



## **Path Goal Leadership of School Heads and Team Effectiveness among Public Secondary Teachers in Digos City Division**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study aimed to assess the extent of path-goal leadership among school heads and the team effectiveness of public secondary teachers in Digos City Division. It also sought to examine the relationship between these variables. Using probability sampling, 150 secondary teachers from public schools were selected as respondents. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive-correlational survey methods, including Mean, Product-Moment correlation, and Regression Analysis. The results indicated extensive path-goal leadership among school heads and high levels of team effectiveness. Additionally, a significant relationship between these two variables was found. Based on these findings, it is recommended that higher officials in the Department of Education devise strategies to enhance path-goal leadership among school heads to promote team effectiveness. Furthermore, future research could explore additional factors and research methods related to the variables under investigation.

Keywords: Path goal leadership of school heads, team effectiveness, descriptive correlation, Digos City Division, Philippines

### **Introduction**

Team effectiveness, often interchangeable with team performance, stands as a critical element in organizational achievement. Studies consistently highlight the superiority of teamwork over individual efforts, positioning it as one of the most impactful approaches to work. Personally, engaging in teamwork fulfills basic needs like social interaction and a sense of belonging, enhancing my overall work satisfaction. Organizations increasingly adopt team-oriented structures to fulfill their goals, recognizing that teams can tackle complex challenges more effectively than individuals working in isolation. However, not all teams operate at their best. Despite abundant research supporting the advantages of teamwork, some management personnel may underestimate the importance of nurturing strong and efficient teams.

In Israel, it has been highlighted that dealing with problematic teachers poses one of the most daunting challenges for school principals. Teachers who underperform not only fail to deliver expected outcomes but also exhibit negative behavior that can hinder the productivity of others and undermine staff credibility. They demand a significant portion of the principal's time and occupy positions that could be filled by more productive staff members. Estimates suggest that incompetent teachers make up approximately 5-10 percent of the teaching workforce. A key external factor contributing to poor performance is the lack of effective management skills and supervision. Some principals may lack essential leadership skills or struggle to address their teachers' difficulties effectively. They may also fail to intervene early on when guidance could potentially make a difference. Administrators often attribute these challenges to their predecessors, who may have lacked the ability or willingness to address the issues of incompetent teachers or provide meaningful support (Buskila & Chen-Levi, 2021; Yariv, 2011).

In the Philippines, research has indicated a comparatively lower level of teamwork in problem-solving and team processes (Dugang, 2020). Similarly, findings from a study by Macabulos and Vicera (2019) highlighted various issues and challenges among teachers, including a lack of cooperation or teamwork, differences in opinions on specific topics complicating work, time constraints, and the emergence of unhealthy competition among teachers. During collaborative efforts, some teachers exhibit uncooperative behavior, relying heavily on decisions made by team leaders and lacking in both planning and support from the team. This is often accompanied by negative attitudes toward work.

In the educational landscape of Digos City, it was noted that educators face challenges in fostering collaboration due to their demanding workload. They tend to prioritize their own tasks, neglecting opportunities for mutual assistance and support. During school events, cooperation among teachers was hindered by conflicts in scheduling and workload. Additionally, differing viewpoints hampered team cohesion. It was important to note that these observations were anecdotal, as there had not been a formal study on team effectiveness within the local educational framework, particularly in relation to the leadership style of school administrators.

In light of these circumstances, the researcher felt compelled to delve into the prevalence of path-goal leadership among school administrators and its impact on team effectiveness within the public secondary schools of Digos City Division. Moreover, the study aimed to explore the relationship between

these two variables. Through this academic pursuit, the researcher aimed to illuminate the significance of path-goal leadership in school administration and its influence on team effectiveness. Additionally, the study aimed to offer insights to policymakers for developing strategies, programs, and interventions that would encourage school leaders to enhance their path-goal leadership skills, thereby facilitating effective teamwork among teachers within the school community.

This study is primarily grounded in House's Path-Goal Theory (1971), which asserts that leadership style should be contingent upon a balance between behavior, needs, and context. According to Northouse (2016), this theory focuses on how leaders motivate their followers to achieve goals. It draws from the expectancy theory of motivation, wherein employees believe they can achieve goals, will be rewarded upon achievement, and find the reward valuable. Leaders motivate followers by defining goals, clarifying paths, removing obstacles, and providing support (Northouse, 2016).

Moreover, the path-goal theory emphasizes that a leader should select a leadership style based on the characteristics of subordinates and environmental factors, while also focusing on motivation. Indeed, within the framework of the path-goal theory, each situation is considered unique, potentially requiring a leader to employ various styles: directive, which pertains to tasks; supportive, which focuses on relationships; participative, which involves processes; and achievement-oriented, which relates to identity or status (EPM, 2019). This suggests that a leader utilizing the path-goal theory may employ any of these four leadership styles individually or in combination, depending on the characteristics of subordinates and environmental factors.

In particular, the directive style entails the leader providing precise instructions to followers regarding what needs to be done, how it should be accomplished, including timelines, rules, and regulations to adhere to. The supportive style fosters a friendly environment where subordinates feel comfortable approaching the leader. The participative style involves an inclusive decision-making process where subordinates are actively involved. Lastly, the achievement-oriented style encourages employees to continuously strive for excellence, with the leader exhibiting confidence in the subordinates' ability to achieve set goals (Dunaetz, 2018).

In addition, the path-goal theory underscores that a leader's style, traits, and behaviors significantly impact team productivity, motivation, and satisfaction. Rooted in the expectancy theory, which posits that individuals behave in anticipation of favorable outcomes, the path-goal theory suggests that a leader can complement and compensate for their employees' strengths and weaknesses. Effective leaders, as per this theory, provide clear guidance for their employees, removing hurdles and challenges on the path to achieving goals. By offering support and encouragement, leaders can facilitate their employees' goal attainment, ultimately enhancing team effectiveness (Indeed, 2023).

Numerous authors have underscored the importance of leadership. Empirical studies indicate that team leadership behavior significantly impacts employee performance, team productivity, team learning, and proactive behavior (Burke, Stagl, Klien, Goodwin, Salas & Halpin, 2006). Leaders, for example, gather information to guide their problem-solving decisions, which in turn influences team members' actions. They effectively manage personnel and material resources by providing clear direction, establishing structures, offering expert coaching, and ensuring a supportive organizational context. These efforts can enhance team effectiveness (Burke et al., 2006).

Functions of leaders such as coaching, developing, and mentoring the team, often termed as task leadership (Gladstein, 1984) or functional leadership (Burke et al., 2006), have been found to improve team processes and effectiveness (Morgeson, DeRue & Karam, 2010). Additionally, leader behavior has a positive impact on team member satisfaction (Miles & Mangold, 2002). Negative perceptions of the team leader can lead to internal tensions among team members, affecting overall satisfaction (Miles & Mangold, 2002). Consequently, an effective team leader who defines roles and goals clearly can reduce frustration among team members (Kotlyar & Karakowsky, 2007).

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## Methodology

### *Research Design*

This study employed a descriptive correlational approach within its quantitative research methodology. Quantitative research methods involve gathering numerical data and analyzing it mathematically, often through statistical analysis, to elucidate a problem or phenomenon (Apuke, 2017). Descriptive correlational investigations aim to delineate variables and the spontaneous connections that arise between them (Davis, 2021). Categorized as quantitative, this study relied on numerical data for analysis and interpretation. Its descriptive nature stemmed from its objective to assess the path-goal leadership of school heads and the effectiveness of teams among teachers. Furthermore, it adopted a correlational approach to explore the relationship between path-goal leadership among school heads and team effectiveness among public secondary teachers in the Digos City Division.

### *Research Respondents*

A total of 150 public secondary teachers were invited to participate in this study. It was noted that for simple regression analysis, a minimum of 50 samples is required, while most research situations necessitate around 100 samples (Hair et al., 2018). Thus, the inclusion of 150 respondents was deemed sufficient to fulfill the objectives of this study. Regarding the inclusion and exclusion criteria, secondary teachers with at least 3 years of teaching experience were selected for this endeavor. This criterion was based on the assumption that their three-year tenure in the public school system provided them with the necessary insight to evaluate the path-goal leadership of their school heads and its impact on team effectiveness. Participants who felt uncomfortable or hesitant in responding to the survey questionnaire were given the option to withdraw from participation. They were under no obligation to continue and their decision to withdraw was fully respected. The well-being and comfort of the respondents were prioritized throughout the study process.

### *Research Instruments*

As to the form of gathering data, this study utilized an adapted survey questionnaire. The questionnaire that was employed in this undertaking was divided into two sets. The first set was focusing on the path goal leadership of school heads while the second set was about team effectiveness.

The path goal leadership questionnaire was adapted from Indvik (1988). The instrument consisted of 20 items. It had the following indicators, namely: directive style (1-5), supportive style (1-5), participative style (1-5), and achievement-oriented style (1-5). The questionnaire was subjected to a pilot testing having a result of .78 suggesting that the items have relatively *high* internal consistency.

The team effectiveness questionnaire was adapted from London Leadership Academy (n.d.). The tool had a total of 42 items. It comprised of seven variables, namely: purpose and goals (1-7), roles (1-7), team relationships (1-7), intergroup relations (1-7), problem solving (1-7), and passion and commitment (1-7). The questionnaire was subjected to a pilot testing having a result of .75 suggesting that the items have relatively *high* internal consistency.

The instruments in this study were contextualized to achieve the purpose of this study. The researcher integrated all the comments and suggestions of the adviser, panel members and expert validators for the refinement of the tools and to achieve construct validity.

## Table

**Table 1**

### Summary on the Extent of Path Goal Leadership of School Heads

No	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1	Directive Style	3.47	Extensive
2	Supportive Style	3.48	Extensive
3	Participative Style	3.37	Moderately Extensive
4	Achievement-Oriented Style	3.47	Extensive
<b>Overall</b>		<b>3.45</b>	<b>Extensive</b>

Table 1 provides the summary on the extent of path goal leadership of school heads. It is exhibited that the overall mean of path goal leadership of school heads is 3.45, which is in an extensive level. This means that path goal leadership of school heads is oftentimes evident.

The extensive implementation of path-goal leadership by school heads reaffirms the principle advocated by Olowoselu et al. (2019), which suggests that leaders should tailor their leadership style to fit the characteristics of their followers and the tasks at hand, as posited by the path-goal theory. This theory recognizes the diverse needs and preferences of individuals, necessitating leaders to be flexible. By comprehending the capabilities and motivations of their followers, leaders can provide the necessary direction and assistance to facilitate their success. Furthermore, leaders should assess the complexity and clarity of tasks to determine the most appropriate leadership style for achieving desired outcomes.

Similarly, Makgato and Mudzanani (2018) proposed that the path-goal theory of leadership advocates for leaders to align their actions with the efforts of their subordinates to enhance satisfaction and performance at work. This theory underscores the importance of leaders complementing the work of their subordinates to generate positive outcomes. Through this approach, leaders can foster a conducive work environment that promotes satisfaction and overall performance.

Moreover, Saleem et al. (2021) emphasized that the path-goal theory of leadership revolves around leadership behaviors and contingent factors, such as follower motivation and performance. Effective leaders must take into account the motivational needs of their followers, especially in the context of teachers, and adjust their leadership behaviors accordingly. By understanding the sources of motivation for teachers and evaluating their performance, leaders can tailor their approach to provide the necessary support and guidance. This adaptive leadership behavior prioritizes the unique needs and circumstances of followers.

**Table 2**

### Summary on the Extent of Team Effectiveness

No	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1	Purpose and Goals	3.55	Extensive

2	Roles	3.49	Extensive
3	Team Relationship	3.56	Extensive
4	Intergroup Relations	3.58	Extensive
5	Problem Solving	3.54	Extensive
6	Passion and Commitment	3.57	Extensive
<b>Overall</b>		<b>3.55</b>	<b>Extensive</b>

Table 2 provides the summary on the extent of team effectiveness. It is exhibited that the overall mean of team effectiveness is 3.55, which is in an extensive level. This means that the team effectiveness is oftentimes evident.

Data show that all six (6) indicators are in an extensive level. As arranged chronologically, intergroup relations the highest mean score (3.58). This is followed by passion and commitment (3.57), team relationship (3.56), purpose and goals (3.55), problem solving (3.54), and roles (3.49).

The data analysis reveals that across all six indicators, team effectiveness is consistently at an extensive level within the context under examination. This suggests that teams excel in goal alignment, problem-solving capabilities, and role clarity, contributing to their overall effectiveness. The data implies that high performing teams exhibit strength in various dimensions, including intergroup relations, passion and commitment, team relationships, purpose and goals, problem-solving, and roles. This comprehensive picture of team effectiveness suggests that these teams are well-rounded and capable of achieving their objectives in a collaborative and harmonious manner.

The positive outcomes of this study align with the conclusions drawn by Bryk et al. (2015), who emphasized the critical importance of effective teams within schools, as they significantly impact student achievement, teacher collaboration, and overall school performance. Research indicates that when school teams collaborate effectively, they improve student outcomes by prioritizing high-quality teaching and personalized learning.

Moreover, Harris and Jones (2017) emphasized that effective school teams cultivate a supportive and collaborative atmosphere, which enhances job satisfaction and promotes teacher retention. This supportive environment places value on teachers and provides them with the necessary support, ultimately increasing their job satisfaction and leading to higher retention rates. Collaboration within these effective teams facilitates the exchange of ideas, resources, and best practices, fostering professional growth and enhancing instructional strategies. Consequently, effective teams ensure stability, continuity, and ongoing improvement within the school community.

Additionally, Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018) highlighted that effective teams in schools facilitate the professional development of educators and encourage knowledge sharing, resulting in continuous improvement and the generation of new ideas. Ultimately, the success of school teams contributes to the creation of a positive and thriving learning environment. Knowledge sharing acts as a conduit for building trust within the team and enhances overall team effectiveness. Lin and Huang (2019) noted that sharing knowledge within the team context significantly enhances team dynamics and performance.

**Table 3**

**Significance of the Relationship Between the Extent of Path Goal Leadership of School Heads and Team Effectiveness**

Path Goal Leadership of School Heads Indicators	Dependent Variable	r-value	p- value	Decision on Ho
Directive Style		0.516	0.000	Rejected
Supportive Style		0.525	0.000	Rejected
Participative Style	<b>Team Effectiveness</b>	0.502	0.000	Rejected
Achievement-Oriented Style		0.510	0.000	Rejected
<b>Overall</b>		<b>0.612*</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>Rejected</b>

\*Significant at 0.05 significance level.

Presented in Table 3 are the data on the significance of the relationship between path goal leadership of school heads and team effectiveness. Reflected in the hypothesis, the relationship was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The overall r-value of .513 with a p-value of <0.05 signified the rejection of the null hypothesis. It means that there is a significant relationship between path goal leadership of school heads and team effectiveness. This shows that path goal leadership of school heads is correlated with team effectiveness.

Doing a pairwise correlation among the measures of both variables, it can be gleaned that directive style, supportive style, participative style, and achievement-oriented style revealed computed r-values of 0.516, 0.525, 0.502, and 0.510 respectively with p-values which are less than 0.05 in the level of significance. This implies that as directive style, supportive style, participative style, and achievement-oriented style increases, the team effectiveness increases.

The results of this study provide compelling evidence of the significant relationship between path goal leadership of school heads and team effectiveness. This rejection unequivocally indicates that there is indeed a substantial and meaningful correlation between the leadership style of school heads and the effectiveness of their teams. Furthermore, a detailed analysis of the individual leadership styles, including directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented, through pairwise correlation, reveals important insights. This implies that as the school heads exhibit higher levels of directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented leadership styles, there is a corresponding increase in team effectiveness. In other words, the specific approaches taken by school leaders have a direct and positive impact on the overall effectiveness of their teams, offering valuable guidance for educational institutions seeking to enhance their leadership strategies and team outcomes.

The outcome aligns with Indeed's concept (2023), emphasizing that effective leadership strategies can enhance employee satisfaction, increase productivity, and foster improved business alignment. A theory frequently deliberated by organizations and leaders in managing their teams is the path-goal theory. Grasping the workings of this theory and implementing it in your own practices can aid in motivating employees and enhancing team performance. As per the path-goal theory, employee motivation hinges on leadership support and a manager's proficiency in effectively addressing team challenges.

Similarly, Olowoselu et al. (2019) highlighted the importance of leaders adapting their leadership style to align with the characteristics of their followers and the specific tasks, as advocated by the path-goal theory. This theory recognizes the diversity of individuals' needs and preferences, necessitating leaders to be flexible. By comprehending their followers' capabilities and motivations, leaders can provide the requisite guidance and support to facilitate their success. Additionally, leaders should assess the complexity and clarity of tasks to ascertain the most appropriate leadership style for achieving success.

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## Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were offered:

The prevalence of path-goal leadership among school heads is frequently observable within the school environment. Indeed, all dimensions of this leadership approach—namely, directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented styles—are often apparent in the behavior of school heads. Concurrently, the level of team effectiveness is notably extensive, with all indicators, particularly purpose and goals, roles, team relationships, intergroup relations, problem-solving, and passion and commitment, found to be high. The findings suggest a relationship between path-goal leadership of school heads and team effectiveness, with all domains of path-goal leadership showing connections to team effectiveness. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected.

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## Recommendations

The following suggestions were offered based on the conclusions of the study:

The higher officials in the Department of Education may encourage and facilitate professional development programs that equip school leaders with the skills and knowledge needed to implement path-goal leadership effectively. They may provide guidance and resources for school leaders to establish clear and achievable goals, aligning them with the broader mission and vision of the education system. Additionally, they may promote a culture of collaboration and teamwork by incentivizing and recognizing schools that demonstrate high levels of team effectiveness.

Moreover, school heads play a pivotal role in fostering path-goal leadership and team effectiveness within their educational institutions. To achieve this, they may prioritize the development of clear and attainable goals, aligning them with the broader educational vision and mission of their schools. They may also create a culture of collaboration and open communication, encouraging teams to work cohesively toward common objectives. They may provide guidance and support to their team members, adapting their leadership style to meet the specific needs and characteristics of each team.

Furthermore, teachers may play a critical role in supporting the attainment of path-goal leadership and fostering team effectiveness in schools. To contribute to these objectives, teachers may actively engage in their professional development, enhancing their skills and knowledge to align with the school's leadership vision. They may provide valuable feedback to school heads about the effectiveness of leadership strategies and the impact on the team's performance. Teachers may also embrace a collaborative and supportive attitude, working cohesively with their colleagues to achieve shared goals.

Lastly, future researchers may make valuable contributions to the attainment of path-goal leadership of school heads and team effectiveness by conducting in-depth studies that explore the nuances of this leadership approach in the educational context. Their research may focus on identifying specific path-goal leadership strategies and their impact on team dynamics and performance.

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