Influence of Christian Education on Moral Leadership Development

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Abstract

This study determined the quality of Christian education experiences of leaders in private and public institutions in the Philippines. Specifically, it identified what type of moral leaders is produced by these Christian institutions, and if their experiences are related to moral leadership type these leaders are practicing. Sixty two leaders from different institutions and organizations were evaluated using the priest-king-prophet-judge moral frame model. The questionnaires were purposely administered to 62 samples who were administrators of Seventh Day Adventist and non-Adventist private and public institutions and organizations in the Philippines. The leaders’ ages ranged from 25 to 72 years old (mean age = 52.93), with a mean of 25.44 years of service, mostly female (55.7%) and married (87.1%), mostly from the area of education (48%) and with doctoral (56.6%) and masters level (39.6%). The results revealed that leaders experienced a quality Christian education: they have good experiences with their academic life, their teachers and extra and co-curricular activities; and they have a very good Christian worldview. In terms of their moral leadership practices, the priest, king, prophet and judge moral leadership styles were exhibited in the workplace but the priest was predominant among the four styles. The correlation analysis revealed that the quality of Christian education experiences was related to the practice of the priest style of leadership except for the extra and co-curricular activities. Furthermore, results showed that the better the leaders’ Christian worldview is, the more they practice the priest, the king and the judge type of moral leadership. Implications and recommendations for developing moral leaders among students enrolled in Christian institutions were discussed.

Keywords: Christian education experiences, moral leadership
There has been a question on what leaders have Christian schools produced. As expected by everyone, Christian school should provide a strong foundation on the moral and ethical development of their students. The integration of biblical values and principles that teaches students to understand and apply the Bible to life situations may have a greater impact to the future leadership directions of students. However, few research findings have identified the importance of certain key experiences in the process of leadership development. Despite these efforts, Bennis (2007) has concluded that, "Leaders develop by a process we do not fully understand" (p. 5). Also Avolio (2007) has reported that "relatively little effort has been devoted to systematically explaining how such leaders and leadership develop" (p. 30). As a result, leadership development practitioners are left with little empirical guidance.

The lack of research on how leaders actually develop is due to the fact that most leadership development approaches have addressed "surface structure skills" as opposed to "the deeper, principled aspects of leadership that may be especially important for understanding the long-term development of effective leaders" (Lord & Hall, 2005, p. 592). Their conclusion pointed to the need for research that includes the development of those "deeper, principled aspects of leadership" over a lifetime.

As emphasized by McMaster (2013):

The Christian school environment that the participants experience gave evidence of providing ethical and faith formation, and foundational knowledge of the Bible. While this was provided by teachers as intentional lessons and as part of the curriculum, it was modeled by teachers presented as confrontations and challenges that shaped the character. (p.79)

McMaster's (2013) qualitative study determined the influence of Christian education on the development of leadership. During the interview, most participants talked only of their high school experiences. According to McMaster, these unintended findings bring to light a connection between biological, social, and emotional development and leadership development since they cater to pre-adult stages of life. Thus, further research should be conducted.

Objective of the Study

This study determined the influence of Christian education experiences of leaders in private and public institutions in the Philippines. Specifically, it identified what types of moral leaders are produced by these Christian institutions, and if their experiences are related to moral leadership type these leaders are practicing.

Significance of the Study

Leaders have an important role in setting the ethical tone in the organization so it is important to know if Christian education contributes to this role. Thus, the result of this study will provide Christian educational institutions information so they can enhance their curriculum for leadership development. Christian schools, colleges and universities can be a training ground for future moral and ethical leaders.

The result of this study will create awareness to those who are involved in managing Christian schools. Christian School management must align their philosophy, mission, and vision to produce future leaders that will make a difference in the lives of many people. The school leaders should make every effort to maintain spiritually healthy and academically excellent schools. Teachers, administrators and parents should also help one another in shaping the lives of future leaders.
Theoretical Foundation

This study used the Leadership Emergence Theory (LET) and modified Allenders’ Type of Moral Leadership.

Leadership Emergence Model

Leadership emergence theory (LET) was articulated by Dr. Clinton (as cited in Stadler, 2009) in order to describe how Christian leaders develop over a lifetime. This theory was a product of his grounded theory research. His resulting theory states that “the development of a leader can be significantly described by using three major variables labeled processing, time, and leader response” (p.116).

Allender’s Type of Moral Leadership

Allender’s moral leadership describe the priests, king, and prophet as the type of leadership that promotes the reconciliatory, pragmatic, powerful and visionary approaches to moral leadership. The judge was added as an integrative type. Covrig, Ongo and Ledesma (2012) described the characteristics of each moral leadership in the following:

The priest. The priest usually uses rituals and teachings to foster forgiveness and reconciliation to God and others. The predominant values of a priest include mercy, healing, and reconciliation. The priest type of moral leadership reconciles before sin is clearly confessed and understood, which can be considered weaknesses of this type of leadership. The modern equivalents for this type of leadership are pastors, counselors, maintenance occupation.

The king. Some distinctive characteristics of a king resemble those of a lion. He can organize groups and can secure resources and has power to work, build, feed, protect, give reward and punish people who commit mistakes. The king dominates through power and policy but gives reward to his deserving people. Justice is his driving ethics. Some of the weaknesses of the kings are: materialism and abuse because of his power. The modern equivalents of this type of moral leadership are administrators, managers, supervisors, and engineers.

The prophet. A prophet is focused on dreams of faithfulness to God by appealing to past ideals and future visions. Usually he initiates reforms to change status quo in the work environment in order to have new visions in life. The predominant values of a prophet are social justice, righteousness and reform. Righteousness is his driving ethics but he is unrealistic, fearful, low in implementing processes and uncompromising.

The judge. The judge has wider perspectives in the sense that he can bring fuller understanding of past issues through investigations and witnessing. He uses due process and appeal to laws to create just outcomes for both victims and criminals. Community resolution and understanding and procedural are some of the judge’s predominant values. His weaknesses are the following: too tedious and laborious with processes, slow in making decisions since they wait for consensus. The modern equivalents of this kind of leadership type are judges, mediators, and arbitrators.

These types of moral leadership can be the product of the Christian education experiences of an individual.

Review of Literature

Christian Education Experience

Education is the process that prepares young people for their social inheritance and this involves the development of knowledge, training of mental abilities and development of character (Walsh, 1990). However, Christian Education, according to Makpu (2011), is concerned with inculcating into individuals, the Christ-like life. It is also concerned with ultimate development of character and Christian maturity among the youth. It is centered on Christ and the goal is to be like Christ in all ramifications. Christian Education
is concerned with inculcating into individuals the Christ-like life. It is also concerned with ultimate development of character and Christian maturity among individuals. It is centered on Christ and the goal is to be like Christ in all ramifications. Walsh further emphasized that Christian education is not an option, it is an order, it is not a luxury, and it is a life. It is not something nice to have; it is something necessary to have.

The study by McMaster (2013) on Christian education experiences revealed four themes, namely academic experience and activities, teachers and coaches, and integration of Christian worldview. The following are the descriptions of the generated themes:

**Academic experience.** The participants in the study conducted by McMaster (2013) viewed their “academic experience” as an important piece of their leadership development. There should be emphasis on the importance of a strong academic program in general. The life-applicable lessons that were learned from specific teachers or in specific subjects were a great academic experience for students. These lessons in life used the Bible as their reference. The challenging academic experience is important in developing critical thinking skills in which every leader should possess.

**Teacher influence.** Student learned by example from their teachers, coaches and administrators. The influence of teachers and coaches inside and outside the classroom plays a significant role for students’ cognitive and leadership development. Their influence can shape the future of their students. If teachers would demonstrate compassion, take time to assess the needs of the learners and their personal interest and address them with care, much of these will be remembered by future leaders. These important characteristics were given as the most influential aspect of leadership development (McMaster, 2013).

**Extracurricular activities.** Extracurricular activities are one of the best investments that a school can make to help promote achievement, student engagement and the attitudes and habits that lead to college aspirations and ultimate success (Johnson, n.d). The Christian educational experience includes opportunities for involvement in various activities and programs of the university. These activities may involve athletic and leadership opportunities, spiritual life activities, musical exposure and other co-curricular and extracurricular activities. Involvement in these activities shaped the manner in which leaders lead in their respective post (McMaster, 2013).

**Christian worldview integration.** The integration of Christian world view has something to do with the integration of faith and spiritual concepts in the students’ education experiences. These experiences may happen in the classroom with their teachers and coaches. The spiritual lessons learned from the conflicts of personal challenges of students’ life shared in the classroom and the inclusion of spiritual driven activities such as thought for the day, Bible verses for the day or values learned related to the lesson can provide strong foundations of a future leader. This kind of environment is important in shaping the leadership character of the students.

**Methodology**

**Research Design**

The study determined the effects of Christian education to moral leadership among leaders who are serving in Christian colleges and universities in the Philippines. Descriptive correlation was used to determine this effect.

**Respondents**

The questionnaires were purposely administered to 62 samples who were administrators of Seventh Day Adventist and non-Adventist private and public
Institutions and organizations in the Philippines. The leaders' ages ranged from 25 to 72 years old (mean age = 52.93), with a mean of 25.44 years of service, mostly female (55.7%) and married (87.1%), mostly from the area of education (48%) and with doctoral (56.6%) and masters level (39.6%). The respondents finished college and graduate education in Christian institutions.

Measures

The Christian education experience was measured in terms of academic experience, teacher influence, extracurricular and co-curricular activities and Christian worldview (McMaster, 2013). The items for each dimension of Christian Education Experience Questionnaire (CEEQ) were developed and content validated. A total of 41 items were subjected to reliability test. The overall reliability of the CEEQ is .94 and with a reliability of >.80 for each dimension. These results show that there is a high internal consistency estimate of the items in the CEEQ. No item was deleted due to high internal consistency result.

The items from each leadership style were content validated and the internal consistency was established with the following indices: priest (.77), prophets (.66), kings (.73) and judges (.82).

Analysis

Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation and Pearson-product moment correlation coefficient was used to address the main objective in this study which was to determine the influence of Christian education experience to the moral development of leaders.

Results and Discussion

The Christian education experiences were recalled by the leaders and they perceived to have good academic experiences in their Christian schools (refer to Table 1). Their academic experiences include the following: development of academic, scholarly and intellectual, development of various skills such as information management, critical, evaluative, analytical, aesthetic, artistic, creative, teamwork, leadership and lifelong learning. Personal and Christian values were emphasized in their schools.

The respondents have good experiences with their teachers in their Christian schools. They perceived that their teacher demonstrate Christian behavior and values, gave evidences of Christian maturity, addressed social concerns and issues, provided variety of learning experiences for students, gave feedback to students' performances, addressed emotional and academic needs of students and guided students in their career plans and ambitions in life.

Aside from academic guidance, the leaders were able to experience good and various extracurricular and co-curricular activities during their student life.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Christian Education Experience</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic experience</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher influence</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra and co-curricular</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian worldview</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some of these experiences were their involvement in different activities such as school organization, student government or publications, campus ministry and other
religious meetings and gatherings, community extension services, sports, and social and cultural programs. They also experienced having leadership position as a product of the leadership training and exposure from their schools.

The leaders being a Christian perceived that their world view was *very good*. According to them, being a Christian, they were able to reflect Christ-likeness in their dealings with others; they think positively; they can handle challenging life situation; they find joy in giving and in service; and perceived that their life is meaningful, has direction and with purpose. Table 1 presents the aforementioned Christian education experience of the respondents of this study.

The moral leadership construct was composed of four styles namely: the *priest, prophets, kings, and judges*. This concept was adopted from the *priest-king-prophet-judge* moral frame model. This model was aligned with the Lion (Mathew), Ox (Mark), Face of Man (Luke), and Eagle (John), which also matches other moral leadership style models used in other fields such as social sciences (Covrig et al., 2012). The result in Table 2 presents the extent of practice of these different moral leadership styles among leaders in the Philippines. The results revealed that the *priest, king, and judge* type of moral leadership were *highly practiced* by the leaders of the Christian institutions. Further results revealed that the prophet type of leadership was also *practiced*.

### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moral Leadership Style</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priest</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>Highly practiced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prophets</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>Practiced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kings</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>Highly practiced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>Highly practiced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The influence of the Christian education experiences to the different types of moral leadership were determined using correlation analysis. The results in Table 3 showed that leaders’ academic experience and teacher’s influence are associated with the practice of the priest type of leadership. This result was confirmed in a qualitative study by McMaster (2013) where he interviewed 10 leaders who viewed that teacher’s influence is important in their leadership styles because of what they had seen and
learned by example from their teachers and administrators. Several studies also revealed that there were direct and indirect connections between student success and learning and strong teacher/student relationships (Martin & Dowson, 2009; Martin, Marsh, McInerney, Green, & Dowson, 2007).

The leaders’ worldview is also associated with the priest, king, and judge type of moral leadership but not with the prophet type.

**Conclusion**

The leaders experienced a *quality* Christian education; they have good experiences with their teachers, have experienced quality extra and co-curricular activities; and they have a *very good* Christian worldview. The Christian leaders practiced all the type of moral leadership. The priest, king, prophet and judge moral leadership styles were exhibited in the workplace but the priest was predominant among the four styles. The correlation analysis revealed that the quality of Christian education experiences was related to the practice of the priest style of leadership except for the extracurricular and co-curricular activities. Further, results show that the better the leaders’ Christian worldview is, the more they practice the priest, the king and the judge type of moral leadership.

This study showed that the quality Christian education leaders received and experienced were able to develop their priest, king, and judge type of moral leadership.

**Recommendations**

School administrators should provide the students quality Christian academic experiences and extracurricular and co-curricular activities that will develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes as future moral leaders.

Teachers and support staff must demonstrate Christian behavior and values, address emotional and academic needs of students, guide students in their career plans and ambitions in life. Teacher educators need to be held accountable for how they relate to students.

Research must be conducted as basis of comprehensive model of developing moral leadership that integrates the efforts of the school, family and the church.

**References**


