

Exploring the Relationship of Leadership Effectiveness in Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) on Employee Work Performance: Basis for Development Program

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between leadership effectiveness and employee work performance in Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) using the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership framework. A quantitative descriptive-correlational research design was employed among 129 full-time teaching and regular non-teaching employees from a selected PHEI in Sta. Lucia, Sta. Ana, Pampanga. Random sampling was used from a population of 193 employees, and data were gathered through adapted survey questionnaires measuring leadership effectiveness and employee work performance. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation. Results revealed that leadership effectiveness was generally high, with an overall mean of 3.53 (SD = 0.46), and that Model the Way obtained the highest rating (M = 3.60, SD = 0.48), while Inspire a

Shared Vision obtained the lowest rating (M = 3.48, SD = 0.52). Employee work performance was also rated positively, with an overall mean of 3.37 (SD = 0.69); task performance was stronger than contextual performance. Correlation results showed a significant positive relationship between leadership effectiveness and employee work performance ($r = 0.252$, $p = 0.004$). Among the leadership dimensions, Model the Way had the strongest relationship with employee performance ($r = 0.307$, $p < 0.01$), followed by Encourage the Heart and Challenge the Process. The study concludes that effective leadership contributes to improved employee performance, particularly when leaders consistently model expected behavior, recognize effort, encourage innovation, empower employees, and communicate organizational direction. The findings served as basis for a development program intended to strengthen leadership practices, feedback systems, empowerment, recognition, and contextual performance in PHEIs.

Keywords: *contextual performance, employee work performance, leadership effectiveness, Model the Way, private higher education institutions, task performance*

INTRODUCTION

Effective leadership remains a central requirement for organizational success in private higher education institutions, where academic, administrative, and support units must sustain quality service while responding to changing institutional demands. In PHEIs, leaders influence the way employees understand goals, perform their core duties, collaborate with colleagues, and contribute to a positive organizational culture. Leadership is therefore not limited to authority or position; it is expressed through daily behaviors that guide, motivate, empower, and recognize employees.

The present study was anchored on the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership, which describes effective leadership through the practices of modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). These practices are useful in academic organizations because leaders in PHEIs are expected to set standards, communicate direction, build trust, support innovation, and strengthen engagement among both teaching and non-teaching employees.

Employee work performance in this study was understood through task performance and contextual performance. Task performance refers to the successful accomplishment of assigned job responsibilities, while contextual performance refers to discretionary behaviors that support the social and organizational environment, such as cooperation, adaptability, initiative, and support for colleagues (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Koopmans et al., 2014). Both forms of performance are necessary in PHEIs because institutional effectiveness depends not only on completing assigned work but also on sustaining teamwork and organizational citizenship.

Although many studies have linked leadership style with employee engagement, motivation, and job performance, there remains a need to examine how specific exemplary leadership practices relate to employee performance in local PHEI settings. This study therefore explored the relationship between leadership effectiveness and employee work performance among full-time teaching and regular non-teaching employees in a selected PHEI in Sta. Lucia, Sta. Ana, Pampanga. The findings were used as basis for a development program that addresses leadership communication, feedback, empowerment, recognition, and employee contextual performance.

Literature Review

Leadership Effectiveness in Private Higher Education Institutions

Leadership effectiveness in PHEIs is closely tied to institutional climate, employee motivation, and organizational performance. Bass and Riggio (2006) emphasized that transformational leadership supports commitment and performance by inspiring followers, fostering intellectual stimulation, and attending to individual needs. Northouse (2021) similarly explained that leadership is a process of influence directed toward achieving shared goals, making it highly relevant in academic institutions where collaboration and service quality are essential.

The leadership framework used in this study was drawn from Kouzes and Posner's (2012) Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership. Model the Way emphasizes consistency between words and actions; Inspire a Shared Vision focuses on communicating direction; Challenge the Process supports innovation; Enable Others to Act promotes participation and empowerment; and Encourage the Heart highlights recognition and appreciation. These practices provide a useful lens for evaluating whether leaders in PHEIs strengthen employee motivation and performance.

Recent studies in higher education and organizational settings support the connection between leadership and employee outcomes. Kasalak (2022) reported that leadership style is associated with academic staff job satisfaction, while Mazzetti et al. (2022) showed that engaging leadership supports team effectiveness and employee engagement. Suparman et al. (2023), Wen et al. (2023), and Yang (2023) also emphasized that leadership practices and organizational culture can shape performance in higher education and private-sector organizations.

Employee Work Performance

Employee work performance is commonly understood as the behaviors and outcomes through which employees contribute to organizational goals. Borman and Motowidlo (1993) distinguished between task performance and contextual performance. Task performance refers to activities directly related to one's formal duties, while contextual performance includes behaviors that support the broader organizational environment, such as helping co-workers, showing initiative, and following organizational norms.

Koopmans et al. (2014) developed measures of individual work performance that include task performance and contextual performance, making their framework applicable to organizational research. In educational institutions, task performance may be reflected in timely completion of work, instructional

responsibilities, administrative duties, and service delivery. Contextual performance may be seen in collaboration, adaptability, problem-solving, and willingness to contribute beyond minimum requirements.

The distinction between task and contextual performance is important because employees may perform well in assigned duties but still need support in teamwork, initiative, innovation, and organizational support. Organ (1988) and Organ et al. (2006) described these supportive behaviors as part of organizational citizenship, which contributes to organizational effectiveness even when such behaviors are not always formally rewarded.

Leadership and Employee Performance

Research generally shows that effective leadership is associated with improved employee performance. Iqbal (2021) discussed how leadership approaches affect thriving at work, while Mazzetti et al. (2022) linked engaging leadership with employee engagement and team effectiveness. These findings support the view that leaders influence employee performance not only through supervision but also through motivation, support, recognition, and the creation of meaningful work conditions.

In PHEIs, leadership effectiveness may be especially important because employees face multiple expectations involving academic quality, student services, administrative compliance, and institutional improvement. When leaders model professional behavior, communicate a clear vision, encourage innovation, empower employees, and recognize contributions, employees may be more likely to perform assigned duties and engage in supportive behaviors that benefit the institution.

The present study extends this literature by examining the relationship between the five exemplary leadership practices and employee work performance in a selected PHEI. By identifying which leadership dimensions have the strongest relationship with employee performance, the study provides a basis for designing a targeted development program that is grounded in actual institutional data.

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design. This design was appropriate because the study described the level of leadership effectiveness and employee work performance and tested the relationship between these two variables using statistical analysis.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in a Private Higher Education Institution located in Sta. Lucia, Sta. Ana, Pampanga. The institution provided an appropriate academic setting for examining how leadership effectiveness relates to employee work performance among teaching and non-teaching personnel.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The respondents consisted of 129 full-time teaching and regular non-teaching employees from the selected PHEI. From a population of 193 employees, the sample size of 129 respondents was determined using a 5% margin of error. Random sampling was applied so that employees had an equal chance of being selected, thereby reducing selection bias and improving the representativeness of the sample.

Research Instrument

The study used an adapted closed-type survey questionnaire as the principal instrument. The leadership effectiveness portion was adapted from Al-Shakha (2019) and measured the five leadership practices: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. The employee work performance portion was adapted from Koopmans et al. (2014) and measured task performance and contextual performance.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers secured permission from the concerned institution and administered the questionnaire to the selected respondents. The respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and were asked to answer

the survey based on their actual work experiences and perceptions of leadership practices within the institution. The completed responses were encoded, checked, and prepared for statistical analysis.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, particularly mean and standard deviation, were used to summarize leadership effectiveness and employee work performance. Pearson correlation was used to determine the relationship between leadership effectiveness and employee work performance, including the relationships between each leadership dimension and the dependent variable. Statistical significance was interpreted based on the reported p-values.

Ethical Consideration

The study observed voluntary participation, confidentiality, and responsible handling of data. Respondents were treated with respect and their identities were protected in reporting the results. The findings were presented in aggregate form and were used only for academic and institutional development purposes. The final journal submission should include the institutional ethics approval reference, if required by the target journal or institution.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Leadership Effectiveness

Leadership effectiveness was rated highly across all dimensions, with an overall mean of 3.53 (SD = 0.46), interpreted as Strongly Agree. Model the Way obtained the highest mean (M = 3.60, SD = 0.48), indicating that leaders were perceived as most effective in demonstrating expected behaviors, maintaining standards, and serving as role models. Inspire a Shared Vision obtained the lowest mean (M = 3.48, SD = 0.52), suggesting the need to strengthen communication of long-term institutional direction and shared goals.

Table 1. *Leadership Effectiveness*

Leadership effectiveness dimension	Mean	SD	Verbal description
Model the Way	3.60	0.48	Strongly Agree
Inspire a Shared Vision	3.48	0.52	Strongly Agree
Challenge the Process	3.51	0.47	Strongly Agree
Enable Others to Act	3.51	0.52	Strongly Agree
Encourage the Heart	3.54	0.54	Strongly Agree
Average	3.53	0.46	Strongly Agree

The result shows that leaders in the selected PHEI demonstrated strong operational and behavioral leadership practices. This finding aligns with Kouzes and Posner (2012), who emphasized that credible leadership begins with modeling values and aligning behavior with institutional expectations. However, the lower rating for Inspire a Shared Vision suggests that leaders may need to communicate strategic direction more clearly and involve employees more actively in institutional goal-setting.

Employee Work Performance

Employee work performance was rated positively overall, with a mean of 3.37 (SD = 0.69), interpreted as Strongly Agree. Task Performance obtained the higher mean (M = 3.41, SD = 0.61), showing that employees were generally effective in completing assigned duties and meeting expected outcomes. Contextual Performance obtained a lower mean (M = 3.33, SD = 0.79), indicating comparatively weaker or less consistent engagement in teamwork, adaptability, initiative, problem-solving, and supportive organizational behaviors.

Table 2. *Employee Work Performance*

Employee work performance dimension	Mean	SD	Verbal description
Task Performance	3.41	0.61	Strongly Agree
Contextual Performance	3.33	0.79	Strongly Agree
Average	3.37	0.69	Strongly Agree

The findings indicate that employees performed well in formal job-related responsibilities but may need further support in discretionary behaviors that strengthen the work environment. This reflects Borman and Motowidlo's (1993) distinction between task and contextual performance. In PHEIs, contextual performance is important because collaboration, adaptability, and initiative help sustain institutional service quality and organizational effectiveness.

Relationship Between Leadership Effectiveness and Employee Work Performance

Pearson correlation showed a significant positive relationship between overall leadership effectiveness and employee work performance ($r = 0.252$, $p = 0.004$). Although the strength of the relationship was weak to moderate, the result indicates that stronger leadership effectiveness is associated with better employee performance. Model the Way showed the strongest relationship with employee work performance ($r = 0.307$, $p < 0.01$), followed by Encourage the Heart ($r = 0.245$, $p = 0.005$) and Challenge the Process ($r = 0.233$, $p = 0.008$).

Table 3. *Correlation Between Leadership Effectiveness and Employee Work Performance*

Leadership variable	Pearson r	p-value	Interpretation
Overall Leadership Effectiveness	0.252**	0.004	Significant positive relationship
Model the Way	0.307**	0.000	Significant positive relationship
Inspire a Shared Vision	0.177*	0.045	Significant positive relationship
Challenge the Process	0.233**	0.008	Significant positive relationship
Enable Others to Act	0.187*	0.033	Significant positive relationship
Encourage the Heart	0.245**	0.005	Significant positive relationship

These results support the view that leadership effectiveness contributes to work performance, especially when leaders demonstrate consistent behavior and provide visible examples of professionalism. The strong role of Model the Way suggests that employees are influenced by leaders who practice what they expect from others. Meanwhile, the significance of Encourage the Heart and Challenge the Process implies that recognition and innovation support also contribute to better employee outcomes. The weaker but significant correlation for Inspire a Shared Vision indicates that vision communication matters, but its impact may depend on how clearly and consistently the vision is translated into daily work practices.

Development Program Based on the Findings

The findings suggest that improvement is needed in vision communication, feedback systems, empowerment, innovation support, recognition, and contextual performance. The proposed development program therefore focuses on strengthening exemplary leadership practices and employee capabilities in ways that support engagement, collaboration, motivation, and institutional effectiveness.

Table 4. *Proposed Development Program*

Area for development	Objective	Proposed activities	Expected output
Vision communication	Strengthen leaders' ability to communicate institutional direction and align employees with shared goals.	Conduct vision-crafting workshops, department-level alignment sessions, and communication planning activities.	Employees have clearer understood of institutional goals and their role in achieving them.
Feedback and recognition	Improve feedback systems and recognition practices.	Conduct active-listening and feedback training; implement monthly recognition of exemplary employee contributions.	Employees receive clearer feedback and feel more valued for their work contributions.
Empowerment and innovation	Enhance leaders' ability to empower employees and support responsible risk-taking.	Provide coaching on delegation, team decision-making, innovation support, and problem-solving.	Employees become more confident in contributing ideas and solving institutional problems.

Contextual performance	Strengthen teamwork, adaptability, initiative, and organizational support behaviors.	Conduct team-building, peer mentoring, collaborative planning, and work-process improvement sessions.	Employees demonstrate stronger collaboration and discretionary support behaviors.
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CONCLUSION

The study concludes that leadership effectiveness significantly relates to employee work performance in the selected PHEI. Leaders were generally rated as effective, especially in Model the Way, which indicates strong role modeling, consistency, and adherence to organizational standards. However, relatively lower ratings in Inspire a Shared Vision suggest that leaders still need to strengthen strategic communication and employee alignment with institutional goals.

Employees demonstrated strong task performance, meaning they were generally able to complete assigned duties and meet expected work outcomes. However, contextual performance was comparatively lower, indicating the need to strengthen teamwork, adaptability, initiative, and supportive behaviors that contribute to a positive organizational environment.

The significant positive relationship between leadership effectiveness and employee work performance shows that leadership practices contribute to employee outcomes. Among the leadership dimensions, Model the Way had the strongest relationship with employee performance, highlighting the importance of credible, consistent, and exemplary leadership. The findings provide evidence for a development program that targets vision communication, feedback, empowerment, recognition, innovation support, and contextual performance.

Recommendation

PHEI administrators should strengthen leadership development programs that focus on the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership. Particular attention should be given to communicating a shared vision, improving feedback mechanisms, empowering employees, encouraging innovation, and recognizing employee contributions.

Institutional leaders should model expected professional behaviors consistently, because Model the Way showed the strongest relationship with employee work performance. Leaders may also conduct regular alignment meetings, coaching conversations, and recognition activities to increase engagement and motivation.

Human resource units should implement a structured development program that includes leadership training, vision-crafting workshops, feedback and active-listening sessions, team-building activities, and peer mentoring. These initiatives may help improve contextual performance, especially teamwork, adaptability, initiative, and organizational support.

Employees should be encouraged to participate in collaborative work improvement activities and professional development opportunities. Future researchers may replicate the study in other PHEIs, use larger samples, include additional institutional variables, or employ mixed-method designs to explain more deeply how leadership practices influence employee performance.

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