Research Article

Public School Heads' Leadership Style and Best Practices in the Department of Education in Bulacan, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the leadership style and the best practices of the school heads in the department of education in Bulacan. In the Philippines, there shall be a school head for all public elementary and secondary schools or as cluster thereof, pursuant to Section 6.1, Rule VI of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Republic Acts No. 9155 (Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001). A school head is a person responsible for the administrative and instructional supervision of the school or cluster if schools. As such, a school head is expected to possess the following leadership: educational leadership, people leadership and strategic leadership. The study will use the Research Design, Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches (Creswell, 2014), extensive documentary analysis was employed. Every school heads function as leaders resulted to improved learners' profound academic performance, brought by a strong leadership formulated an achievable vision, mission in accomplishing the goal. Best practices were clearly demonstrated as the indicators of better and improving school learning environment.

Keywords: *best practices, department of education, leadership style, school heads*

Introduction

In the Philippine educational setting, public school heads could be the principal, head teacher, master teacher or teacher In-charge assigned by the division superintendent. The school principal is the highest-ranking administrator in an elementary or high school. Principals typically report directly to the school or division superintendent, but may report to the superintendent's designee, usually an assistant superintendent, in larger school districts. The highest-ranking school level administrator in some private schools is also called principal or director. Head Teachers have many of the same responsibilities as principals, but they may engage in additional activities such as directly

supervising the master teachers and the teachers under his/ her jurisdiction. Principals, head teacher, master teachers, and others who are responsible for the overall operation of a school are often called school heads. In an era of shared decision-making and site-based management, the term school heads may also be used in reference to other school administrators and leaders within the school such as assistant principals, head or lead teachers, master teachers and others who participate in school leadership activities.

Leadership and management need to be given equal prominence if schools are to operate effectively and achieve their objectives. "Leading and managing are distinct, but both are important ... The challenge of modern organizations requires the objective perspective of the manager as well as the flashes of vision and commitment wise leadership provides" (Bolman & Deal, 1997).

Leithwood et al. (1999) make the important point that, in practice, principals in their day-to-day work are rarely aware of whether they are leading or managing people under them and the school in particular; they are simply carrying out their work on behalf of the school and its learners. However, the nature of that work of the school head should reflect the school context and, in particular, its needs at any one time.

While there is global interest in school leadership, because of its perceived importance in developing and maintaining successful schools and education systems, there is much less clarity about which leadership behaviors are most likely to produce the most favorable outcomes.

The various theories of educational leadership and management reflect very different ways of understanding and interpreting events and behavior in schools and colleges. In this sense, they demonstrate the different origins and epistemologies of the discipline. They also represent what are often ideologically based, and certainly divergent, views about how educational institutions ought to be managed.

Leadership theory and practice must be put in the context of history, to understand how the field of study has evolved. The earliest theories of leadership were the Great Man Theories, which emerged in the late 1800s. (Perhaps you can see one primary fault with these theories, just from their name: they assumed only half the world's population could even be considered for leadership.) The Great Man concept evolved into trait-based theories of leadership, which defined leadership by a leader's characteristics, most of which were considered innate. You were either lucky enough to be born with them, or you weren't. (Starting, first, with a Y chromosome.) For many of us, our first understanding of leadership may have aligned with these theories: leaders were often men with dominant personalities. We still see this theory at play unconsciously today, when someone is overlooked for a leadership role because of a quiet personality.

In the middle of the last century, the study of leadership shifted from the study of traits to the study of behaviors: not who the leader is but what the leader does. This allowed for an understanding that leadership could be developed in others. The most prominent leadership theories today build on this understanding, and begin to integrate the perspective of followers and the contextual circumstances in which leaders and followers interact. As business, and our understanding of human nature, grows more complex, leadership theories and frameworks should evolve to accommodate the new contexts and understandings.

Methods
Methods and Techniques Used
The study will use the Qualitative descriptive research design, data were analyzed to determine the school heads leadership style and best practices in schools in Bulacan.

The school heads in various position, or designation were the respondents of the Survey Questionnaires. The school heads leadership style and best practices will be the main source of qualitative data.

Extensive documentary analysis was also employed, pertinent documents such as Five Year Development Plan, Strategic Plan, Operational Plan, Supervisory Plan, Best Practices and other long-range and short range development with emphasis on Instruction, Research, and Community Extension encapsulated by the Outcomes-Based Education implementation

that are necessary to establish the endeavor of the study.

Study Group Data

Public school heads functioning as leaders in their respective schools in Department of Education in Bulacan will be the respondents of the study. Convenience sampling method were used to obtain data.

Instrument Data

Data were collected through two scales by researcher:
a) School heads' Leadership Style
    i.   autocratic,
    ii. democratic,
    iii. transformational,
    iv. transactional and
    v.   laissez-faire
b) Best Practices

Administration of the Instrument

Permission to conduct the study will be obtained from the public school heads in the Department of Education in Bulacan. Inform Consent form will be as attachment in the survey form. The survey questionnaires were administered to the respondents by the researcher through email using google form. Confidentiality of records and results were assured. The data were analyzed descriptively.

Results and Discussion

Leadership theory scholar Dr. Peter Northouse defines leadership as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal." This definition makes clear that leadership is not a trait or behavior, and it is not a position. You are not made a leader by your job title; you are made a leader by your influence.

Theories of Being a Leader

In the past half century, the study of leadership has grown, offering many new theories and frameworks for exploring what it means to be a leader, and how to do leadership well in an educational setting. This study will outline five current leadership theories, and offer resources and suggestions for integrating the theories into your own leadership practice.

Five Leadership Theories

When Kathleen Yosko, now CEO of Northwestern Medicine's Marianjoy Rehabilitation Center, began her first job as a hospital president, there was no onboarding process planned, and no one to welcome her. Thinking it was a mistake, Yosko called her headquarters for advice. They told her, "Just do whatever a president does."

Fortunately, Yosko was a seasoned leader and she intuited where to start. But for many others, our first forays into leadership felt much like Yosko's first day: knowing how to start was not obvious. In many companies, individuals are promoted because of their technical skill – they are gifted engineers, accountants, or marketers – but that does not mean they are prepared for leadership. Leadership is a skill that can be learned, but it takes intentionality.

In the past half century, the study of leadership has grown, offering many new theories and frameworks for exploring what it means to be a leader, and how to do leadership well. In this article, we outline five current leadership theories, and offer resources and suggestions for integrating the theories into your own leadership practice. We will explore:
1. Transformational Leadership
2. Leader-Member Exchange Theory
3. Adaptive Leadership
4. Strengths-Based Leadership
5. Servant Leadership

Five Leadership Styles

1. Autocratic leaders- make the employee do their job without right to choose while democratic leaders try to have the work done by giving them right to choose. Autocratic leaders choose the willing team members during preparation period, because they believe those who resist changing threaten the process (Martincic, 2010).
2. Democratic leaders- give importance to increasing sharing and willingness in mutual respect by considering organizational communication and group dynamics (Ferguson, 2011). In other words, democratic leaders try to form an organizational power for a positive change by providing an atmosphere the employees can share

their feelings, ideas and experiences and showing they value everyone's ideas (Brookfield, 2010).

3. Transformational leaders-become a model for employees and try to create willingness to change by affecting them with their charisma, vision and self-confidence (Shanker and Sayeed, 2012). That's why it is asserted that transformational leadership is more appropriate for an organization to survive by exploring the innovation, initiating the change and meeting the needs in a competitive environment (Mokhber, Ismail and Vakilbashi, 2011). As leader's charisma is effective to manage the crisis especially during change process, it is important for a positive change that the leader adopts transformational leadership style in change management (Boga and Ensari, 2009).

4. Transactional leaders- are the administrators who try to maintain the existing structure in a punishment and reward system by making the employees obey the rules, avoid taking risks and have interdependent relations with employees.

5. Laissez-faire leaders-exhibit a passive administrative attitude, give a total freedom to the employees in their jobs, passes the decision making and responsibilities to employees and don't feel the need to motivate them to reach the organizational goals.

The Principal as Leader:
- Five Key Responsibilities
- Shaping a vision of academic success for all students
- Creating a climate hospitable to education
- Cultivating leadership in others
- A Profile in Leadership: Dewey Hensley
- Managing people, data and processes
- Improving School Leadership

Leadership Framework, Department of Education, Philippines

There shall be a school head for all public elementary and secondary schools or as cluster thereof, pursuant to Section 6.1, Rule VI of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Republic Acts No. 9155 (Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001). A school head is a person responsible for the administrative and instructional supervision of the school or cluster if schools. As such, a school head is expected to possess the following leadership dimensions:

1. Educational Leadership is the ability to craft and pursue a shared school vision and mission, as well as develop and implement curriculum policies, programs and projects.
2. People Leadership is the ability to work and develop effective relationship with stakeholders and exert a positive influence upon people.
3. Strategic Leadership is the ability to explore complex issues from a global perspective, manage an educational enterprise and maximize the use of resources. (except from the revised guidelines on selection, promotion and designation of school heads, DO_s2007_042_Department of Education, Republic of the Philippines)
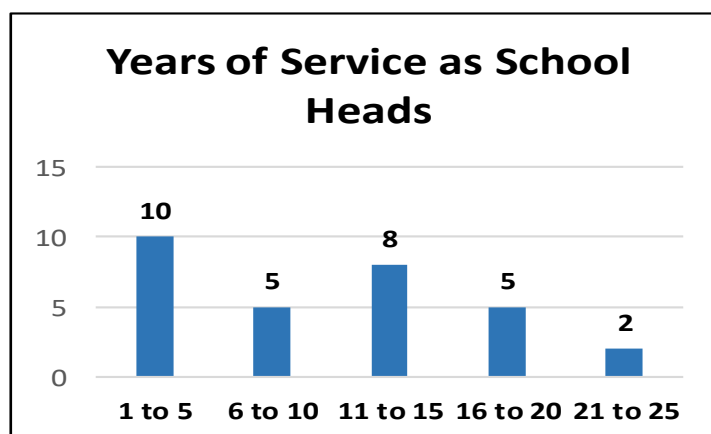
Graph 1. Graph above shows the length of service of the respondents as school heads

10 out 30, or 33.33% of the respondents has 1 to 5 years serving as school heads, while only 6.66% or 2 out of 30 respondents have the longest years of services of 21-25 years.
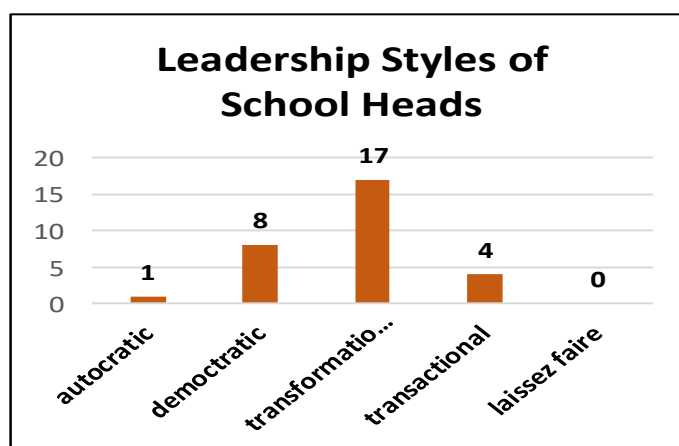
The graph above shows that majority of the respondents are just new in their position as school heads. And 26.66 or 8 out of 30 school heads were in their 15 years or experienced leaders.
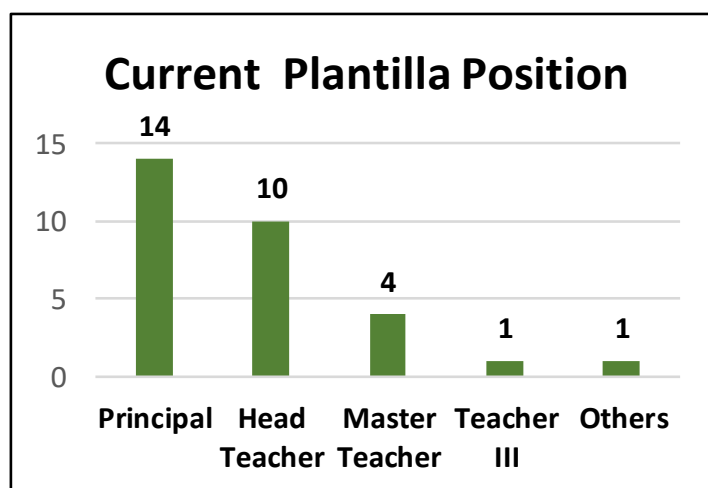
Graph 2. Graph above shows the current plantilla position of the respondents as school heads

46.66% of the respondents are certified principals, with only one teacher III assigned as Teacher-in-charge in an extension campus and directly under the supervision of a principal in the main campus. The graph shows that majority of the respondents are in accordance to

Leadership Framework, Department of Education, Philippines pursuant to Section 6.1, Rule VI of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Republic Acts No. 9155 (Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001).

Graph 3. Graph above shows the leadership style of the respondents as school heads

The graph above shows that 57% of the respondents has transformational leadership style as school heads. Only one respondent was identified as autocratic. This result manifested that school heads in public schools in Bulacan are more likely to transformational leaders.

Transformational leaders are said to be model for employees and try to create willingness to change by affecting them with their charisma, vision and self-confidence (Shanker and Sayeed, 2012). Transformational leadership is more appropriate for an

organization to survive by exploring the innovation, initiating the change and meeting the needs in a competitive environment (Mokhber, Ismail and Vakilbashi, 2011).

Best Practices in School Leadership

Table 1: The table below shows the expressed best practices of the respondents. On the first follow are the 9 Best Practices, on the second column are the corresponding numbers of the school heads on the corresponding best practices, and on the third column are the numbers of the school administrators and their corresponding leadership corresponds to the best practices.

Best Practices expressed by 30 respondents are group according to similarity in Context that resulted into 9 Best Practices.

Best Practices	No. of Respondents with expressed best practices	Leadership Style of the respondents
1. Great ability to formulate Clear Vision That means updating teachers, students, and parents regularly on the progress of the vision statement and the steps needed to achieve it.	27 school heads	14- Transformational 01-Democratic 06-Transactional 02-autocratic 00-laissez faire
2. Ability to improve physical facilities for an orderly and safe learning environment. *This is more than just behavior – relationships that allow students to feel psychologically safe matter too.*	24 school heads	20- Transformational 01-Democratic 03-Transactional 00-autocratic 00-laissez faire
3.Focus in supporting quality teaching	21 school heads	15- Transformational 00-Democratic 06-Transactional 00-autocratic 00-laissez faire
4. Effective Communication skills Formulating a vision is inadequate if it's not communicated well.	21 school heads	15- Transformational 00-Democratic 06-Transactional 00-autocratic 00-laissez faire
5. Capacity to set compelling goals and expectations Start with student outcomes and create a compelling discrepancy between how things are now, and how you'd like them to be in the future. Align resources to achieving these goals. Allocate resources behind these goals, including students time.	18 school heads	11- Transformational 01-Democratic 04-Transactional 02-autocratic 00-laissez faire
6. Leader as good Listener *"If a teacher comes to you with a problem, listen and then ask the teacher what they think should be done."* *"Listen to your teachers and students. Learn their talents, interests and passions and then delegate accordingly."*	15 school heads	09- Transformational 01-Democratic 05-Transactional 00-autocratic 00-laissez faire

Best Practices	No. of Respondents with expressed best practices	Leadership Style of the respondents
7. Learner Leader *Leaders should attend conferences that are the most likely to improve their skills and knowledge. That might mean forsaking the traditional conferences and seeking out new ones. Leaders should apply the same logic to teachers.*	15 school heads	10- Transformational 00-Democratic 03-Transactional 02-autocratic 00-laissez faire
8. School heads that Train Future Leaders *Great leaders will inspire people who work under them if they give those who have grown professionally more responsibility and leadership roles. The school is better off if it has more great leaders instead of just one.*	15 school heads	09- Transformational 01-Democratic 05-Transactional 00-autocratic 00-laissez faire
9. Leading quality teacher learning and development. *Start with evidence of learning needs, integrate theory and practice, utilize external expertise and use science of learning principles to practice what you preach.*	12 school heads	08- Transformational 00-Democratic 03-Transactional 01-autocratic 00-laissez faire

Result shows that 27 out of 30 school heads has best practice to formulate Clear Vision of their school, teachers, students, and parents are participated and updated on the progress of the vision statement. The 27 respondents are comprising of 14- Transformational, 1-Democratic, 6-Transactional, 2-autocratic. This affirms that Transformational leaders-become a model for employees and try to create willingness to change by affecting them with their charisma, vision and self-confidence (Shanker and Sayeed, 2012). That's why it is asserted that transformational leadership is more appropriate for an organization to survive by exploring the innovation, initiating the change and meeting the needs in a competitive environment (Mokhber, Ismail and Vakilbashi, 2011).

Result also shows that the second to the best practices is the Ability to improve physical facilities for an orderly and safe learning environment expressed by 24 school heads where in 20-Transformational, 1-Democratic, 3-Transactional leadership styles. This prove that as leader's charisma is effective to manage the crisis especially during change process, such crisis could be the maintenance and operations

of schools despite small budget allocation. The school leader's ability and capacity to become resourceful in generating additional budget to literally transform the facility into conducive learning environment.

The 9th in the list of best practices is Leading quality teacher learning and development expressed by 12 school heads comprising of 8-Transformational, 3-Transactional and 1-autocratic. In all aspects, result shows that majority of the school leaders are transformational leaders. As transformational leadership is more appropriate for an organization, like school to survive by exploring the innovation, initiating the change and meeting the needs in a competitive environment like the learning environment.

Conclusion

Research has consistently shown that school head leadership style and schools best practices play a significant role in school progressive development. This study consistently found that the school head's leadership was the key to an effective school learning

environment. The position school head hold, as the one person in a school who is responsible for and empowered to oversee the entire school, places them in a powerful position to coordinate the entire school operation and move it forward. Furthermore, the result of this study revealed that the most effective school heads particularly principals with emphasize on its leadership capacity and ability had a clear vision of how the school could serve its students; had aligned resources and priorities with the vision; and could engage other key players, within and outside the school, in achieving the goals embedded in the vision that will eventually result in best practices of the school.

This study also identified information that school head as the key to a school's successful transition into an institution that will adequately prepare the teachers, students, parents and other stakeholders in combating challenges and drive them into better future equipped with holistic development. We know for a fact that as society continues to change and technological advances change the tools available for teaching, the role of the school heads will likely change also. Weather in the presence and absence of the changing condition brought about by the challenges the school heads are facing right now, changes take place as effective and efficient leadership falls into place.

Acknowledgement

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