INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES (ONLINE) - ISSN: 2717-7130

Vol:7 Issue: 26 pp: 26-36

JEL Codes: M1, M11, M12

Alex, V. (2026). **"The Role of Leadership Styles in Enhancing English Teachers' Effectiveness At Schools"**. *International Journal of Social Science, Innovation and Educational Technologies (Online)*", Vol: 7, Issue: 26, pp: 26-36

Keywords: *leadership style, enhancing, English teacher and effectiveness*

Article Type Research Article

The Role of Leadership Styles in Enhancing English Teachers' Effectiveness At Schools

Arrived Date	Accepted Date	Published Date
15.01.2026	25.03.2026	30.04.2026

Velankanni Alex [1]

Abstract

Researchers agree that English teachers are among the most important school-based resources for shaping students' future academic success and lifetime outcomes, yet defining the characteristics that make an effective teacher has proven difficult. This article reviews the extensive literature on measures of English teacher effectiveness, highlighting the variety of approaches used to explore the general construct of "teacher quality," including experience, professional knowledge, and opportunity to learn. The study aimed to determine the current level of teaching effectiveness of English teachers in Chinese schools (population = 300), using mean, median, and standard deviation, and to explain the findings. To examine the relationship between leadership styles and teaching effectiveness of English teachers (sample = 300), and to report and explain the findings. Findings regarding the effect of teacher support on opportunity to learn are fewer in number but more robust. These factors provide the basis for a comparative cross-country model. The beneficiaries are students, English teachers, school administrators, and school principals. English teachers could improve their teaching quality and teaching effectiveness in Chinese contexts, as they work under the rules and regulations of Chinese institutions.

Introduction

China is internationally diverse and has a combination of public government supported University and a range private run universities that operate from different ideas, principles. Over the past decades, China has undergone significant social and economic changes that have shaped new aspirations for parents and learners about what good-quality education is supposed to be (UNESCO 2020). There needs to be far more powerful leadership in schools, particularly with the system becoming increasingly competitive (World Bank, 2018). School administrators' leadership styles play an

[1] velankanni.alex@stamford.edu, Dr., Stamford International University., Thailand

Work published in issjournal is licensed under
Creative Commons Attribution 4.0.
http://dx.doi.org/10.54603/iss.233

important role in shaping a school's culture, climate, and overall success (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). In China, where cultural, economic, and political conditions influence education, examining how different leadership styles relate to academic performance is particularly relevant. Within private education, Salesian schools have a distinctive approach rooted in the principles of the Chinese schools. They promote academic achievement while supporting students' spiritual, emotional, and social development (Lenti, 2008).

This paper explores how different leadership styles affect school effectiveness in China. By analyzing various leadership theories and how they apply in the Chinese academic context, the study aims to identify the leadership practices that work best for improving academic achievement, student development, teacher performance, and school climate. Examining the relationship between leadership styles and school effectiveness helps build a deeper understanding of how leadership shapes school success in China. Such understanding is essential for developing strategies that strengthen leadership practices and, in turn, the effectiveness of schools in China.

Review of Literature

The researcher reviewed literature of teacher leadership styles and teacher effectiveness.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership has been widely studied in education and is associated with charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and attention to individual needs (Bass, 1985; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). Itsara Imlap (2019) describes it as an approach in which leaders inspire followers to exceed expectations through innovative management and ways of working. This approach supports better performance, skill development, and personal growth. By building confidence, commitment to a shared mission, loyalty, and motivation, leaders encourage followers to place collective goals above individual interests and contribute to organizational success. Research also suggests that transformational leaders establish a shared vision, nurture a positive school culture, and empower English teachers and students to fulfil their potential (Avolio & Bass, 2004).

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership, based on contingent rewards and management by exception, is a more traditional approach to leadership (Bass, 1985). In schools, transactional leaders set clear expectations, provide feedback, and use rewards and sanctions to motivate performance (Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987). Research on transactional leadership in education has yielded mixed results. While some studies have found positive associations with student achievement (Marks & Printy, 2003), others have suggested it may limit creativity and innovation (Avolio & Bass, 2004). From the researcher's perspective, transactional leadership, a traditional approach focused on rewards and punishments, is used in schools to set expectations and motivate performance. Research on its effectiveness is mixed,

with some studies showing positive impacts on student achievement but others suggesting it may hinder creativity and innovation.

Servant Leadership

Servant leadership centers on a genuine commitment to serving others. Leaders put their followers' needs first and help them develop their abilities and achieve their goals. Rather than focusing mainly on authority or organizational priorities, this approach values the growth and well-being of those being led. It rests on the leader's character, empathy, and sincere concern for others. Serving is therefore more than a leadership technique; it reflects how leaders view their responsibilities and build relationships with people (Greenleaf, 1977).

Autocratic and Democratic Leadership

Autocratic leadership involves centralized decision-making and control, while democratic leadership emphasizes participation and shared decision-making (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939). While autocratic leadership may be effective in certain situations requiring quick decisions, it can also lead to decreased motivation and morale among English teachers and students (Gastil, 1994). Democratic leadership has been associated with increased teacher satisfaction, student engagement, and a positive school climate (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). From the researcher's perspective, autocratic leadership centralizes decision-making, while democratic leadership encourages participation. Although autocratic leadership can be useful for quick decisions, it may negatively impact motivation. Democratic leadership, on the other hand, is linked to increased teacher satisfaction, student engagement, and a positive school climate.

School Effectiveness

This chapter explores the multifaceted concept of school effectiveness, specifically examining how it manifests across four critical dimensions: academic performance, student development, teacher performance, and school climate. The review synthesizes research findings, highlighting key factors that contribute to effectiveness in each dimension and drawing connections between them.

Academic Performance

Student achievement, often measured through standardized test scores, is a central indicator of school effectiveness (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2015). Research consistently demonstrates the importance of effective teaching practices, including clear learning objectives, differentiated instruction, and formative assessment, in promoting academic success (Hattie, 2009). School-level factors such as strong leadership, a positive school culture, and high expectations for all students also contribute significantly to academic performance (Scheerens & Bosker, 1997).

Student Development

Beyond academic achievement, effective schools foster holistic student development, encompassing social-emotional skills, character development, and well-being (Durlak et al., 2011). A supportive and inclusive school climate, positive relationships with English teachers, and opportunities for extracurricular involvement are crucial for nurturing student development (Eccles & Barber, 1999). Research suggests that schools promoting social-emotional learning and character education programs experience positive impacts on student behavior, attendance, and academic outcomes (CASEL, 2013).

Teacher Performance

Teacher quality is widely recognized as a critical factor in student learning and overall school effectiveness (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Effective schools invest in teacher professional development, provide ongoing support and mentorship, and create a collaborative and empowering work environment (Day & Gu, 2013). Research indicates that teacher collaboration, distributed leadership, and opportunities for professional growth contribute to improved teacher performance and student achievement (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000).

School Climate

School climate, encompassing the quality and character of school life, significantly influences student learning and well-being (Cohen et al., 2009). A positive school climate is characterized by high expectations, respect for diversity, a sense of safety and belonging, and strong relationships between students and staff (National School Climate Center, 2014). Research demonstrates that schools with positive climates experience lower rates of disciplinary problems, increased student engagement, and improved academic outcomes (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013).

Research Methodology

The researcher used mixed method like qualitative and quantitative. The first research objective was used as qualitative method using systematic literature review method. The second objective was used quantitative method using relationship between the English teachers and the effectiveness scale.

Findings and Recommendations

Method

The population for this objective comprised 300 English teachers drawn from public and private schools in China. Teaching effectiveness was measured using a validated effectiveness scale covering instructional planning, classroom management, student engagement, assessment practices, and professional commitment. Descriptive statistics (mean, median, and standard deviation) were computed to establish the current level of teaching effectiveness. Scores were interpreted on a five-point scale (1 = very low, 5 = very high), with a theoretical midpoint of 3.00.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for English Teachers' Teaching Effectiveness (N = 300)

Keyword / Dimension	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Instructional Planning	3.81	3.85	0.54	High
Classroom Management	3.74	3.78	0.61	High
Student Engagement	3.68	3.70	0.63	Moderate–High
Assessment Practices	3.65	3.68	0.59	Moderate–High
Professional Commitment	3.72	3.74	0.56	High
Overall Teaching Effectiveness	**3.72**	**3.75**	**0.58**	**Moderate–High**

The table presents the descriptive statistics for the key dimensions of teaching effectiveness among 300 English teachers. Each dimension was measured on a five-point scale, with a theoretical midpoint of 3.00.

Instructional Planning recorded the highest mean (3.81) and median (3.85), with a standard deviation of 0.54. This indicates that English teachers are strongest in preparing lessons, setting clear learning objectives, and organizing content. The low standard deviation shows that planning practices are fairly consistent across the population.

Classroom Management followed with a mean of 3.74 and a median of 3.78 (SD = 0.61). Teachers generally maintain orderly and productive learning environments, though the slightly higher standard deviation suggests more variation in how different teachers manage their classrooms.

Student Engagement produced a mean of 3.68 and a median of 3.70 (SD = 0.63). This dimension scored lower than planning and management, indicating that motivating students and sustaining active participation remains a relative challenge. The higher standard deviation confirms that engagement practices vary most widely among teachers.

Assessment Practices showed a mean of 3.65 and a median of 3.68 (SD = 0.59), the lowest among the dimensions. This suggests that teachers are less confident or less consistent in using formative assessment and feedback to guide learning.

Professional Commitment recorded a mean of 3.72 and a median of 3.74 (SD = 0.56), reflecting a solid level of dedication, responsibility, and willingness to support student learning.

Overall Teaching Effectiveness yielded a mean of 3.72, a median of 3.75, and a standard deviation of 0.58. The close match between mean and median indicates a symmetrical distribution, meaning the typical teacher performs at roughly the same level as the average teacher. The moderate standard deviation shows that scores cluster fairly tightly around the mean, implying consistent effectiveness across the population, while still indicating a minority of teachers who score lower and may need targeted support. Overall, the results suggest that English teachers in the sampled schools demonstrate moderately high effectiveness, with instructional planning as their strongest area and assessment practices as the area most in need of development.

Objective 2: Relationship Between Leadership Styles and Teaching Effectiveness

Method

A sample of 300 English teachers was used to examine the relationship between perceived leadership styles (transformational, transactional, servant, autocratic, and democratic) and teaching effectiveness. Pearson correlation was applied to test the strength and direction of each relationship, and a t-test was used to evaluate the significance of the differences between correlation coefficients. The significance level was set at $p < .01$.

Table 2. Correlation Between Leadership Styles and English Teachers' Teaching Effectiveness (N = 300)

Leadership Style	Pearson Correlation (r)	Sig. (two-tailed)	Interpretation
Transformational	.663**	.000	Strong positive
Democratic	.612**	.000	Moderate–strong positive
Servant	.547**	.000	Moderate positive
Transactional	.438**	.000	Moderate positive
Autocratic	.126	.061	Weak, not significant

** Significant at 1% level ($p < .01$).

The table explained that all correlations except autocratic leadership were positive and statistically significant at the 1% level, confirming that the style of leadership experienced by English teachers is meaningfully associated with their teaching effectiveness. The strongest relationship was found for transformational leadership ($r = .663$), followed by democratic leadership ($r = .612$), servant leadership ($r = .547$), and transactional leadership ($r = .438$).

The strong positive correlation for transformational leadership indicates that when principals inspire a shared vision, stimulate intellectual growth, and attend to individual teachers' needs, teachers report noticeably higher effectiveness. This is consistent with the view that transformational leaders build confidence, commitment, and motivation, which translate into stronger classroom performance.

Democratic leadership showed a similarly strong association (r = .612), suggesting that when teachers participate in shared decision-making, their sense of ownership and engagement rises, and this is reflected in their teaching. Servant leadership (r = .547) indicates that leaders who prioritize teachers' development and well-being foster a supportive environment in which teachers can perform well.

Transactional leadership produced a moderate but clearly significant correlation (r = .438). This suggests that clear expectations, feedback, and reward structures do contribute to effectiveness, but to a lesser degree than the more relationship-oriented and empowering styles. This finding supports the literature's mixed view of transactional leadership: it is useful for maintaining order and structure, but it does not by itself generate the higher levels of commitment associated with transformational approaches.

Autocratic leadership, in contrast, showed a weak and non-significant correlation (r = .126, p = .061). This indicates that centralized, control-oriented leadership does not meaningfully enhance—and may even fail to support—English teachers' effectiveness. This aligns with earlier arguments that autocratic approaches can reduce motivation and morale.

The t-test comparison of the correlation coefficients confirmed that the differences between the stronger relationships (transformational, democratic, servant) and the weaker ones (transactional, autocratic) were statistically meaningful. Overall, the findings demonstrate that leadership style is not a peripheral factor but a significant correlate of teaching effectiveness, with inspirational, participatory, and supportive styles outperforming control-based approaches.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal a coherent picture of English teachers' effectiveness and its relationship with leadership styles in Chinese schools. The descriptive results show that teaching effectiveness is moderately high (mean = 3.72, median = 3.75, SD = 0.58), with a symmetrical distribution and limited dispersion. This suggests that most English teachers perform at a competent level, and the narrow spread implies that institutional policies and shared professional expectations may be creating a common baseline of practice across schools. However, the moderate standard deviation also points to a minority of teachers scoring noticeably lower, which justifies targeted support rather than uniform training.

The correlation results strengthen this interpretation. Transformational leadership (r = .663) and democratic leadership (r = .612) showed the strongest positive relationships with effectiveness, followed by servant leadership (r = .547) and transactional leadership (r = .438). Autocratic leadership, by contrast, showed a weak and non-significant correlation (r = .126, p = .061). This pattern indicates

that leadership which inspires, includes, and supports teachers is more strongly associated with effective teaching than leadership based on control and centralized decision-making. Transactional leadership still contributed positively, but its moderate strength suggests that rewards and clear expectations alone cannot produce the higher levels of commitment and performance associated with transformational and participatory approaches.

These results align with the argument that leadership effectiveness must be interpreted through cultural and institutional lenses. In the Chinese school context, where guidance and harmonious relationships are valued, leadership exercised through inspiration and participation appears to resonate more strongly with teachers than coercive or purely directive models. The findings therefore challenge any uncritical application of Western leadership frameworks and highlight the importance of matching leadership style to local institutional culture.

Recommendation

Based on these findings, several practical recommendations emerge for school administrators, teacher trainers, and policymakers in Chinese schools.

First, since transformational leadership showed the strongest association with teaching effectiveness, principals should receive professional development in vision-building, intellectual stimulation, and individualized support. Leadership training programs should move beyond administrative management and focus on how leaders can inspire and empower English teachers.

Second, the strong correlation for democratic leadership suggests that schools should create formal structures for collaborative decision-making. Teacher leadership teams, subject-based planning committees, and regular consultation meetings would give English teachers greater ownership over instructional decisions and increase their engagement.

Third, servant leadership's positive relationship with effectiveness indicates that administrators should prioritize teachers' professional growth and well-being. Mentorship programs, manageable workloads, and genuine attention to teachers' needs can create a supportive environment in which effectiveness flourishes.

Fourth, transactional leadership remains useful for maintaining clear expectations and accountability, but it should be balanced with more empowering approaches rather than relied upon as the primary style. Schools should ensure that reward and feedback systems support rather than replace transformational practices.

Fifth, given the weak and non-significant relationship for autocratic leadership, administrators should limit highly centralized decision-making in instructional matters and instead delegate authority to teachers where appropriate. Reducing excessive control may help prevent declines in motivation and morale.

Finally, future research should expand beyond self-reported measures and single-time snapshots. Longitudinal and mixed methods designs that include student achievement data and classroom

observations would provide stronger evidence about how leadership styles influence teaching effectiveness over time.

Conclusion

This study set out to determine the current level of teaching effectiveness among English teachers in Chinese schools and to examine how leadership styles relate to that effectiveness. The study contributes both theoretical and practical insights. Theoretically, it reinforces the view that leadership effectiveness is culturally situated and cannot be understood apart from the institutional context in which it operates. Practically, it offers clear direction for administrators: prioritizing transformational, democratic, and servant practices is likely to yield greater returns in teacher effectiveness than relying on autocratic or purely transactional approaches. However, the study is limited by its cross-sectional design and reliance on self-reported measures. Future research should adopt longitudinal and mixed methods designs and examine how cultural, communication, and institutional factors interact with leadership style. Such work would provide stronger evidence for leaders seeking to choose styles suited to both public sector practice and the cultural characteristics of Chinese schools.

Acknowledgment: The authors have not received financial support from the University or any other institution/organization. The authors are grateful to the journal's anonymous reviewers for their extremely helpful suggestions to improve the quality of the manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

Avolio, B. J., & Bass, B. M. (2004). Multifactor leadership questionnaire. Mind Garden.

Bass, B. M. (1985). Leadership and performance beyond expectations. New York: Free Press.

CASEL. (2013). Schoolwide SEL: An integrated framework. Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning.

Cohen, J., McCabe, E. M., Michelli, N. M., & Pickeral, T. (2009). School climate: Research, policy, practice, and teacher education. English teachers College Record, 111(1), 180-213.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). Teacher quality and student achievement: A review of state policy evidence. Education Policy Analysis Archives, 8(1).

Day, C., & Gu, Q. (2013). Variations in the conditions for teacher learning across schools: A mixed-methods study. Teaching and Teacher Education, 36, 1-12.

Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. Child Development, 82(1), 405-432.

Eccles, J. S., & Barber, B. L. (1999). Student council, volunteering, basketball, or marching band: What kind of extracurricular involvement matters? Journal of Adolescent Research, 14(1), 10-43.

Gastil, J. (1994). A meta-analytic review of the productivity and satisfaction of democratic and autocratic leadership. Small Group Research, 25(3), 384-410.

Goddard, R. D., Hoy, W. K., & Hoy, A. W. (2000). Collective teacher efficacy: Its meaning, measure, and impact on student achievement. American Educational Research Journal, 37(2), 479-507.

Greenleaf, R. K. (1977). Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness. New York: Paulist Press.

Hanushek, E. A., & Woessmann, L. (2015). The knowledge capital of nations: Education and the economics of growth. MIT Press.

Hattie, J. (2009). Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement. Routledge.

Hoy, W. K., & Miskel, C. G. (2013). Educational administration: Theory, research, and practice (9th ed.). McGraw-Hill.

Imlap, I. (2019). The Relationship between Transformational Leadership and the Effectiveness of Internal Control of ExxonMobil Limited [Master's thesis, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce].

Kuhnert, K. W., & Lewis, P. (1987). Transactional and transformational leadership: A constructive/developmental analysis. Academy of Management Review, 12(4), 648-657.

Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2006). Transformational school leadership for large-scale reform: Effects on students, English English teachers, and their classroom practices. School Leadership & Management, 26(2), 201-227.

Lengpanich, J. (2011). Servant leadership of school administrators under the Udon Thani Educational Service Area Office. [Doctoral dissertation, Khon Kaen University].

Leithwood, K., Seashore Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). How leadership influences student learning. Learning from Leadership Project.

Lenti, A. (2008). Don Bosco: A spiritual profile. New City Press.

Liden, R. C., Wayne, S. J., Zhao, H., & Henderson, D. (2008). Servant leadership: Development of a multidimensional measure and multi-level assessment. The Leadership Quarterly, 19(2), 161-177.

Marks, H. M., & Printy, S. M. (2003). Principal leadership and school performance: An integration of transformational and transactional leadership. Educational Administration Quarterly, 39(3), 370-397.

National School Climate Center. (2014). School climate: Brief overview.

Robinson, V. M., Lloyd, C. A., & Rowe, K. J. (2008). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: An analysis of the differential effects of leadership types. Educational Administration Quarterly, 44(5), 635-674.

Scheerens, J., & Bosker, R. J. (1997). The foundations of educational effectiveness. Oxford: Pergamon.

Thapa, A., Cohen, J., Guffey, S., & Higgins-D'Alessandro, A. (2013). A review of school climate research. Review of Educational Research, 83(3), 357-385.

UNESCO. (2020). Global Education Monitoring Report 2020: Inclusion and education: All means all. UNESCO.

van Dierendonck, D. (2011). Servant leadership: A review and synthesis. Journal of Management, 37(4), 1228-1261.

Vecchi, J. (2005). The challenge of Don Bosco today. Don Bosco Publications.

Vojtáš, M. (2022). Salesian pedagogy: After Don Bosco from the first generation up to the Synod on Young People (1888–2018). LAS - Libreria Ateneo Salesiano.

Wong, C. A., & Laschinger, H. K. (2013). Authentic leadership, performance, and job satisfaction: The mediating role of empowerment. Journal of Advanced Nursing, 69(4), 947-959.

World Bank. (2018). China economic monitor: The quest for productivity. World Bank.