

Effective Leadership Styles in Second-Grade Classrooms



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Objective

Analyze male and female teachers in the classroom to establish which leadership style is the most effective[†] for each sex.

Research Question

Is there a distinct difference between male and female leadership styles and the effectiveness[†] of these approaches?

Data Collection

- Detailed observations were taken in one-hour increments per classroom, totaling four hours
- Conducted in four different classrooms around the Eau Claire area
- Observations were recorded through note-taking

Classrooms' Characteristics

- The observed teachers ranged from ages 25 to 40
- Students were engaged in the following activities: mathematics, writing, spelling, reading, group work, and educational games
- Classroom atmospheres included the following aspects: friendly, inviting, dark, chaotic, colorful, sports-oriented, and laid-back

Method of Analysis

Leadership styles of the teachers' responses were categorized as transactional, transformational, or situational

Definitions and Examples

Leadership

- "Guidance, direction, or empowerment given to other people to reach a goal" (Creedon 248)

Examples

- Teachers in the classroom
- Coaches in a team setting

Transactional

- These leaders are authoritative and task-oriented. They exhibit clear direction and provide motivation by giving materialistic rewards.

Examples

- Rewards students' good behavior with stickers (Classroom B)
- Students get points for being ready on time (Classrooms C and D)

Transformational

- These leaders are participative and charismatic "while communicating a vision and a path to achieve that vision. [They] address higher level needs for self actualization and therefore motivate members to perform beyond expectations" (Creedon 249).

Examples

- Well-behaved students were chosen as role models for the others who were not paying attention (Classroom C)
- Gave students the task of summarizing in order to attain the goal of going home (Classroom D)

Situational

- These leaders are autocratic and sometimes participatory; they change their styles to fit different types of situations.

Examples

- Used a stern voice when students disobeyed (Classroom A)
- Referred to students as "friends" (Classrooms B, C, and D)

Results

- No obvious leadership style was found more effective[†] than the others
- There was no distinct difference between male and female approaches to leadership styles
- Situational was the most frequently used leadership style by both male and female teachers

Implications

- There is no way to establish which leadership style is going to have the most impact on students
- Many factors, such as environment and demographics, are involved in determining the most effective leadership style[†] for a particular classroom
- Therefore, both male and female teachers must go into a classroom with an open mind about their leadership styles
- Teachers must be knowledgeable and able to execute all three leadership styles depending on the situation because not one style is sufficient for teaching students

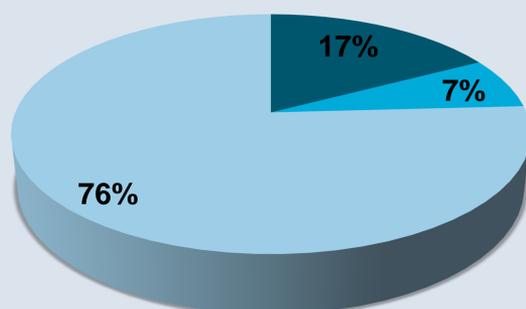
Supporting Research*

- Male and female leadership styles had no distinct differences (Chapman 646).
- Chapman found that leadership roles change from situation to situation (647).
- According to Jill Nelson, "In a corporate culture people can feel various levels of discomfort because of being different" (Sargent 148). This statement supports the fact that all teachers used the situational leadership style most frequently.

Graphical Representation of Observed Leadership Styles

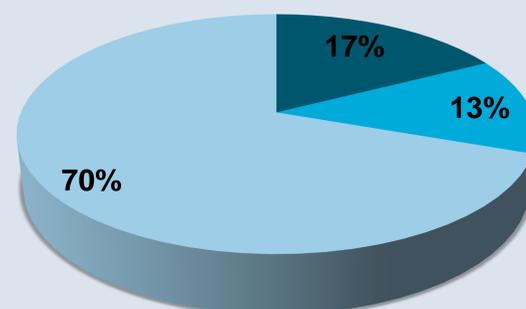
Classroom A - Female

■ Transactional ■ Transformational ■ Situational



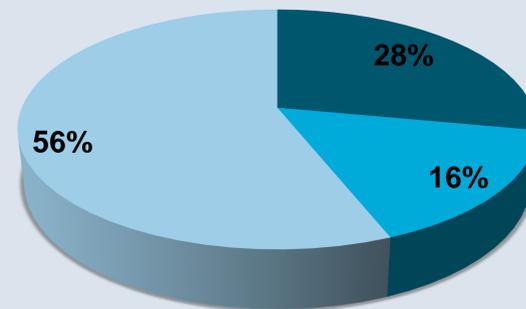
Classroom B - Male

■ Transactional ■ Transformational ■ Situational



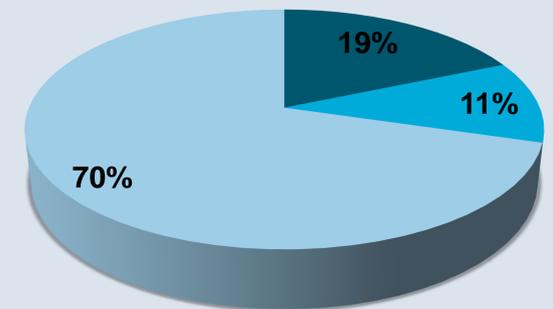
Classroom C - Female

■ Transactional ■ Transformational ■ Situational



Classroom D - Male

■ Transactional ■ Transformational ■ Situational



References
 *Chapman, J. Brad. "Comparison of Male and Female Leadership Styles." *The Academy of Management Journal* 18 (1975): 645-50. JSTOR. McIntyre, Eau Claire. 2 Apr. 2009 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/255695>.
 *Creedon, Pamela J., and Judith Cramer. *Women in Mass Communication*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2007.
 *Sargent, Paul, Ph.D. *Real Men or Real Teachers? Contradictions in the Lives of Men Elementary School Teachers*. New York: Men's Studies P, 2001.

[†] Most effective leadership style, for this project, is defined as the approach which is met with the most compliance by the students.