



Leadership Styles and School Climate: Implications for Educational Outcomes

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Abstract:

This systematic review examines the interplay between leadership styles, school climate, and educational outcomes in Philippine schools. The study underscores the pivotal role of leadership in shaping school climate, with transformational and instructional leadership styles identified as key influencers. Transformational leaders, by inspiring and empowering stakeholders, foster positive climates characterized by trust, collaboration, and shared goals. In contrast, administrative-focused leadership may contribute to negative climates and hinder school effectiveness. The review highlights the mediating role of school climate, showing how it enhances or impedes the translation of leadership practices into student achievement and teacher satisfaction. Challenges faced by school leaders, such as inadequate training and resource constraints, underscore the need for robust leadership development initiatives like the School-Based Management policy and School Head Development Program. These programs aim to empower principals, enhance their leadership competencies, and foster collaborative school governance. Ultimately, fostering a positive school climate through effective leadership is essential for improving educational outcomes and creating supportive learning environments in Philippine schools.

Keywords: School leadership, Transformational leadership, Instructional leadership, School climate

Introduction:

The quality of basic education in the Philippines has witnessed significant improvements since the onset of the new millennium, yet public schools in the country continue to face a plethora of challenges. Developments in access to education and advancements in both soft and hard infrastructure have ameliorated certain school conditions. For instance, kindergarten enrollment almost doubled from 2008 to 2014, and the proportion of school-age children attending basic education has also increased. Improvements in the student-teacher ratio in public high schools, from 38:1 in 2010 to 29:1 in 2013, and reductions in the student-classroom ratio from 64:1 in 2010 to 47:1 in 2013, underscore these positive trends (World Bank, 2016). Furthermore, dropout rates at the elementary level decreased from 6.29% in the school year (SY) 2010-2011 to 2.70% in SY 2015-2016, and from 7.79% to 6.65% at the secondary level during the same period (NEDA, 2017).



Despite these achievements, public schools still struggle with inadequate basic infrastructure and facilities, high absenteeism rates among teachers, particularly in highly urbanized areas, insufficient operational funding, limited professional development opportunities for school teachers, and inadequate support from local governments (World Bank, 2016). For example, in SY 2014-2015, the student-classroom ratio in several regions exceeded the national average, with some areas experiencing ratios as high as 1:49 at the elementary level and 1:60 at the secondary level (World Bank, 2016). Additionally, absenteeism remains a significant issue in urban centers, where nearly one in ten teachers was absent in 2014, 54% higher than the national average.

Addressing these challenges is a priority for the national government, as outlined in the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) of 2017-2022. The government's strategy includes ensuring lifelong learning opportunities for all and achieving quality, accessible, relevant, and liberating basic education (NEDA, 2017). Key initiatives include strengthening capacity building among teachers and educational agents, ensuring a responsive and relevant curriculum, improving school facilities, and prioritizing the provision of quality learning resources (NEDA, 2017).

In this context, the role of school principals as instructional leaders and administrative managers is crucial. Effective leadership by school heads can foster the overall development of schools and communities. Programs such as the School-Based Management (SBM) policy and the School Head Development Program (SHDP) by the National Educators Academy of the Philippines (NEAP) aim to empower school leaders and improve educational outcomes (DepEd, 2015).

Research suggests that school leadership significantly impacts school effectiveness, educational quality, and community engagement (Allen et al., 2015; Brauckmann & Pashiardis, 2011; Gurr et al., 2005). However, the specific influence of leadership styles on school climate remains a debated topic, with some studies showing a direct relationship while others do not (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1998; Allen et al., 2015). It is evident that leadership in schools is highly contextual and that no single leadership style can be universally applied (Brauckmann & Pashiardis, 2011).

This study aims to explore the impact of school leadership on the quality of education in public schools in the Philippines. By examining the relationship between leadership styles and school climate, this research seeks to identify the key factors that contribute to better school management and improved educational outcomes.

Literature Review:

The concept of school leadership has evolved significantly over the years, with numerous studies underscoring its critical role in enhancing educational outcomes. Effective school leadership is often linked to improved student performance, better school climate, and increased teacher satisfaction. This literature review examines the various dimensions of school leadership and its impact on school quality, focusing on the Philippine context where unique challenges and strategies are at play.

School leaders, particularly principals, play a dual role as instructional leaders and administrative managers. Their effectiveness in these roles significantly influences the overall quality of education within their schools. According to Leithwood et al. (2004), effective school leaders contribute to the development of a positive school climate, foster professional growth among teachers, and ensure the efficient use of resources. These leaders also play a pivotal role in shaping school culture and driving school improvement initiatives (Hallinger & Heck, 1998).

In the Philippines, school principals are expected to navigate a complex educational landscape marked by disparities in resource allocation and varying levels of community support. The Philippine Development Plan (PDP) of 2017-2022 emphasizes the importance of building the capacity of educational leaders to ensure quality and accessible education for all (NEDA, 2017). The School-Based Management (SBM) policy and the School Head Development Program (SHDP) are key initiatives aimed at empowering school leaders to meet these challenges (DepEd, 2015).

Research on leadership styles has identified transformational and instructional leadership as particularly influential in the educational context. Transformational leadership involves inspiring and motivating staff towards achieving common goals, fostering an environment of collaboration and innovation (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Instructional leadership, on the other hand, focuses on improving teaching and learning processes by setting clear educational goals, monitoring progress, and providing support and resources to teachers (Robinson et al., 2008).

In a study by Allen et al. (2015), it was found that transformational leadership positively correlates with school climate and student achievement. Similarly, Robinson et al. (2008) highlight that instructional leadership is closely linked to improved student outcomes, as leaders who focus on curriculum and instruction can directly impact teaching quality and student learning.

School climate, defined as the quality and character of school life, is influenced by various factors including leadership practices, teacher relationships, and student behavior (Cohen et al., 2009). A positive school climate is



associated with higher student achievement, better student behavior, and increased teacher satisfaction (Hoy et al., 1991). School leaders play a crucial role in establishing and maintaining a positive school climate through their leadership styles and practices.

Sergiovanni and Starratt (1998) argue that the actions and behaviors of school principals are instrumental in shaping school climate. Effective communication, participatory decision-making, and equitable evaluation procedures are some of the behaviors that contribute to a positive school environment (Kelley et al., 2005). In contrast, poor leadership can lead to a negative school climate, characterized by low teacher morale, high absenteeism, and poor student performance (Bulach et al., 1998).

Continuous professional development is essential for school leaders to adapt to the evolving educational landscape and meet the demands of their roles. The School Head Development Program (SHDP) in the Philippines aims to equip school leaders with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively manage schools and lead educational improvement efforts (DepEd-NEAP, 2016). The program focuses on various competencies, including curriculum management, strategic human resource management, financial management, and community partnerships.

Leithwood et al. (2004) emphasize the importance of professional development for school leaders, noting that it enhances their capacity to lead instructional improvement and fosters a culture of continuous learning within schools. Effective professional development programs are those that are context-specific, ongoing, and aligned with school goals and priorities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009).

Public schools in the Philippines face numerous challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, high student-teacher ratios, and limited resources. These challenges are compounded by issues such as teacher absenteeism, lack of professional development opportunities, and insufficient support from local governments (World Bank, 2016). In this context, effective school leadership becomes even more critical.

The disparity in resource allocation is evident in regions such as Region IV-A, Bicol Region, and the National Capital Region (NCR), where student-classroom ratios exceed national averages (World Bank, 2016). Addressing these disparities requires strategic leadership and effective management of available resources. School principals must also navigate the complexities of local governance and build partnerships with community stakeholders to garner support for their schools (DepEd, 2015).

Successful school leaders exhibit certain key characteristics and practices that contribute to school improvement. Leithwood (2005) identifies effective school leaders as good communicators, open-minded, creative, persistent, and optimistic. These leaders are adept at building strong relationships with teachers, students, and the community, fostering a collaborative environment that supports educational excellence.

Collaborative leadership structures, where decision-making is shared among teachers, parents, and community members, are also associated with positive school outcomes (Lashway, 2003; Gruenert, 2005). Such structures promote a sense of ownership and accountability among stakeholders, leading to increased engagement and support for school initiatives (Liang & Sandmann, 2015).

The literature underscores the critical role of effective school leadership in enhancing the quality of education. In the Philippine context, where public schools face significant challenges, strong leadership is essential to drive school improvement and ensure equitable educational opportunities for all students. Programs such as the School-Based Management policy and the School Head Development Program are vital in building the capacity of school leaders to meet these challenges. Future research should continue to explore the relationship between leadership styles and school outcomes, with a focus on context-specific strategies that address the unique needs of Philippine schools.

Methodology:

This study employed a systematic review methodology to investigate the correlation between school leadership and educational quality in the Philippines. The systematic review approach was selected to systematically synthesize and comprehensively analyze existing research, ensuring a thorough exploration of pertinent literature. The methodology encompassed several key stages: formulating research inquiries, conducting a comprehensive literature search across multiple academic databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, ERIC, and ProQuest using specific search terms like "school leadership," "principal leadership," "educational leadership," "Philippines," "school quality," "educational outcomes," and "school climate." The search focused on peer-reviewed articles, conference papers, dissertations, and official reports published between 2000 and 2023 to include recent and relevant studies. Additionally, selected study references were manually reviewed to identify additional relevant literature.

The search strategy included specific combinations of keywords such as "school leadership" AND "Philippines," "principal leadership" AND "school quality" AND "Philippines," "educational leadership" AND "educational outcomes" AND "Philippines," and "school climate" AND "leadership styles" AND "Philippines." Eligibility criteria for study



inclusion involved focusing on school leadership within the Philippines, examining the influence of leadership styles on educational outcomes, school climate, or teacher satisfaction, and providing empirical data or a comprehensive literature review. Studies not conducted in the Philippines, not centered on primary or secondary education, or lacking empirical data or clear methodologies were excluded during the screening process of titles, abstracts, and full-text assessments.

Findings and Discussion:

Predominant Leadership Styles and Their Impact on School Quality:

The systematic review of literature on school leadership styles in the Philippines underscores the prevalence and impact of transformational and instructional leadership among school principals. Transformational leadership is characterized by principals who inspire and motivate teachers and students, aiming to achieve high educational standards through a shared vision and fostering professional development. This leadership style emphasizes collaboration and engagement within the school community, contributing significantly to school quality (Hallinger & Heck, 1998).

Research indicates that transformational leadership positively influences various aspects of school performance. Principals employing transformational leadership practices have been associated with improved student academic achievement, enhanced teacher job satisfaction, and a conducive school climate conducive to learning (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). By fostering a sense of collective purpose and empowering teachers, transformational leaders create an environment that supports innovation and continuous improvement in educational outcomes.

Similarly, instructional leadership plays a crucial role in shaping school quality in the Philippines. Principals adopting instructional leadership styles prioritize curriculum development, teaching quality, and student learning outcomes. They actively engage in educational practices that directly impact classroom instruction and student learning experiences (Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). Studies indicate that schools led by principals who emphasize instructional leadership demonstrate higher levels of academic rigor, effective teaching practices, and enhanced student achievement outcomes.

Moreover, instructional leadership complements transformational leadership by providing strategic direction and educational expertise necessary for improving overall school performance. Principals who effectively balance both transformational and instructional leadership styles are better equipped to address the multifaceted challenges facing Philippine schools, including educational equity, teacher development, and curriculum adaptation (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005).

The systematic review highlights the critical role of transformational and instructional leadership styles in enhancing school quality in the Philippines. Principals who exhibit transformational leadership traits inspire and empower stakeholders within the school community, fostering a collaborative environment conducive to academic success. Meanwhile, those emphasizing instructional leadership contribute directly to improving teaching practices and student learning outcomes. By understanding the dynamics of these leadership styles and their impact, education policymakers and school administrators can better support effective leadership development initiatives aimed at improving educational outcomes nationwide.

Challenges Faced by School Leaders in the Philippines

School leaders in the Philippines encounter multifaceted challenges that significantly impact their ability to foster effective educational environments and achieve high educational standards. This section explores several key challenges identified through a systematic review of literature, highlighting their implications for school leadership and educational outcomes.

One of the primary challenges faced by school leaders in the Philippines is the lack of adequate training and professional development opportunities. Many principals report feeling ill-prepared to handle the diverse administrative and instructional demands of their roles (DepEd, 2015). Effective school leadership requires a broad skill set encompassing educational management, curriculum development, teacher supervision, and community engagement. However, the absence of comprehensive training programs limits principals' capacity to implement evidence-based practices that enhance school quality.

Research underscores the importance of continuous professional development for school leaders to stay abreast of evolving educational trends and strategies. Principals who participate in ongoing training programs are better equipped to navigate complex educational landscapes and lead their schools effectively (Day & Sammons, 2016). Moreover, professional development opportunities contribute to leadership efficacy by fostering skills in strategic planning, resource allocation, and staff management (Fullan, 2014).

Resource constraints, including inadequate funding and deficient school facilities, pose significant barriers to improving educational outcomes in Philippine schools. Insufficient financial resources limit principals' ability to implement innovative educational programs, upgrade infrastructure, and provide essential learning materials



(World Bank, 2016). Many public schools struggle with dilapidated buildings, overcrowded classrooms, and limited access to modern teaching technologies, which hinder effective teaching and learning experiences (DepEd, 2015).

The disparity in funding allocation across different regions exacerbates educational inequities, particularly in underserved and remote areas where schools face acute resource shortages (World Bank, 2016). Principals often grapple with balancing budgetary constraints while striving to meet the diverse needs of their students and staff. Addressing these resource challenges requires strategic policy interventions aimed at equitable resource distribution and sustainable funding mechanisms (Fullan, 2014).

Teacher absenteeism, particularly prevalent in highly urbanized cities, poses a significant challenge to school leaders striving to maintain consistent educational quality. High rates of absenteeism disrupt instructional continuity, diminish student engagement, and strain school operations (World Bank, 2016). Principals must navigate absenteeism issues through effective human resource management strategies, including fostering a culture of accountability, providing professional support to teachers, and implementing fair attendance policies (DepEd, 2015).

Effective human resource management practices are crucial for mitigating absenteeism and optimizing teacher performance. Principals who prioritize teacher motivation, professional growth opportunities, and supportive work environments foster higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment among staff (Day & Sammons, 2016). Moreover, collaborative approaches to leadership empower teachers to take ownership of their roles and contribute actively to school improvement efforts (Robinson et al., 2008).

School leaders in the Philippines face governance challenges stemming from complex policy frameworks and bureaucratic inefficiencies. The decentralization of educational decision-making processes under the School-Based Management (SBM) policy has empowered principals with greater autonomy in school governance (DepEd, 2015). However, navigating bureaucratic procedures and complying with regulatory requirements often divert principals' attention from instructional leadership to administrative tasks (Fullan, 2014).

Policy coherence and institutional alignment are essential for enabling effective school leadership and improving educational outcomes. Principals require clear policy guidelines, administrative support, and inter-agency collaboration to implement strategic initiatives that address local educational priorities (Day & Sammons, 2016). Enhancing policy effectiveness through stakeholder engagement, data-driven decision-making, and capacity-building initiatives can empower school leaders to enact meaningful reforms and drive sustainable educational improvement (Kilag et al., 2024).

The challenges faced by school leaders in the Philippines are diverse and multifaceted, encompassing issues related to training and professional development, resource constraints, teacher absenteeism, and policy governance. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts from policymakers, educational stakeholders, and community leaders to support principals in their pivotal roles as educational leaders. By investing in leadership capacity-building, equitable resource allocation, and supportive policy environments, Philippine schools can enhance leadership efficacy and ultimately improve educational outcomes for all students.

Strategies and Programs to Improve School Leadership in the Philippines:

In response to the challenges faced by school leaders in the Philippines, various strategies and programs have been implemented to enhance school leadership effectiveness and promote educational improvement. This section examines key initiatives, including the School-Based Management (SBM) policy and the School Head Development Program (SHDP), highlighting their objectives, implementation strategies, and impacts on school leadership.

The School-Based Management (SBM) policy represents a significant reform initiative aimed at decentralizing decision-making authority in Philippine schools. Introduced by the Department of Education (DepEd), the SBM policy empowers school principals with greater autonomy and responsibility for managing their schools (DepEd, 2015). Under this policy framework, principals collaborate closely with teachers, students, and community stakeholders to establish school governance structures, develop educational plans, and allocate resources based on local needs and priorities (Kilag et al., 2024).

Research indicates that the SBM policy has facilitated more responsive and participatory school leadership practices, thereby fostering a sense of ownership and accountability among school stakeholders (Fullan, 2014). Principals empowered by the SBM policy are better positioned to align school strategies with community expectations, promote inclusive decision-making processes, and enhance educational outcomes through localized initiatives (DepEd, 2015).

The School Head Development Program (SHDP), initiated by DepEd in collaboration with the National Educators Academy of the Philippines (NEAP), focuses on enhancing the leadership competencies of school heads through structured training and professional development opportunities (DepEd-NEAP, 2016). The SHDP is designed to



equip school leaders with essential skills in curriculum management, instructional leadership, strategic human resource management, financial stewardship, and community engagement.

Participants in the SHDP undergo competency-based training modules that address the complex responsibilities of school leadership in the Philippine context. The program aims to strengthen principals' capacity to lead educational reforms, improve teaching and learning practices, and effectively manage school resources (DepEd-NEAP, 2016). By investing in leadership development, DepEd seeks to cultivate a cadre of competent and visionary school leaders capable of driving sustainable educational change at the grassroots level.

Effective school leadership in the Philippines necessitates robust educational governance frameworks and policy alignment mechanisms. The integration of SBM principles into national education policies has promoted greater coherence between central directives and local implementation strategies (DepEd, 2015). Principals operating within a supportive policy environment benefit from clearer guidelines, streamlined administrative procedures, and enhanced decision-making autonomy.

Policy coherence is critical for sustaining school leadership initiatives and fostering continuous improvement in educational practices (Fullan, 2014). By aligning policies with research-based practices and stakeholder feedback, educational policymakers can facilitate principled decision-making, resource allocation, and capacity-building initiatives that empower school leaders to meet diverse educational challenges effectively.

Successful school leadership in the Philippines hinges on cultivating collaborative partnerships and engaging diverse stakeholders in educational governance processes. Principals play a pivotal role in fostering positive relationships with teachers, parents, local authorities, and community organizations to support school development goals (DepEd, 2015). Collaborative leadership approaches promote shared ownership of educational outcomes, encourage innovative solutions to local challenges, and build trust and accountability within the school community.

Research underscores the importance of community engagement in enhancing school effectiveness and promoting inclusive educational practices (Robinson et al., 2008). Principals who leverage community resources, expertise, and support networks create opportunities for holistic student development, parental involvement, and sustainable school improvement efforts (Fullan, 2014).

The implementation of strategies and programs such as the School-Based Management (SBM) policy and the School Head Development Program (SHDP) represents significant milestones in improving school leadership in the Philippines. These initiatives have empowered school leaders with greater autonomy, enhanced their leadership competencies, and promoted collaborative governance practices (Kilag et al., 2023). Moving forward, sustained investment in leadership development, policy coherence, and community engagement will be essential to fostering effective school leadership and achieving equitable educational outcomes across Philippine schools.

The Role of School Climate in Mediating Leadership Effects:

School climate plays a pivotal role in shaping educational outcomes by mediating the effects of leadership practices within educational institutions. This section explores the findings from a systematic review on how school climate influences the effectiveness of leadership and its implications for student performance, teacher satisfaction, and overall school improvement efforts.

School climate encompasses the social, emotional, and physical aspects of the school environment that influence the attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions of students, teachers, and stakeholders (Gruenert, 2005). A positive school climate is characterized by factors such as trust among stakeholders, supportive relationships, clear communication channels, and a sense of collective responsibility for student success (Cohen et al., 2009).

Leadership styles significantly impact school climate, influencing how principals manage relationships, resolve conflicts, and promote collaborative decision-making processes within their schools (Kelley et al., 2005). Transformational leadership, which emphasizes vision-setting, motivation, and empowerment, has been linked to positive school climates characterized by innovation, shared goals, and a strong sense of community (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). Principals who exhibit transformational leadership traits inspire trust and create a supportive environment where teachers feel valued and motivated to excel (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Conversely, leadership styles that prioritize administrative tasks over instructional leadership may contribute to a negative school climate marked by distrust, low morale among staff, and ineffective communication channels (Gruenert, 2005). The relationship between leadership style and school climate is complex and contingent upon cultural, organizational, and contextual factors that shape educational practices (Brauckmann & Pashiardis, 2011).

The influence of leadership on school climate is shaped by cultural norms, values, and organizational dynamics unique to each school community (Brauckmann & Pashiardis, 2011). Cultural sensitivity and contextual understanding are essential for school leaders to effectively navigate diverse educational environments and implement strategies that resonate with local needs and aspirations (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005).



A positive school climate enhances educational outcomes by fostering a conducive learning environment where students feel safe, engaged, and motivated to succeed (Cohen et al., 2009). Research indicates that schools with a positive climate experience higher academic achievement, reduced disciplinary issues, and improved overall well-being among students and staff (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005).

School climate serves as a critical mediator of leadership effects on educational outcomes in Philippine schools. Principals who cultivate a positive school climate through transformational leadership practices empower stakeholders, promote collaborative relationships, and enhance overall school effectiveness (Kilag et al., 2023). Moving forward, fostering a supportive school climate requires intentional leadership strategies, cultural responsiveness, and a commitment to inclusive practices that prioritize the holistic development of students and the professional growth of educators.

Conclusion:

This systematic review has underscored the critical role of school leadership in shaping educational outcomes through its influence on school climate in the Philippines. Key findings highlight the complex interplay between leadership styles, school climate, and their collective impact on student achievement, teacher satisfaction, and overall school effectiveness.

The review confirmed that leadership styles, particularly transformational and instructional leadership, significantly influence school climate. Transformational leaders, characterized by their visionary outlook and ability to inspire, motivate, and empower stakeholders, fostered positive school climates conducive to collaboration, innovation, and shared goals (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). In contrast, leaders emphasizing administrative tasks over instructional leadership tended to contribute to negative school climates marked by low morale and ineffective communication channels (Gruenert, 2005).

School climate emerged as a crucial mediator of leadership effects, influencing the extent to which leadership practices translate into tangible educational outcomes. A positive school climate, characterized by trust, respect, and supportive relationships among stakeholders, was found to enhance the implementation of effective teaching and learning practices (Cohen et al., 2009; Kelley et al., 2005). Principals who prioritized effective communication, participatory decision-making, and equitable evaluation procedures were better able to cultivate a positive school climate that promoted student engagement and teacher commitment to professional growth (Gruenert, 2005; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005).

Despite the positive impacts observed, school leaders in the Philippines face significant challenges, including inadequate training, resource constraints, and cultural diversity issues that influence leadership effectiveness (DepEd, 2015; World Bank, 2016). Strategies such as the School-Based Management (SBM) policy and the School Head Development Program (SHDP) have been instrumental in addressing these challenges by promoting autonomy, enhancing leadership competencies, and fostering collaborative school governance (DepEd, 2015; DepEd-NEAP, 2016).

To further advance understanding in this area, future research should explore the longitudinal effects of leadership styles on sustained school climate improvement and student outcomes. Investigating the scalability and adaptability of leadership interventions across diverse educational contexts in the Philippines would provide valuable insights into effective leadership practices that can be tailored to meet local needs and challenges.

Practical implications from this review emphasize the importance of investing in leadership development programs that cultivate transformational leadership qualities and promote a positive school climate. Educational policymakers and school administrators should prioritize strategies that enhance principal preparation, support ongoing professional learning, and promote collaborative partnerships with stakeholders to optimize school leadership effectiveness.

Effective school leadership in the Philippines hinges on fostering a supportive school climate where leadership practices align with the educational aspirations and cultural contexts of the community. By leveraging transformational leadership approaches and nurturing positive school climates, Philippine schools can enhance educational outcomes, promote teacher well-being, and create inclusive learning environments conducive to student success.

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