

## THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP STYLES IN CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

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### ABSTRACT

Being a teacher in a classroom needs knowledge not only in terms of the knowledge of the subject itself but also in term of knowing how to handle the class such as leadership skill because this skill is able to maintain students spirit or morale also requires skill so that the students have self confident to speak English without being afraid of making mistakes and being laughed by their friends. The aim of this paper is to analyze leadership styles available and to find out an appropriate style that can be applied in an English classroom. Several styles ranged from an authoritarian style to democratic to laissez faire have been viewed and analyzed. An autocratic is one in which the manager retains the decision making rights to herself, it is task oriented, it gives orders to subordinates, and the type of communication is one-way downwards. In contrast, in a laissez-faire decision style, the manager imposes few, if any, controls on subordinates. Decisions are left to subordinates and it is they who are the principle initiators of actions. In English class room the situation of learning a foreign language has been discussed. Some principles required by students to learn a foreign language have been mentioned. The situation required by an foreign language classroom should be relax and able to encourage students to talk or communicate using the target language. Besides the situation, learners should also be taken into consideration. The way to behave to one student as individual is different to another. It is mostly influenced by the maturity task owned by a student and a class. By looking at the advantages and disadvantages of two extreme styles, it is suggested that there is no best style in leadership. The best is the leadership which considers situation that can build up good relationship between leader and followers

### KEYWORDS

Leadership Management, Leadership Range

## 1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Being a teacher in a classroom needs knowledge not only in terms of the knowledge of the subject itself but also in term of knowing how to handle the class. Mastering in the subject that one teaches is absolutely required. It also gives positive contribution to gain self confidence to stand in front of students. However, knowledge itself can not guarantee that the process of teaching and learning runs well. Knowledge should be combined with the way a teacher manages a classroom.

Managing classrooms involves several main activities including planning, organising, actuating and controlling which involve leading (Dressler, G., 2000). Leading means getting others to get the job done, maintaining morale, motivating subordinates which in this case can be read as students. To have students something seems easy but actually in English class room it is some time not as easy as it looks. Sometimes an instruction given is not implemented as it should be. Maintaining student's spirit or morale also requires skill so that the students have self confidence to speak English without being afraid of making mistakes and being laughed by their friends. In addition, since learning a foreign language sometimes stress full, the students need a teacher to motivate them all the time.

## 2. RESEARCH QUESTION

A research question used in this paper is to find out whether there is one leadership style suitable to be applied in an English classroom at Politeknik Negeri Sriwijaya.

## 3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### 3.1. Leadership Management

Many people confuse leadership with management, but the two are very different. Many things are happening in our classroom while teaching that are increasing the emphasis on the management skill, *leadership*. Leadership has to do with the people as a part of organization (which in this case the people can be read as students). A teacher can manage teaching aids, material and many other facilities used for teaching but students need to be led.

In classroom management, a teacher requires management and leadership. To differ them, management can be stated as something which is scientific and formal but leadership is more visionary and relationship oriented because it involves eliciting cooperation and teamwork from everyone in the classroom ( Hoy and Miskel, 1987; Yuki, 2002).

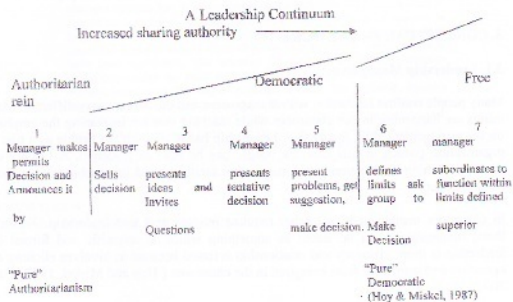
There are many definitions of leadership. Fiedler (1967) quoted by Hoy and Miskel (1987), and Yukl (2002) defines that leader is the individual in the group given the task of directing and coordinating task-relevant group activities. While this paper relies on definition from Ralph M. Stogdill (1950) that leadership is the process influencing the activities of an organize group toward goal setting and goal achievement (Yukl, 2002). Stogdill's definition can be adapted to the classroom situation where there is teacher and students. It is a teacher job to influence students to do activities in and out the classroom in order to achieve goals.

### 3.2. Leadership Range

Owen and Thomas (2006) state that all of us have observed leader behavior ranging from autocratic to democratic to laissez-faire. An autocratic decision style is one in which a leader maintains the decision-making rights to his/herself, it is task orientated, it gives order to his/her subordinates and the typical communication is one way communication. In contrast, in a laissez-faire context the leader few controls on subordinates. Decisions are left to subordinates and there are the ones who initiate actions. The same thing is also stated by Hoy and Miskel (1987). They say that although there is a wide range of possible behaviors, it can be simplified in two polarized terms.

1. The leader can decide what to do and tell followers how to do it or
2. The leader can permit followers to operate freely within limits dictated by things over which he/she has no control.

To make it clear below is the diagram of the leadership range.



### 3.3. The History of Leadership Theory

#### 3.3.1. Early Theories

In the 50's and 60's leadership was discouraged. The emphasis was on following procedures, carrying decisions made from above but now it is a major competitive advantage both personally and institutionally.

Early theory of leadership was basically based on a simple traits or personality. It means leaders trait such as physical appearances were considered dominant in producing outcomes. This also called a great man theory or trait approach. It attempts to identify any distinctive physical or psychological characteristic of the individual that relate or explain behavior of leader (Yukl,2002). This idea makes people think that a leader cannot be learned but he/she is born.

However, Stogdill (1976) reviews that the relationship between a leader and followers are not fully influenced by traits but more on intelligence need for power, sense of responsibility, social participativeness and socio economic status.

After the trait leadership, the research of leadership moved to behavioral differences. It assumed that behavior plays an important role in achieving goals. Manager's behavior brings outcomes. The behaviors are identified in several principal factors, they are consideration and initiating structure. Consideration covers the empathy a leader shows for subordinates' emotional needs, and the warmth, support and respect she shows for them. Initiating factors show that subordinates need to be supervised generally. Therefore, a teacher will be ineffective when he/she is task oriented and close supervision (Owen, and Valesky, 2007).

#### 3.3.2. Current Theories

Looking at the early theories, it is realized that traits and behaviors are not the only factors to be considered. Situation, in fact, becomes a significant aspect to get job done, to maintain morale and, to motivate subordinates.

Fiedler's theory maintains that there are three situational factors determine the favorability of the situation for managers. They are leader member relation, task structure and leader position power. Thus, different types of situation require different type of leadership. The question is what traits under what situations are important to leader effectiveness?

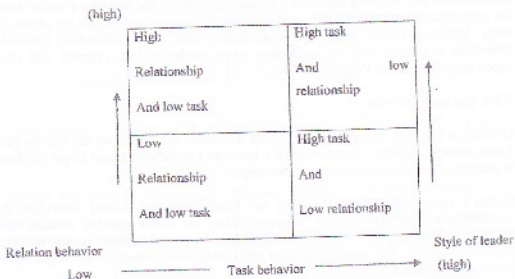
There are quite a few theories which put situation as one factor that has to be put highly considered. They are categorized as contingency approach. According to this approach, it is necessary to specify the conditions or situational variables the moderates' relationship between leader traits or behaviors and performance criteria. The evidences

indicate that under one set of circumstances, one type of leader is effective; under another set of circumstances, a different type of leader is effective. Yet, Merton (1969) as quoted by Hoy and Miskel (1987:274) says that it must also involve attributes of the transaction between those who lead and those who follow. In other words leadership is effective when it is valued as some sort of social transaction.

Then, Vroom's and Yettons in 1973 developed a taxonomy of five leadership styles, as follows: Autocratic process, consultative process and group process, analysis of situation and decision making flowchart (Owen and Valesky, 2007). While, Reddin in 1967 made three dimensions of leadership including relationship, task and effectiveness (Hoy and Miskel, 1987).

Belasco, et al.,(1975) describes that leadership has four activities: control internal activities, enforce group value, linking with other group and protection from outside pressures. In addition, in order to be effective a leader should be supportive and instrumental leadership the first means a leader should consider member needs, involve participants in decision making and be general leadership. The latter is when a leader performs several functions that are instrumental to the group achievements of its goal.

Situational theory proposed by Hersey and Blanchard (1977) in Hoy and Miskel (1987) is taken here to simplify the process of leadership.



The diagram above shows that effective leadership styles are related to the maturity of followers which is a critical factor. A maturity here is not seen in term of general group but is seen only in term of a specific task to be performed. To simplify it, it can be said that the question raised is not "is this group mature or immature?" but rather "what is to be done here, what is maturity level of this group?". Therefore maturity here is only

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defined in relation to a specific task. Students who have a high level of task-relevant maturity not only have the ability, knowledge, experience and motivation to do the job but also feelings of self confidence and self respect about themselves. On the other hand, students who have a low level of task-relevant maturity lack the ability, motivation and knowledge to do the job, as well as psychology maturity (Hoy and Miskel, 1987).

### 3.4. English Classroom

In teaching English, there are eight principles needed to be considered viewed from the students (Scarino, et al., 1988). The student learned the language best when:

- They are treated as individuals,
- They are provided with opportunities to participate in communicative use of the target language in a wide range activities,
- There are exposed to communicative data which is comprehensible and relevant to their own needs and interests,
- They focus deliberately on various language forms, skills, and strategies, in order to support the process of language acquisition,
- They are exposed to socio-cultural data and direct experience of the culture(s) embedded within the target language,
- Become aware of the role and nature of language and of culture,
- They are provided with appropriate feedback about their progress,
- They are provided with opportunities to manage their own learning.

Besides the implications, many approaches have been offered to English teachers in order to get success in process of teaching and learning English as foreign language. It is started from grammar Translation method to Communicative approach introduced in seventies. Communicative approach stresses the centrality of the communicative situation and this approach sees language as media of communication (Nunan, 1984).

Rivers (1987) maintains that interaction is the key to teaching language for communication. Communication is the sharing of experience (Tubb and Moss, 1987). It is an exchange between people, of knowledge, of information, of opinion, of feelings. It takes place in multitude ways from writing to mocest flicker of eyelid.

When language is seen as a media of communication, class room situation needs to be considered. The classroom situation must be created in such a way that students are encouraged to talk in target language with one another (Broughton, 1988). Further, he states that although most young children seem to participate actively in role play activities, some adult students are less enthusiastic. They are afraid of being made to look silly in front of their fellow students.

#### 4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter deals with the analysis of leadership styles through identifying the advantages of each polarized style.

As it has been stated in the previous chapter that leadership styles can be seen in a continuum dimension. From the continuum it can be stated that leadership style ranges from authoritarian style towards free rein or laissez faire.

##### 4.1. Authoritarian style

When a teacher has to focus on the task in teaching learning processes, the positive outcomes can be seen in terms of time efficiency and conformity since this style demands a teacher not to be compromising. In addition, the teacher is fully task oriented therefore; instructional material can be delivered as it is stated on schedule. Since the teacher is the only decision maker in a classroom is totally under controlled.

Being authoritarian is similar to teacher centered when teacher tells, decides what answers are right or wrong, teacher asks students to give explanations and uses leading questions, teacher talks more, and teacher leaves no question open for later solution. In a teacher classroom, the teacher is the ultimate authority. In case of dispute between the textbook and the teacher, students quickly teach whom to believe. Never mind what the text book says, pay attention to what I say.

Although several benefits can be produced using this style, the effect of the teachers value in authoritarian style can be seen in classroom climate. The climate becomes closed. The teacher and the students simply appear to go through the motions, with the teacher stressing routine activity and the students responding minimally and exhibiting little commitment. The leadership becomes ineffective since the teacher role is only seen as controlling and rigid as well as unsympathetic, unconcerned and unresponsive or low supportiveness in the light of student's need.

Of course, this situation will not be effective to maintain student motivation to learn a foreign language because learning foreign language acquires supportive situation viewed from student's need, good interaction, low directive, and low restrictive and high intimate.

##### 4.2. Free Rein Style

This is the opposite of the authoritarian. A manager gives permission to subordinates to function within the limit of superior. Having freedom makes subordinates become creative, innovative and independent. The situation is unstructured and uncontrolled. If this situation is adapted to a classroom, the students have no afraid of being controlled

or evaluated (low defectiveness). They don't feel under supervision and this situation can encourage students to make experiment in learning a foreign language.

In English Classroom, learning is totally determined by learners. Learning is seen as a process which learners use what knowledge or skills they have in order to make sense of the flow of new information. It is again a process of negotiation.

Unlike the authoritarian, this style leads to learning by discovery: teacher asks not tells, teacher has students evaluated each other responses, teacher asks students to think, but not give verbal explanation, teacher talks less and teacher leaves some problems for later solution. Thus by letting students do the talks they will understand as a Chinese proverb says I hear I forget, I see and I remember, I do and understand.

In addition, the class room with this style of leadership encourages interaction between a teacher and students. It implies tailoring teaching to the needs of learners regardless of whether they work in group or individually. The classroom climate becomes open since the corporation between a teacher and students exists.

However, this leadership style also gives some weaknesses. The class becomes uncontrolled and confuses. Viewed from time efficiently, this style needs extra time to accomplish one task. A teacher is also demanded not only to have extra patience to deal with students especially a big classroom but also to have experiences since many unexpected question or cases are possible to be raised by students.

#### 4.3. Democratic Style

This is the combination of the two extreme ranges. It is probably the most frequently used mode. In this case a leader presents a problem to subordinates' and asks for comments, suggestion, reaction and ideas. The decision is clearly the leader but he or she tries to reflect the subordinates' participation and feeling in the final decision. It means there is an agreement. The teacher tells, asks for input or comments, and tries to understand students feeling and needs which is seen from the final decision that she or he makes.

#### 4.4. Appropriate Style in English Classroom at The *Politeknik Negeri Sriwijaya*

To identify which style is appropriate in English class, several characteristics of learning English need identifying. As the principles of language have been mentioned in the previous chapter it can be stated here that an English teacher is expected to imply the principles by providing a wide range of classroom learning experience, some designed to promote spontaneous learning, some designed to focus on underlying knowledge, skill and strategies to assist learners to develop control in the use of English as the target language.



English classroom are available at this polytechnic. The aim of the institution is to be able to make its students to communicate in using English in their job field. Therefore the task is clearly stated. However, the students' maturities within a classroom and or among classes are not always the same. This can be seen from the score in student's mark sheet.

The diagram on page 6 shows that effective leadership styles are related to the maturity. For example, suppose a teacher finds that a student is constantly late in collecting his/her assignment or homework or any activities related to teaching learning process. And perhaps it is also need to be returned since the paperwork has many mistakes and needs correction. It means that the student has low maturity level. To be effective a teacher cannot apply the laissez faire style but he/she has to tell explicitly about the mistake and explain what the teacher expects from him/her and monitor the students work closely.

In addition, the teacher may find that a class as a group may be at one level of maturity in a particular area, but student within that group may be at a different level. When a teacher is one-to-one with that student, he or she may have to behave quite differently than when working with the class as a group. Thus, the maturity of students and the class determines the appropriate supervisory or leader behavior.

At the same time, when the two polarized style of leadership is reviewed, it can be concluded here that there is no best style in leadership. The best is the leadership which consider situation that can build up good relationship between leader and followers.

In other world, learning English as a media of communication demands a teacher to create a conducive situation that can encourage students to talk or to express their ideas without being afraid of making mistakes or looking silly in front of their friends. The situation also has to build up students' confidence, to create open atmosphere. Thus needs a teacher to adopt the style of democratic to laissez-faire. However, in some cases styles towards autocratic is also required when a teacher should be strict with regulation and repeated mistakes in expressing themselves.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Several theories of leadership have been discussed in this paper including early theories, and current theories. Early theories cover trait theory and behavioral models while current theories discusses Fiedler's model. Traits theory of leadership emphasizes particular personal characteristics as the basis for leadership effectiveness. Behavioral theories stresses that leadership effectiveness relies on consideration and initiating structure.

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In current theories, leader effectiveness requires motivational system of the leader and group effectiveness is joint function of the leader's style and the situation favorableness; that is group performance is contingent upon the leader control and influence in the situation.

From the theories it has been observed that leader behavior varying from autocratic to democratic to laissez-faire. An autocratic decision style is one in which the manager retains the decision making rights to herself, is task oriented, gives orders to subordinates, and the type of communication is one-way downwards. In contrast, in laissez-faire, the manager is the initiator of all salient actions. In contrast, in a laissez-faire decision style, the manager imposes few, if any, controls on subordinates. Decisions are left to subordinates and it is they who are the principle initiators of actions.

In English class room the situation of learning a foreign language has been discussed. Some principles required by student to learn a foreign language have been mentioned. The situation required by a foreign language classroom should be relax and able to encourage students to talk or communicate using the target language. Besides the situation, learners should also be taken into consideration. The way to behave to one student as individual is different to another. It is mostly influenced by the maturity task owned by a student and a class.

By looking at the advantages and disadvantages of two extreme styles, it is suggested that there is no best style in leadership. The best in the leadership which consider situation that can build up good relationship between leader and followers.

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