The questionnaire for the students included two parts to evaluate the development level of the student's competence and commitment.

The 100 teachers surveyed came from different higher vocational colleges in Beijing, Qingdao, Hangzhou and Ningxia in China during April 2013. And during 2011 to 2014, the third months of each term, that is, November of 2011, May of 2012, November of 2012, May of 2013, November of 2013, May of 2014 and a survey of 200 students at the above four colleges were conducted. Each term, the 200 students respond to the same questionnaire according to their own development at that time. And till this May, we collected 195 (97.5%) questionnaires each term. Because five of the surveyed students joined the army during the survey time and could not go on, their responses were not counted.

Results

The Teacher's Leadership Styles in China's Higher Vocational Colleges

The teachers' responses to each of the situations are summarized below:

Situation 1

There is going to be a speech contest in your college, as a head teacher, you are thinking of asking a highly capable and experienced student to take charge of the contest. This person successfully organized the last year speech contest and has the trust and respect of most of the students. She is very willing to help with the contest.

- a) Assign the task to her and let her determine how to accomplish it.
- b) Assign the task to her, indicate to her precisely what must be done, and supervise her work closely.
- c) Assign the task to her and provide support and encouragement as needed.
- d) Assign the task to her and indicate to her precisely what needs to be done but make sure you incorporate her suggestions.

Teachers' responses to situation 1 are given in Table 1.

Table 1

Responses	A	B	C	D
Leadership style	S4	S1	S3	S2
percentage	10%	11%	67%	12%

It's a very common situation in higher vocational colleges that students undertake numerous activities. In this situation, the teacher has identified a student who has the ability, experience and respect from her peers to do the job. According to the SLII model, this person is at Developmental Level 4(D4). The corresponding leadership style should be S4, a delegating approach, that is, a low supportive-low directive style. Response (A), "Assign the task to her and let her determine how to accomplish the best one. Among 100 teachers, only 10% chose the right response. Even 12% think the opposite way, S2 (D). And most of the teachers (67%) think that the students need their support. It reflects that higher vocational college teachers cannot trust their students fully and make the decision themselves.

Situation 2

During teaching, you have noticed that one of your freshmen students is not following through on assigned tasks. She is enthusiastic about her studies and wants to get ahead in the class.

- a) Discuss the lack of follow-through with her and explore the alternative ways this problem can be solved.
- b) Specify what she must do to complete the tasks but incorporate any suggestions she may have.
- c) Define the steps necessary for her to complete the assigned tasks and monitor her performance frequently.
- d) Let her know about the lack of follow-through and give her more time to improve her performance.

Teacher's responses to situation 2 are given in Table 2.

Table 2

Responses	A	B	C	D
Leadership style	S3	S2	S1	S4
percentage	29%	14%	14%	43%

The student in this situation is a freshman who has high motivation but lacks the relevant competence to complete the task. She is at the D1 level of development. The teacher should use an S1 (high directive-low supportive behavior) with her, tell her what to do and how to do and then supervise her performance

precisely. The alternative that reflects directing is (C), "Define the steps necessary for her to complete the assigned tasks and monitor her performance frequently." Only 14% of all the surveyed teachers chose the right answer, while 43% of them adopted S4 (low directive-low supportive). It shows that even for the freshman, some teachers didn't want to devote more time for teaching and education. And some teachers didn't know the development of the students and chose their usual leadership style.

Situation 3

Because of a new and very important task, for the past weeks you have made sure that the students understood their responsibilities and expected level of performance, and you have supervised them closely. Due to some recent project setbacks, your students have become somewhat discouraged. Their morale has dropped, and so has their performance.

- a) Continue to direct and closely supervise their performance.
- b) Give the group members more time to overcome the setbacks but occasionally check their progress.
- c) Continue to define group activities but involve the group members more in decision making and incorporate their ideas.
- d) Participate in their problem-solving activities and encourage and support their efforts to overcome the task setbacks.

In situation 3, the teacher applied leadership S1 (high directive-low supportive) to the students so that they have developed some abilities and experience, but they are reluctant to go on when things are not going smoothly. So they are now at D2 level and need high supportive and high directive leadership from the teacher. That is coaching style (S2) of leadership. Option (C), "Continue to define group activities but involve the group members more in decision making and incorporate their ideas." represents S2 in this situation. While in Table 3, the percentage of C is merely 26%. And 63% teachers use S3 leadership approach, High Supportive-Low Directive behavior.

Table 3

Responses	A	B	C	D
Leadership style	S1	S4	S2	S3
percentage	4%	7%	26%	63%

Situation 4 describes a common situation that happens in higher vocational colleges especially when they compete with the students from universities. The teacher knows that the student has the ability to do a good job. What he lacks is just self-confidence. So the student who is at D3 in this situation calls for a supportive style (S3) from the teacher. Response (C), "Listen to his concerns but assure him he can do the job and support his efforts." suggests that the teacher will give the student more encouragement and support than directing.

Situation 4

As a teacher, you have asked a student to make a presentation of a topic concerning his major. You have helped with this student on the presentation of other topics, and you know he has the knowledge and experience to be successful at new assignments. However, he seems a little unsure about his ability to do the job.

- a) Assign the new task to him and let him function on his own.
- b) Set goals and objectives for this new assignment but consider his suggestions and involve him in decision making.
- c) Listen to his concerns but assure him he can do the job and support his efforts.
- d) Tell him exactly what the new task involves and what you expect of him, and supervise his performance closely.

Seventy-Eight percent of the teachers use the right leadership behavior as shown in Table 4. The surveyed teachers scored the highest for this question compared with the other three. Most of the teachers realized that the student needs to encourage and chose the right response C.

Table 4

responses	A	B	C	D
Leadership style	S4	S2	S3	S1
percentage	7%	12%	78%	3%

The above is the analysis of all the 100 teachers' responses in each situation. To make it more clear, by giving each question 10 points, the researcher also made another quantitative analysis of each teacher's responses for all the four situations by SPSS 19.0 for Windows. It shows in Table 5 that the mean score is as low as 12.7 of the total 40 point, and the standard deviation is as high as 6.64466.

Table 5

Mean	N	SD
12.7000	100	6.64466

Analysis of the Student's Development in China's Higher Vocational Colleges

Questionnaire for Students

Instructions: Look at the following questions and decide which one is your response to each of them (i.e., options 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) according to your own situation.

Questionnaire for competence

Question 1

When you get a task based on what you have learned, are you confident with yourself to complete it?

1. Not at all. 2. A little. 3. Some. 4. A lot. 5. Full of confidence.

Question 2

When you get a task based on what you have learned, can you figure out the detailed steps to complete it by yourself?

1. No, not at all. 2. Just a little. 3. Yes, I can make some. 4. Yes, I can do most part of it. 5. Yes, always.

Question 3

When you get a task, do you like your teacher tell you every step to complete it and be there to help you all the time?

1. Yes, I love that.
2. Yes, I need a lot of help from my teacher.
3. Yes, I need some help from my teacher.
4. Yes, but I just need a little help from my teacher.
5. No, I don't need my teacher's help.

Question 4

When your opinion does not accord with the teacher's, what would you do?

1. Follow the teacher's without any doubt.
2. Follow the teacher's but with a little doubt.
3. Follow the teacher's but will tell him/her my own opinion.
4. I will not follow his/her opinion before persuaded by him/her.
5. Follow my own.

Questionnaire for commitment

Question 1

If your teacher assigns you a new task, are you willing to try and finish it in time?

1. No. 2. Yes, I have to. 3. Yes, if it's not difficult. 4. OK. 5. Yes, I'd love to.

Question 2

If your teacher assigns you a new task, are you willing to try and finish it in time?

1. No. 2. Yes, I have to. 3. Yes, if it's not difficult. 4. OK. 5. Yes, I'd love to.

Question 3

If your teacher assigns your group a new task, and you must work with each other, do you like to play a big role in your group to complete the task?

1. No. 2. Yes, a little. 3. Yes, if it's not difficult. 4. OK. 5. Yes, I'd love to.

Question 4

At present, do you want to work hard and get ahead in your class?

1. No. 2. Yes, a little. 3. Yes, if it's not difficult. 4. OK. 5. Yes, I'd love to.

For the survey instrument, the following values are assigned: option 1 to option 5 is equal to one point to five points respectively. SPSS 19.0 for Windows was used to analyze the data collected for this study. Analysis was conducted for each factor in the research question. For the descriptive statistics, mean scores was reported for the participants' responses.

Table 6 presents the means of students' competence and commitment for each term.

Table 6

Mean of students' competence and commitment in each term. (n=195, N=200) (scale: 1-5)

Term Contents	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth
competence	1.85	2.83	3.07	3.84	4.18	4.89
commitment	4.62	3.96	3.73	3.18	3.54	4.71

Figure 2 is a two-dimensional line chart of the above data. Using the "term" as the abscissa and "competence" and "commitment" as ordinate, the mean score of students' response was mapped into points in a two-dimensional coordinate plane. From the chart, we can easily see that the competence of the students is a rising trend. And among the six terms, the second and the third are closest. The fourth term and the fifth term are also close to each other. Therefore, the rising trend could be divided into four phases. That is, the first term is the first phase, the second and third term is the second phase, the fourth and the fifth term is the third phase and the sixth term is the last phase. Meanwhile, the line 1, which represents the commitment of higher vocational college students, is on a down-and-rising trend. But we can also find that the third term changes very a little from the second term, so does the fourth term from the fifth term. Thus, it also can be divided into the same four phases as the line 2, the competence of the students.

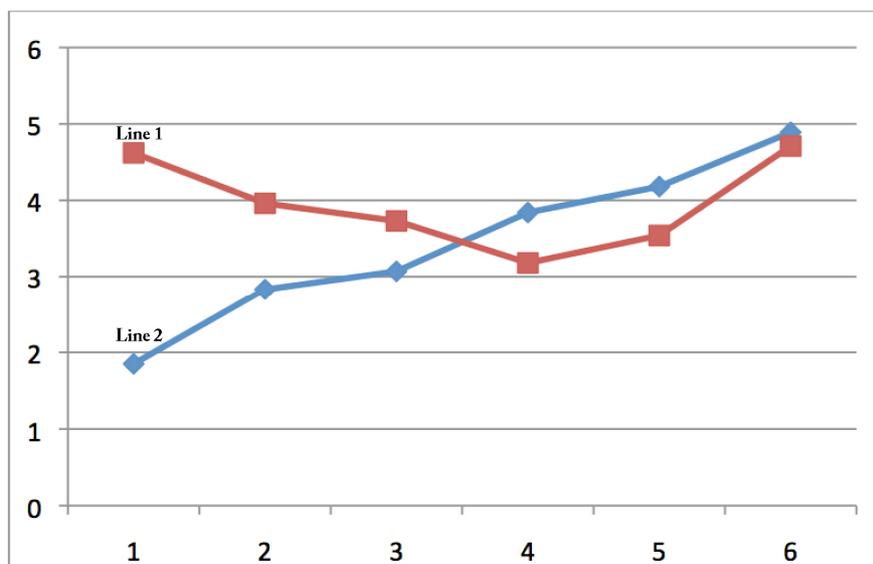


Figure 2. Two-dimensional line chart of the above data

Discussion

Based on the above analysis, the findings can be summed up as follows:

- a) Most teachers in China's higher vocational colleges adopt their personal leadership styles to fit their students' learning styles and needs, but do so without accommodating the development of the students. This means these teachers change their leadership styles from directing all the way to delegating because their students move in and out of those leadership quadrants. However, these teachers may have neglected the competency level and commitment level as shown in Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Style. Teachers need to take into consideration especially the development level of students. Although these teachers surveyed indicated they adopt and adapt Situational Leadership Style, it is questionable whether their teaching is more effective given the fact they neglect the development level of students.
- b) The development of China's higher vocational college students is divided into 4 phases with relatively fixed period of time. These are D1: The first term of the first academic year; D2: The second term of the first academic year to the first term of the second academic year; D3: The second term of the second academic year to the first term of the third academic year; D4: The second term of the third academic year

It was significantly correlated with the development level of followers in Blanchard SLII, which means the students in China's higher vocational colleges develop from low to high, from low competence, high commitment to some competence, low commitment, then to moderate competence, low commitment and finally to high competence and high commitment. Thus the teachers are supposed to use the corresponding leadership styles, that is, S1 (Directing) for D1, S2 (Coaching) for D2, S3 (Supporting) for D3 and S4 (Delegating) for D4. However, the findings indicate that there is an evident disconnect between the teachers' desire to utilize leadership styles adapted to their students' needs and the appropriate leadership styles.

The study had several limitations. First, the data were generated from self-reported practice, which needs validation via direct observation, students' surveys, and analysis of exams reports. Second, the researcher didn't take the students' further study and further promotion into account. For example, if they are going to university after they pass the entrance exam. Third, the research is for the general students' development, not specific to the individuals. Later study maybe focuses on how to train the teachers by

Blanchard's Situational Approach and how to conduct the proper leadership via the student group leader to the members of each study group.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate if China's higher vocational college teachers adopt suitable leadership styles according to the development of their students. The findings indicate that the surveyed teachers do not use the leadership styles that correlate to their students' developmental stages. As shown in the findings from this quantitative analysis, the development of China's higher vocational college students can be divided into 4 phases, which need the corresponding leadership styles from the teachers. Some teachers felt the situation is changing, but they are used to personal usual leadership style. Most teachers chose S4 (delegating) and S1 (directing) as their main leadership styles with students. Most of them disregarded the development of the students. If teachers cannot provide the correct direction or support for the students, it will slow down their development. In addition, such issues influence the quality of vocational graduates, and their employability. This finding helps teachers realize that there's no "one size fits all" approach to leadership and understand the characteristics of the students' development.

By utilizing the Situational Approach Model (Blanchard, 1985), the teachers can find the proper leadership style when their students are in different situations. Training should be taken for the higher vocational college teachers to understand and judge which development phase their students are in, D1, D2, D3 or D4. And then adapt their leadership styles from S1 to S2 then to S3 and S4. Leadership style should be adjusted as students change over time. Teachers should vary their leadership style in various phases. To summarize, teachers must consider the development level of their students by analyzing the group's competence and commitment. Depending on the level of these variables, teachers must apply the most appropriate leadership style to fit the given situation. In this procedure, there are three steps. First step, identify the task, make it simple and clear and specific. Second step, diagnose the development level of the students. Third step, decide the matching leadership style.

Another thing we need to know is that the division of the students' development periods is not fixed, it may move a little forward or backward, so the teachers' leadership styles are flexible. Teachers need to have the ability to diagnose the situation, and to appreciate the impact of the variables at play. Relationships with the students you lead are significant in all situations. Leaders and managers must be able to use a variety of styles and behaviors that are contextualized to fit the interaction of people and tasks (Isaksen, 2009).

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Effectiveness of Web Quest Strategy in Acquiring the Geographic Concepts among Eighth Grade Students in Jordan

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[Abstract] This study aimed at identifying the efficiency of using Web Quest Strategy in acquiring the geographic concepts among eighth grade students in Jordan. The study individuals consisted of (119) students in the scholastic year 2013-2014. Four sections were randomly selected from two schools and divided into experimental and control groups. They were placed into the experimental group that consisted of (58) male and female students taught by Web Quest Strategy and into a control group that consisted of (61) male and female students taught by the traditional method. To achieve the study objectives, teaching plans were prepared according to the Web Quest Strategy and testing the acquisition of the geographic concepts. The study results showed the presence of differences with statistical significance at significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) between the means of the students' scores on the test acquiring the geographic concepts attributed to the teaching method in favor of the experimental group. But the results did not reveal the presence of statistically significant differences between the students' scores on the test of acquiring the geographic concepts by the eighth basic grade attributed to the gender variable or to the interaction between the teaching method and gender.

[Keywords] web quest strategy; geographic concepts; eighth basic grade

Introduction

In Jordan, the new vision of developing education focuses on knowledge economy by employing technology in education and preparing a generation of learners able to deal with technology and use it effectively. Undoubtedly, raising the level of output is the basic goal of the development process, which helps students who know about modern technology to construct knowledge and employ it in their life. One of the basics of developing education in Jordan is the focus on concepts and cognitive structure in ways that assure learners' effective role in learning through activity, work, and practice, which help them understand and apply concepts. Developing education also focuses on using knowledge in life and employing the concepts and cognitive structures in dealing with daily practical problems and situations (Al-Ziadat & Qatawi, 2014).

Educators affirm that helping students at different stages of study to learn concepts in an effective way is a fundamental objective of basic education, and learning the concepts facilitates learning the educational content, increasing its fixation in the memory, improving the students' abilities in achievement and education, and employing the educational experiences (Qatawi, 2007). For an example, from this research concepts are considered as the important component in the content of geography subject. Learning and developing these concepts is considered one of the teaching objectives of the geography subject. Therefore, teachers of geography need to know how to use methods in teaching geographic concepts. It is worth mentioning that learning geographic concepts has a great importance; studying the cognitive concepts of any subject starts by clarifying the basic concepts to enable the students' abilities to use them (Ababna, 2006; Al-Zydat & Qataqi, 2014).

The general frame of the geography subject, which is published in text books and curricula management in Jordan for the year 2005, makes the student aware of the social, political, and economic role in society; these materials also facility understanding the relationship between time and place, and explain natural and human phenomena scientifically. Therefore, these objectives cannot be achieved unless modern strategies in teaching geography are used in author's opinion.

Al-khadr (2014) and Al-Kasab (2011) pointed that one of the important challenges facing the