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## Research Article

### The Influence of School Heads' Transformational Leadership on Schools' Performance: The Case of City Schools Division of San Fernando, La Union

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#### ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship of school heads' transformational leadership and school performance among public elementary school in the City Schools Division of San Fernando, La Union. Descriptive-correlational design was used which consists of 27 elementary schools with twenty-seven (27) school heads and four hundred forty-three (443) teachers who were in active service for the School Year 2021-2022 were the respondents of the study. Descriptive statistics, Kruskal-Wallis H test, Wilcoxon signed rank test, Rank-biserial and Spearman's rank, Pearson product-moment correlation were the tools used in the study and all analyses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using IBM SPSS. The professional characteristics of the school heads showed that majority of them are occupying a plantilla item of Principal 1 and 2 and are still taking their doctorate degree. Also, most of them served for 10 years and above as school heads and they are managing non-central and medium-sized schools. The practice of transformational leadership among the school heads is generally high and the ratings of the school heads across all the dimensions of transformational leadership are consistent. Majority of the school head in the Division of La Union have *Maturing* or level 2 SBM practice. The schools have introduced and sustained continuous improvement process that integrates wider community participation and improve significantly the students' performance and learning outcomes. The test of hypothesis showed that there were no significant differences between school heads and teachers' ratings of the former's transformational leadership except for the domains "enabling others to act" and "encouraging the heart". The school type had a significant relationship with the domain "enabling the heart". Specifically, those who are managing non-central school had significantly lower scores in encouraging the heart compared to those who are managing the central schools. Other pro-

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file variables are not significantly related to transformational leadership. Finally, there was a significant positive correlation between the overall transformational leadership and the schools' performance. The more school heads practice transformational leadership particularly "Inspiring a shared vision" and "Encouraging the heart", the higher is the schools' performance. In conclusion, the elementary schools in the Division of La Union City are compliant to DepEd Order No. 83, s. 2012. However, much is desired to elevate its compliance to advanced stage. Significantly, the high practice of transformational leadership and this is translated in the school improvement and performance marked by the introduction and sustained process of stakeholders' participation and significant students' learning outcomes. Remarkably, higher practice of transformational leadership among school heads yields higher school performance particularly along Inspiring a shared vision and Encouraging the heart. Thus, transformational leadership is an effective leadership approach in managing DepEd schools as it ushers significant changes in the development of schools and its stakeholders.

**Keywords:** *Asia, City Schools Division of San Fernando, descriptive-correlational design, Educational Management, La Union, Philippines, school heads, school performance, transformational leadership*

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## Background

Leadership is a continuous process of dynamically infusing positive changes in an organization. It is geared towards the attainment of goals and it is dynamic enough to respond to myriads of challenges generated by time. Essentially, the expectation from a leader is always high, particularly towards achieving increased performance. As such, leaders need to have the ability to see the whole enterprise of the organization especially in the academic setting. Specifically, leadership practices in schools aims at establishing culture of excellence that would harness the potentials of school heads and to prepare the learners and teachers for a caliber educational institution in transforming the world. This is consistent with the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which provides inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels – early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary, technical and vocational training (UN, 2019).

Transformational leadership is a type of leadership which focuses on achieving changes in the values, beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, emotional, and the needs of subordinates for better

change in the future. It is the ability to influence a group towards achieving a vision or goal (Robbins & Judge, 2015). Through transformational leadership, the subordinates get inspired as the leaders transcend from their own self-interests for the benefit of the organization as they make the required change.

One of the major concerns of school leaders is to ensure high school performance which is an issue that deeply concerns students, parents, teachers and other stakeholders. School performance is considered as a description of the school's success or failure during the exercise of major duties and functions, in order to realize the stipulated goals, objectives, vision and mission. Furthermore, the purpose of school performance is to achieve an educational goal based on standards. In this regard, leaders are challenged to make a significant difference in student achievement, management of resources, curriculum enhancement, continuous improvement, and the like.

In the Philippine setting, school performance is usually measured using the School-Based Management (SBM) which was enforced through the Governance of Basic Education Act

of 2001 (RA No. 9155). It is specifically implemented in the Department of Education (DepEd) to address the gaps and improve the quality of education in the public schools. With its decentralization feature, it aims to uplift the services and performance, and also assures that learners get the best education possible. In particular, the DepEd desires that every school targets the vision of honing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of learners to their full potential and contribute meaningfully in building the nation.

Today, school heads in the DepEd are often confronted with problems of big class size, lack of classroom, inadequate facilities, and the like, which affect not only learners' performance but also the health of the teachers and learners (Solomon, 2015). The purpose of transformational leadership is to address these problems to ensure academic success by improving processes, materials, and training. Thus, the school heads are challenged to lead in order to direct positive change, negotiate collaborative agreements with stakeholders, and overcome issues and challenges in the school.

From this concept, it is clear that transformational leadership is a key factor in ensuring school performance. It is a significant predictor of readiness to change and it proved relevant in empowering knowledge sharing quality, which in turn affects school performance (Effiyanti et al., 2020). Furthermore, the principal's transformational leadership is the key to prompt school development as it can help the school solve problems pertinently and obtain various degrees of improvement on different stage (Yang, 2013).

To this date, there was varied studies conducted relating transformational leadership to different constructs. Most of the studies conducted were along transformational leadership in relation to student achievement (Sun and Leithwood, 2012), leadership effectiveness (Trmal, et al., 2015), teachers' effectiveness (Leithwood & Sun, 2012), and job satisfaction (Boberg & Bourgeois, 2016). None of these studies, however, used SBM as an indicator of school performance in relation to transformational leadership.

In the local setting, specifically at the City Division of San Fernando, La Union, school

heads have expressed difficulty in exercising transformational leadership and the requirements of SBM. Instead of decentralizing the functions, the Department of Education (DepEd) still follows a top-bottom approach in school governance leaving the school heads to implement policies from the top down to the school level. Based on interview of the researcher, some school heads could not exercise flexibility and creativity in managing their schools because they are most of the time compelled to implement policies coming from the central office. Such experience limits their ability to eliminate the hindering forces of quality education such as poor learning outcomes, inadequate instructional resources or facilities, lack of parents' follow-up, indifferences of stakeholders, and lack of teachers' perseverance and patience.

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship of school heads' transformational leadership and school performance among public elementary school in the City Schools Division of San Fernando, La Union. Specifically, it answered the following questions: 1. What is the personal and professional profile of the school heads? 2. What is the level of transformational leadership of the school heads along the following dimensions [modeling the way; enabling others to act, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process and encouraging the heart] as perceived by the teachers and the school heads themselves? 3. What is the performance of the schools managed by the school heads as revealed by the School-based Management Rating for School Year 2020-2021 along the following components [performance improvement and compliance and practice of SBM principles]? 4. Is there a significant difference in the ratings of transformational leadership between school heads and teachers? 5. Is there a significant relationship between the profile of the school heads and their transformational leadership practices? 6. Is there a significant relationship between the school heads' transformational leadership and schools' performance?

In view of the foregoing gap, it is the desire of the researcher then – being a former elementary school teacher in the Philippines and currently Assistant Principal and math

instructional coach in USA – to evaluate the transformational leadership and school performance. This is with the end goal of providing baseline data needed in enhancing the leadership practices and school performance for improved quality education.

## **Methods**

This study used the descriptive-correlational design to answer the research questions. Descriptive correlational studies describe the variables and the relationships that occur naturally between and among them. In essence, the descriptive component of the study is along the personal and professional profile of the school heads, their level of transformational leadership and the performance of the schools they managed. On the one hand, the correlational component includes the test of hypothesis particularly on the relationships between the variables.

### ***Locale of the Study***

The respondents of this study were the school heads and teachers of the Schools Division Office – City of San Fernando, La Union deployed in the elementary schools. The map of the City of San Fernando, La Union is presented in Figure 2. The Schools Division Office – City of San Fernando, La Union consists of twenty-seven elementary schools located in two congressional districts. Districts 1 and 2 consist of 17 and 10 elementary schools, respectively.

### ***Respondents and Sampling Procedure***

This study used total enumeration for its respondents. There were twenty-seven (27) school heads and four hundred forty-three (443) teachers which were surveyed for the School Year 2021-2022. All the respondents were given questionnaires (using Google Form) in response to the mandate of the national Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases Resolutions for a limited face-to-face contact due to COVID-19 Pandemic in the country. The distribution of respondents can be gleaned in Table 1 who have served their school assignment for at least three years.

## **Research Instruments**

This investigation used two (2) set of questionnaires. First is the Profile Questionnaire and the second is the Transformational Leadership Practices Questionnaire (LPQ). The LPQ was adopted from Kouzes and Posner (2015) which measures five dimensions namely: (a) Modeling the way; (b) Inspiring as shared vision; (c) Challenging the process; (d) Enabling other to act; and (e) Encouraging the heart. There are 25 items of the questionnaire and the respondents determined how often do their school heads perform each statement 1 = “Never” to 5 = “Always”. The reliability of the total score in the questionnaire was found to be acceptable (.97) when it was piloted using 1,209 respondents by its developers i.e., Kouzes and Posner (2015)

On the other hand, the school’s performance was measured using the SBM Instrument of the DepEd. The data was sourced from the Office of the Superintendent and it utilized the scoring matrix for the revised School-Based Management assessment process and tool.

### ***Data Gathering Procedures***

The researcher sent a letter to the Schools Division Superintendent of Schools Division Office – City of San Fernando, La Union, asking for permission and recommendation to conduct the study. Another letter was sent to the school heads asking for permission and administration for the survey questionnaire. Upon approval, the researcher with the help of his nephew (who is working at the DepEd Division of La Union City) administered the questionnaires to the teacher respondents and school heads using Google Form. The data for the school performance was taken from the Office of the School Head which was submitted by the school heads to the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent. Finally, the data that were retrieved and collected were tallied, tabulated and interpreted accordingly using the appropriate statistical tools.

### ***Statistical Tools and Treatment***

Descriptive statistics (frequency count, rank, percentage, and mean) was used to analyze the personal and professional profile of the

school heads as well as the level of transformational leadership of the school heads. The same descriptive statistics was utilized in examining

the performance of the schools managed by the school heads.

The scale and description used in analyzing the level of transformational leadership is as follows:

Response	Range	Interpretation
Never	1.00 – 1.80	Very low
Rarely	1.81 – 2.60	Low
Sometimes	2.61 – 3.40	Moderate
Oftentimes	3.41 – 4.20	High
Always	4.21 – 5.00	Very High

On the other hand, the level of school performance was determined by a composite score derived from (a) performance improvement (60%) and (b) Compliance to SBM principles (40%). The performance improvement includes the following thematic areas: access (enrolment increase), efficiency (dropout rate and completion rate), and quality (National

Achievement Test Mean Percentage Score or School Mean Percentage Score). On the other hand, the Compliance to SBM principles includes (a) Leadership and governance; (b) Curriculum and learning; (c) Accountability and continuous improvement, and (d) Management of resources.

By applying the computation in the said DepEd Order, the resulting points per school are added and the interpretation of the final results is as follows:

Numerical Rating Scale	Results	Description	SBM Level of Practice
0.5-1.49	Good	Developing	Level 1
1.5-2.49	Better	Maturing	Level 2
2.5-3.0	Best	Advanced	Level 3

In order to determine the significant differences in the level of implementation between school districts, Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted. Meanwhile, Wilcoxon signed rank test was conducted to check if there are significant differences in the ratings of transformational leadership between school heads and teachers. Interestingly, there were significant differences in the ratings of some domains hence, combining the ratings of school head and teachers were necessary. Moreover, Rank-biserial and Spearman's rank order correlations were used to determine the relationship between school heads' transformational leadership and their profile variables. Pearson product-moment correlation was run to determine the relationship between school heads' transformational leadership and schools' performance. All analyses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using IBM SPSS.

## Results and Discussion

### *Personal and Professional Characteristics of the School Heads*

Table 1 presents that majority of the school heads are female (21 or 77.78%), with a mean age of 47 and are married (18 or 66.67%). It also presents that majority are Ilocano (17 or 62.96%), Roman Catholic (23 or 85.19%) and residents of rural areas (19 or 70.37%). Moreover, the table shows that majority of the school heads have PhD units (10 or 37.04%), with a Plantilla item of Principal 1 and Principal 2 (8 or 29.63%). Also, most of the school heads have served an average of 9 years as school head in a medium-sized (11 or 40.74%) and non-central school (21 or 77.78%).

Table 1. Personal Characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	Frequency (N=27)	Percent (100%)
<b>Age</b>		
30-40	5	18.52
41-50	11	40.74
51-60	11	40.74
61 and above		
Mean age = 47		
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	6	22.22
Female	21	77.78
<b>Civil Status</b>		
Single	7	25.93
Married	18	66.67
Widow/Widower	2	7.40
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Ilocano	17	62.96
Non-Ilocano	10	37.04
<b>Religion</b>		
Roman Catholic	23	85.19
Non- Roman Catholic	4	14.81
<b>Place of Residence</b>		
Urban	8	29.63
Rural	19	70.37
<b>Highest Educational Attainment</b>		
Bachelor degree		
With Masteral units	7	25.93
Masteral degree	1	3.70
With PhD units	10	37.04
PhD degree	9	33.33
<b>Plantilla Position</b>		
School Head 1	6	22.22
School Head 2		
School Head 3	3	11.11
Principal 1	8	29.63
Principal 2	8	29.63
Principal 3	1	3.70
Principal 4	1	3.70
<b>Number of Years as School Head</b>		
1-3 years	8	29.63
4-6 years	7	25.93
7-9 years	4	14.81
10 and above	8	29.63
<b>Size of School Managed</b>		
Small	9	33.33
Medium	11	40.74
Big	7	25.93
<b>Type of School</b>		
Central	6	22.22
Non-Central	21	77.78

### **Level of Transformational Leadership Practices of the School Heads along Modeling the Way**

Table 2 presents that the *Transformational Leadership Practices of the School Heads along Modeling the Way* is high ( $\bar{x}=3.89$ ). Interestingly, the ratings of the school heads and teachers along the various statements of this dimension are consistent. This finding means that the school heads are highly capable of establishing principles that are focused on the learners which realize their goals and well-being. These principles clearly embody their philosophy of leadership that show behavioral patterns that can be emulated by the different stakeholders in school. The result is supported by Greene (2013), who reiterates that leading people means showing them that you are a model. He asserted that a leader should have the qualities which will make his subordinates to look up to him. Being a model means to influence others and let them do good things. Likewise, the results of the study agree with the findings of David (2012) which reiterate that transformative leader is also someone with emotional intelligence and self-awareness who leads "from the inside out," and his/her work is grounded in authentic relationships.

The statement to which the school heads and teachers have rated very high is *Makes certain that the projects he/she manages are broken down into manageable chunks* ( $\bar{x}=4.29$ ). This data implies that the school heads have the competence to process individual pieces of information and grouping them into layer units.

In doing this strategy, they are able to help learners, teachers and other stakeholders in breaking down difficult information, task or project into more manageable pieces. This approach can help them organize and synthesize information which can generate action for the betterment of their school in general. According to Lewis, et al (2017), chunking is an effective strategy to reduce the cognitive load as subordinates process the information. Essentially, chunking helps in processing information by breaking long strings of information into bit size chunks that are easier to remember thus, subordinates are able to perform better and contribute in the accomplishment of organizational plans and targets.

The statement which obtained the lowest rating but with high descriptive values is *Clears about his/her own philosophy of leadership* ( $\bar{x}=3.27$ ). This finding implies that the school heads moderately or sometimes demonstrate competence in making the different stakeholders clearly understand their leadership philosophy or belief system that guides their decision making. This leadership philosophy consists of their core principles, perspectives, and values which sometimes help shape their behaviors and decisions in managing their schools. This finding affirms the study of Chen et al., 2016 that school leaders who clearly articulate and share their philosophy of leadership influences teacher initiative and collaboration through interdependence and trust-building of school members.

*Table 2. Level of Transformational Leadership Practices of the School Heads along Modeling the Way*

<b>Modeling the Way</b>	<b>School Heads</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Combined</b>
Clears about his/her own philosophy of leadership	3.15 (M)	3.39 (M)	3.27 (M)
Sets clear goals and seek to clearly articulate them for group members, and practices what he/she preaches	3.52 (H)	4.03 (H)	3.78 (H)
Let others clearly know the beliefs and values of the organization through his/her actions	4.19 (H)	4.15 (H)	4.17 (H)
Spends time and energy in making certain that people adhere to the values that have been agreed on	4.00 (H)	3.88 (H)	3.94 (H)
Makes certain that the projects he/she manages are broken down into manageable chunks	4.26 (VH)	4.32 (VH)	4.29 (VH)

<b>Modeling the Way</b>	<b>School Heads</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Combined</b>
Category Mean	3.82 (H)	3.95 (H)	3.89 (H)

**Level of Transformational Leadership Practices of the School Heads along Enabling Others to Act**

Table 3 shows that the *Transformational Leadership Practices of the School Heads along Enabling Others to Act* is high ( $\bar{x}$ =3.78). Clearly, there is consistency in the ratings of the school heads and teachers in the five statements along this dimension. The high practice of this competency signifies that the school heads have the ability to foster collaboration and build spirited teams. Such practice may also connote that they understand the strengths and weaknesses of their subordinates, their students and other collaborators. By doing so, they make them feel capable and powerful in fostering collaboration and team effort especially in realizing their collective goals in school. This finding proves that indeed transformational leaders have the ability to connect individual and collective action by not exercising power over people, but rather through them (Vanblaere & Devos, 2016,).

The statement to which the school heads and teachers have rated very high is *Seeks to develop cooperation and collaboration among group members* ( $\bar{x}$ -4.39). This data implies that the school heads would always involve the different stakeholders for greater collaboration. The practice that vividly reflects this competence is the making of the School Improvement Plan (SIP). Under the School-based Management (SBM), share governance principle dictates that the SIP needs to be developed

through maximum participation of the different stakeholders to have a sense of ownership of the goals and to partake in their realization. This practice may explain the very high rating given by the school heads and teachers in this statement.

The finding of this study attests to the fact that school administrators who exercised transformational leadership focusing on cooperation and collaboration among group members enhanced the overall conditions of schools, particularly the climate, and inspired stakeholders to support the improvement goals (Aydin et al., 2013; Gray & Lewis, 2013; Tobin, 2014).

The statement which obtained the lowest rating but with moderate level is *Gives people discretion to make their own decisions* ( $\bar{x}$ -2.98). Such finding implies that the school heads in some occasions allow their teachers, students, and other collaborators to make their decisions or discretions at their own levels. This condition is understandable considering that there are decisions which are discretionary among school heads. There may be different points of view on a particular concern or problem but at the end of the day, there are things that may be decided by the school heads without due consultation or in collaboration with the stakeholders which are called “management prerogative or discretionary power of the school head”.

Table 3. Level of Transformational Leadership Practices of the School Heads along Enabling Others to Act

<b>Enabling Others to Act</b>	<b>School Heads</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Combined</b>
Creates a “safe,” trusting environment where group members feel comfortable and involves other in planning the actions we will take.	3.30 (H)	4.18 (H)	3.74 (H)
Gives people discretion to make their own decisions.	2.78 (M)	3.18 (M)	2.98 (M)
Treats others to share his/her dream of the future as their own.	3.78 (H)	3.97 (H)	3.88 (H)



Enabling Others to Act	School Heads	Teachers	Combined
Gets group members to buy into the project at hand, sharing in the ownership.	3.74 (H)	4.13 (H)	3.94 (H)
Seeks to develop cooperation and collaboration among group members.	4.48 (VH)	4.29 (VH)	4.39 (VH)
Category Mean	3.61 (H)	3.95 (H)	3.78 (H)

### **Level of Transformational Leadership Practices of the School Heads along Inspiring a Shared Vision**

Table 4 reveals that the *Transformational Leadership Practices of the School Heads along Inspiring a Shared Vision* is high ( $\bar{x}$ =4.02). All the items in this dimension were rated consistently by both the school heads and the teachers. The high practice along this dimension implies that the school heads passionately believe that they can make a difference in the development of their school assignment as well as in the lives of the students and teachers under their care. They have clear vision of the school's future and in creating an ideal image of what the school can become, thus, enlisting other in their organizational dreams. Again, this practice can be attributed to the crafting of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) wherein the school heads are able to lay on the table their plans, and other performance indicators as well as their strategies in realizing the school targets. Such practice allows the different stakeholders to understand the school plans, targets and means of verifications which would eventually make them help realize together with the school heads.

The finding of this study affirms the study of Carless (2018) indicating that transformational leaders who inspire a shared vision do not only articulate a vision but use lateral or non-traditional thinking that encourages individual development, participative decision-making as well as cooperative and trusting work environment.

The statement to which the school heads and teachers have the highest rating is *Convince the stakeholders of school to support his/her future plans and actions* ( $\bar{x}$ =4.17). Such finding implies that the school heads put premier emphasis on convincing stakeholders in

accomplishing their school targets. A good example of this practice is the *Brigada Eskwela* which is aimed at encouraging volunteerism and public-private partnership in public education. In this practice, the school heads are able to mobilize parents, alumni, civic groups, local businesses, non-government organizations, teachers, students and individuals in collaborating for safe living and in addressing issues and concerns in schools as well as at homes and in the community.

This result shows that indeed school leaders who demonstrated transformational leadership have convincing powers with the different stakeholders and have trusting relationships with staff who are willing to support them in facilitating organizational improvement (Baptiste, 2019). According to Finnigan (2012), transformational leadership behaviors were "important to understanding the extent to which individuals are motivated and convinced to support the achievement of collective goals of the organization.

The statement to which the school heads and teachers have the lowest rating but still with high level is *Seeks to motivate others about new opportunities and the future, and encourages development planning, and asks for to anticipate the future in order to improve it* ( $\bar{x}$ =3.79). Such finding suggests that the school heads are able to encourage the different stakeholders to explore opportunities for growth of the school. Moreover, the high practice along this statement implies that they are able to map out the plans of the school for its development. Such practice is being institutionalized in the DepEd because of the Enhanced School Improvement Plan which lays the roadmap or the specific interventions that a school will undertake within a period of three consecutive school years. This is made more possible with

the creation of Annual Improvement Plan (AIP), Project Procurement Management Plan (PPMP) as well as monitoring and evaluation for these plans.

*Table 4. Level of Transformational Leadership Practices of the School Heads along Inspiring a Shared Vision*

<b>Inspiring a Shared Vision</b>	<b>School Heads</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Combined</b>
Seeks to motivate others about new opportunities and the future, and encourages development planning, and asks for to anticipate the future in order to improve it.	3.85 (H)	3.73 (H)	3.79 (H)
Convince the stakeholders of school to support his/her future plans and actions.	4.19 (H)	4.14 (H)	4.17 (H)
Enlists a common vision to inspire and motivate others.	4.00 (H)	4.12 (H)	4.06 (H)
Clearly communicates a positive and hopeful outlook for the future of our organizations.	4.04 (H)	4.04 (H)	4.04 (H)
Describes to others the kind of future he/she would like for us to create together.	3.93 (H)	4.17 (H)	4.05 (H)
Category Mean	4.00 (H)	4.04 (H)	4.02 (H)

#### ***Level of Transformational Leadership Practices of the School Heads along Challenging the Process***

Table 5 presents that the *Transformational Leadership Practices of the School Heads along Challenging the Process* is moderate ( $\bar{x}=3.33$ ). In this dimension, the ratings of the school heads and teachers have similar descriptive values in all the statements implying that they share the same perspectives in this dimension. This result implies that the school heads show moderate practice in searching for opportunities to change the status quo. In short, they sometimes demonstrate the ability to seek innovative ways to change, grow and improve. They do not "experiment and take risks" by constantly questioning how things are done in their schools. Such practice is evident in the DepEd because most of the things that are to be implemented by the school heads are policies, programs and projects which are cascaded by the DepEd Central Office to the field units like schools. While the School Improvement Plan and Annual Improvement Plan exist, the targets that schools set are those that are pre-determined by the Central Office as defined in the School-based Management. There is still very

little room for the school heads to identify processes that do not work and take action to fit it especially those that are pre-determined by the DepEd Central office.

The statement to which the school heads and teachers have the highest rating is *Keeps updated on the most recent developments affecting our organization* ( $\bar{x}=4.22$ ). Such finding implies that the school heads are very much abreast in the factors influencing their organizational development. These emerging trends may be along globalization, international networks, learning gaps and approaches as well as 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching and learning landscape. With the COVID-19 pandemic school heads are updated as to the protocols and innovative platforms on flexible learning. One good example of keeping updates regarding recent development is the Educational Management Information System (EMIS) among DepEd schools which is a system for collection, integration, processing, maintenance and dissemination of data and information to support decision-making, policy analysis and formulation, planning, monitoring and management at all levels of an education system. It is in this way that the school heads are able to get recent updates and

development in the field of education not to mention the regular trainings and seminars that they attend.

The statement to which the school heads and teachers have the lowest rating (moderate level) is *Challenges group members to try new things and consistently ask, "What can we learn?", and challenges the way we do things at work* ( $\bar{x}=2.79$ ). Such finding implies that the school heads sometimes allow the teachers, learners and other stakeholders to challenge

the established system and procedures in the DepEd. This situation happens because the system and procedures in the department are institutionalized from the highest to lowest level of the bureaucracy. Providing alternative ideas, altering workflows and the like are rarely performed by the school heads and teachers and it takes research-based findings and strong political will to convince higher authorities in the department to change existing rules, regulations and procedures.

Table 5. Level of Transformational Leadership Practices of the School Heads along Challenging the Process

Challenging the Process	School Heads	Teachers	Combined
Challenges group members to try new things and consistently ask, "What can we learn?", and challenges the way we do things at work.	2.48 (M)	3.10 (M)	2.79 (M)
Is willing to experiment and take risks.	2.89 (M)	3.16 (M)	3.03 (M)
Seeks out challenging opportunities that test his/her skills and abilities.	3.04 (M)	3.03 (M)	3.04 (M)
Looks for ways to innovate and transform the organization.	3.70 (H)	3.47 (H)	3.59 (H)
Keeps updated on the most recent developments affecting our organization.	4.22 (VH)	4.21 (VH)	4.22 (VH)
Category Mean	3.27 (M)	3.39 (M)	3.33 (M)

**Level of Transformational Leadership Practices of the School Heads along Encouraging the Heart**

Table 6 shows that the *Transformational Leadership Practices of the School Heads along Encouraging the Heart* is very high ( $\bar{x}=4.46$ ). All the items along this dimension were rated in the same descriptive values by the school heads and teachers. Such indicates that they hold similar views in this respect. This finding implies that the school heads have very high practice in motivating the stakeholders especially in accomplishing extraordinary things in school through sheer hard work. They show optimism in the accomplishments of the stakeholders and they praise them for every significant contribution they share in realizing school goals. The study affirms the finding of Mora (2012) that an encouraging school leader has high

sense of motivation, trust and faith to his followers which consequently make the followers exceed their performance more than they are expected to.

The statement to which the school heads and teachers have "Very high" rating is *Actively looks for ways to reward/recognize teachers and students for a job well done* ( $\bar{x}=4.62$ ). Such finding shows that the school heads are able to implement reward and recognition programs which are essential in motivating teachers, students and other stakeholders for their significant performance and contributions for the betterment of the school. These may be monetary in nature or otherwise. With the Program on Awards and Incentives for Service Excellence (PRAISE) System of the DepEd, all officials and employees in the career and non-career service of the department are conferred

awards conducted during the formal or planned awarding ceremonies. This is done annually and the provision of awards and incentives is based on merit, innovative ideas and exemplary behavior. The result of the study strengthens the finding of Fuhrmann (2016) that institutional reward, recognition and motivational practices provide positive attitudes about job which cause job satisfaction among teachers and good learning outcomes among students. These practices motivate these individuals by changing the nature of work and learning hence, challenging them to develop their skills and talent that fulfill their potential.

The statement to which the school heads and teachers have the lowest rating but still of

high level is *Praises people for an outstanding effort and makes sure that the group is recognized for their contributions to the success of our projects* ( $\bar{x}=3.94$ ). Such finding suggests that the school heads show respect and admiration to teachers, students and other stakeholders by giving them a prize or a title or by praising them publicly. The high practice of the school heads in this regard can be attributed to the established reward and incentive system embedded in the DepEd which is regularly implemented at the school, division, region, and national levels. These awards are generally categorized as classroom awards, grade level awards, and special recognition as stipulated under DepEd Order No. 36 series 2016.

Table 6. Level of Transformational Leadership Practices of the School Heads along Encouraging the Heart

Encouraging the Heart	School Heads	Teachers	Combined
Takes the time to celebrate accomplishment when project milestones are reached.	4.85 (VH)	4.31 (VH)	4.58 (VH)
Praises people for an outstanding effort and makes sure that the group is recognized for their contributions to the success of our projects.	3.74 (H)	4.13 (H)	3.94 (H)
Actively looks for ways to reward/recognize teachers and students for a job well done.	4.89 (VH)	4.35 (VH)	4.62 (VH)
Readily tells others about the group's work and their achievements.	4.67 (VH)	4.37 (VH)	4.52 (VH)
Provides a team support and encourage a "one for all and all for one" attitude.	4.89 (VH)	4.33 (VH)	4.61 (VH)
Category Mean	4.61 (VH)	4.30 (VH)	4.46 (VH)

**Summary Table among Dimensions of Transformational Leadership**

Table 7 reveals that the *Transformational Leadership* of the school heads across all its dimensions is high ( $\bar{x}=3.92$ ). This finding implies that they have high ability and practice to induce stakeholders to accomplish certain goals that represent the values and motivations as well as the aspirations and expectations of the schools. This kind of leadership approach causes change in individuals and institutional goal. The transformational leadership in the DepEd may be reflected in the School-based Management Practice in which the school heads are focused on transforming others to support each other and the school as a whole.

By employing the SBM practice, stakeholders respond by feeling the trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect to their school heads and are more willing to work harder than originally expected. Such data affirms the finding that high practice of transformational leadership among school leaders results in teachers and students' empowerment. Teachers and students want to identify with school leaders who envision a desirable future, articulate how it can be reached, sets an example to be followed, set high standards of performance, and show determination and confidence thus displaying idealized influence and inspirational leadership (Bass, 2019). Also, the finding affirms that principals who exhibit transformational characteristics play a

major role in the fostering of conditions for school improvement by stimulating teachers' engagement in professional learning activities, which can impact student achievement (Jacobson, et al., 2015; Mulford et al., 2008; Murakami-Ramalho, et al., 2010).

The dimension which the school heads and teachers have rated "Very High" is *Encouraging the Heart* ( $\bar{x}$ -4.46). Such finding suggests that among the dimensions of transformational leadership, the school heads put primary emphasis on "encouraging the heart". Such dimension reveals their high ability and practice to pay attention, personalize recognition, relate stories about success and values and be an example for others to follow. Such finding solidifies earlier research which indicated that school heads who focus on personalizing recognition and put premium value on intrinsic and

extrinsic rewards drive employees towards higher productivity and performance. This is because employees place a high value on personalized, specific, and instant social rewards such as attention, recognition, and sincere appreciation (Luthans, 2015).

The dimension to which the school heads and teachers have the lowest rating and with moderate level is *Challenging the Process* ( $\bar{x}$ -3.33). Such finding connotes that the school heads occasionally practice the testing and refining ideas without fearing failure. In short, they do not often challenge the status quo through stepping back and assessing where they have rooms to grow and do things differently. This is due to the fact that the systems and procedures in the DepEd are institutionalized across the levels of bureaucracy.

Table 7. Summary Table among Dimensions of Transformational Leadership

<b>Transformational Leadership</b>	<b>School Heads</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Combined</b>
Modeling the Way	3.82 (H)	3.95 (H)	3.89 (H)
Enabling others to Act	3.61 (H)	3.95 (H)	3.78 (H)
Inspiring a Shared Vision	4.00 (H)	4.04 (H)	4.02 (H)
Challenging the Process	3.27 (M)	3.39 (M)	3.33 (M)
Encouraging the Heart	4.61 (VH)	4.30 (VH)	4.46 (VH)
Overall	3.75 (H)	3.97 (H)	3.92 (H)

**Level of School Performance Based on the School-Based Management Practice and Performance Improvement**

Table 8 shows that the majority of the schools in the City Division of La Union are in Maturing level (18 or 66.67%) of School-Based Management practice. It must be noted that the school performance in this study is based on the ratings obtained in the SBM compliance along its principles (40%) and Performance Improvement (60%). The maturing level of school performance among these schools suggests that the school heads have not only introduced but sustained the continuous improvement process in their schools that integrates

wider community participation and improve student learning outcomes. In short, the schools have planned practices and procedures which are fully implemented but still needing more improvement to the advanced stage.

The maturing level of the schools may be explained by the fact that some schools do not satisfy some indicators of the SBM validation instrument. One good example is the access indicator in which it is expected that each school has to have remarkable increases in enrollment each year. This does not happen because enrollment remain the same each year. Another concern is that some schools could hardly provide good documentation or packaging of all their

programs, projects and activities. Most schools do not have enough manpower to do such documentation and they are reliant on their teachers to perform this role on top of their instructional tasks and multiple designations and assignments. This finding corroborates with the study of Petingco (2019) who found that majority of elementary schools in the City Division of Cotabato, Philippines are in level 2 (maturing) SBM practice.

Meanwhile, the Developing (Level 1) of the five schools (18.52%) reveals that they are still starting to develop structures and mechanisms with acceptable level and that they have introduced the extent of community participation

and impact on the learning outcomes. Interestingly, these are schools located at the outskirts of the City Division of La Union which has small number of enrolments, teacher population, school building and facilities.

Finally, the Advanced (Level 3) of the four schools (14.81%) suggests that they have already ensured the production of intended outputs and outcomes and they met all standards of a system fully integrated in the local community and is self-renewing and self-sustaining. These are usually the central schools which have a greater number of teachers and administrative staff and are competitive in all contests in the division.

Table 8. Level of School Performance (SBM Principles plus Performance Improvement)

Numerical Rating Scale	Level of SBM Practice	Frequency (N=27)	Percent (100%)
0.50 - 1.49	Developing (Level 1)	5	18.52
1.50 - 2.49	Maturing (Level 2)	18	66.67
2.50 - 3.00	Advanced (Level 3)	4	14.81

**Level of Compliance and Practice to Performance Improvement (60%)**

Table 9 shows that the majority of schools have a good (22 or 81.48%) level of compliance and practice to the various indicators or criteria under Performance Improvement. This data suggests that the schools have average enrollment increase (i.e. % increase/decrease = 0); average dropout rate (at least 4% decrease); average completion rate (at least 3% increase); and average NAT/School MPS (51%-74% for School Year 2020-2021).

The good performance of the schools along performance improvement suggests that enhancement of the different indicators of this dimension is needed. This can be attributed to

the fact that percentage of enrollment can hardly be increased each year and that the national achievement scores of the student were low for the last three years during this rating period. It must be noted that the SY 2020-2021 coverage of the SBM rating in this study included the prior ratings from SY 2018 to SY 2021.

Interestingly, only five schools have obtained better performance and none of the schools obtained best performance along School Performance Improvement, respectively. This data means that only five schools have improved in performance improvement along all its performance and none of them have reached the best level.

Table 9. Level of School Performance along Performance Improvement (60%)

Numerical Rating Scale	Thematic Area	Frequency (N=27)	Percent (100%)
0.50 - 1.49	Good	22	81.48
1.50 - 2.49	Better	5	18.52
2.50 - 3.00	Best	0	0

**Level of Compliance and Practice to SBM Principles (40%)**

Table 10 presents that most of the schools are in the Better (18 or 66.67%) level of compliance and practice to SBM Principles such as

leadership, curriculum and learning, accountability and resource management. The data imply that in terms of leadership, the school heads have improved leadership that inspires and empowers for high achievement and

governance that fosters commitment, participation, informed decision making, and shared accountability. As regards curriculum and learning, the data suggest that the school leaders have improved ability to implement a research and experienced-based curriculum that meets national requirements, responds to local needs and expectations of its stakeholders uses innovative strategies to facilitate achievement for all learners. With respect to accountability, the school heads have better ability to implement a comprehensive quality assurance and accountability mechanisms based on clearly

stated mandate and expectations. Also, as regards to resource management, the data suggest that the schools are better provided with the resources necessary to implement the curriculum and the school management plan. All of these data coincide with the assertion of Caldwell (2014) that capacity building at the local level is one of the reasons for the effective implementation of SBM. Teachers, principals and other school leaders need to build their capacity to perform their new roles in the restructured school operation.

Table 10. Level of Compliance and Practice to SBM Principles (40%)

Numerical Rating Scale	Thematic Area	Frequency (N=27)	Percent (100%)
0.50 - 1.49	Good	5	18.52
1.50 - 2.49	Better	18	66.67
2.50 - 3.00	Best	4	14.81

### Comparison on the Ratings of Transformational Leadership between School Heads and Teachers

Table 11 indicates that there were no significant differences between school head and teachers on their ratings on transformational leadership ( $p > 0.05$ ) except for the domains "Enabling others to act" ( $z=-2.331$ ,  $p=0.020$ ) and "Encouraging the heart" ( $z=-3.508$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). The median rating of teachers is higher than the school heads on enabling others to act while the median rating of school heads is higher in encouraging the heart compared to the teachers' rating.

The high rating of teachers along the dimension "enabling others to act" suggests that among all the dimensions of transformational leadership, they perceive and feel that the school heads put emphasis in fostering

collaboration and in building spirited teams in their schools rather than the other dimensions of transformational leadership. In short, this is the dominant behavior of transformational leadership which they see among their school heads.

On the other hand, the high rating of school heads along the dimension "encouraging the heart" means that they perceive themselves to be more focused in motivating subordinates in accomplishing extraordinary things in the organization through hard work. This finding affirms the study of Northouse (2016), that utilizing transformational leadership particularly that on encouraging the heart motivates the subordinates and other stakeholders to accomplish more than what is usually expected of them.

Table 11. Comparison on the Ratings of Transformational Leadership between School Heads and Teachers

	School Head			Teacher			Z	p
	25th	Median	75th	25th	Median	75th		
Modeling the way	3.60	3.80	4.00	3.82	3.98	4.09	-1.562	0.118
Inspiring a shared vision	3.60	4.00	4.20	3.85	4.00	4.20	-0.296	0.767
Challenging the process	3.00	3.20	3.60	3.23	3.44	3.56	-1.382	0.167
Enabling others to act	3.20	3.60	4.00	3.71	3.97	4.19	-2.331	0.020
Encouraging the heart	4.60	4.60	4.80	4.12	4.29	4.53	-3.508	<0.001

	School Head			Teacher			Z	p
	25th	Median	75th	25th	Median	75th		
Leadership	3.76	3.88	3.96	3.79	3.88	4.11	-1.003	0.316

**Relationship between Transformational Leadership Practices and Profile of School Heads**

Table 12 shows that the school type had a significant relationship with the domain “encouraging the heart”,  $r_{rb} = -.389, p = .045$ . Specifically, school heads who are managing “Non-Central school” had a significantly lower scores in encouraging the heart compared to those who are in “Central school”. Other profile variables are not significantly related to transformational leadership,  $p > 0.05$ .

The higher scores of school heads coming from central schools along “Encouraging the heart” may be explained by the fact that they tend to pay attention, personalize recognition and attach rewards and recognition to job performance. It is a fact that central schools are more competitive than non-central schools in almost all academic and non-academic areas. This is not to mention that non-central schools which are located at the remote areas lack instructional facilities and books as well as less achieving students and teachers. As this

becomes evident, the school heads are more likely to give encouragement and motivation to achieve the goals set by the school. By encouraging their stakeholders through recognition and celebration, school heads from central schools have more likelihood to make their teachers, learners, and other stakeholders to feel that they are part of the group and part of something significant. This result is an affirmation of the finding that transformational leadership was positively related to school performance among urban and central schools. The cogent behind these reasons are the competitiveness and compelling vision of school leaders from urban and central schools which is not mostly reflected by the school leaders from rural and far-flung schools. This behavior of school leaders makes for an excellent performer and helps employees from the urban and premier schools to achieve their selected goal and make better achievements than their counterparts from the rural areas (Bunaiyan and McWilliams, 2018).

Table 12. Relationship between Transformational Leadership Practices and Profile of School Heads

Profile	Modeling the way		Inspiring a shared vision		Challenging the process		Enabling others to act		Encouraging the heart		Leadership	
	Coef	p	Coef	p	Coef	p	Coef	p	Coef	p	Coef	p
Age	-.0012	0.953	-.0048	0.811	0.157	0.433	-.0128	0.525	0.232	0.243	0.019	0.925
Sex	-.0046	0.821	-.0223	0.263	0.303	0.124	-.0263	0.185	-.0069	0.734	-.0217	0.276
Civil Status	0.083	0.681	-.0158	0.430	0.181	0.365	-.0026	0.898	0.249	0.211	0.022	0.913
Ethnicity	0.049	0.807	-.0167	0.404	0.020	0.922	-.0266	0.180	-.0187	0.350	-.0226	0.256
Religion	-.0134	0.506	0.121	0.549	0.107	0.595	0.013	0.947	0.040	0.842	0.107	0.595
Place of Residence	0.052	0.796	-.0229	0.250	0.151	0.452	0.135	0.501	-.0104	0.605	0.000	1.000
Education	-.0290	0.142	0.039	0.845	-.0025	0.900	0.261	0.188	-.0162	0.421	0.000	0.999
Plantilla Position	-.0057	0.776	-.0050	0.803	0.164	0.414	0.202	0.312	0.306	0.120	0.168	0.403



Profile	Modeling the way		Inspiring a shared vision		Challenging the process		Enabling others to act		Encouraging the heart		Leadership	
	Coef	p	Coef	p	Coef	p	Coef	p	Coef	p	Coef	p
Years as School Head	0.026	0.896	-0.093	0.646	0.215	0.281	-0.210	0.292	0.232	0.243	-0.011	0.955
School Size Managed	-0.106	0.598	0.018	0.928	0.225	0.260	-0.003	0.987	0.331	0.092	0.126	0.530
School Type	-0.011	0.955	-0.235	0.239	-0.069	0.734	-0.114	0.570	-0.389*	0.045	-0.240	0.228

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

**Relationship between School Heads' Transformational Leadership and Schools' Performance**

Table 13 presents that there was a significant positive correlation between the overall transformational leadership and school performance ( $r = .402, p = .038$ ). This data implies that higher scores in school heads' transformational leadership corresponds to higher scores in schools' performance. Thus, the more school heads practice transformational leadership, the higher is the school performance. This finding affirms the study that school leadership provided and/or shared by a school administrator is one of the key factors in enhancing school performances and student achievements (Aruzie, et. al. (2018). Also, it strengthens the research findings which found that school leaders who used transformational leadership did influence student achievement outcomes and school performance (Heck & Hallinger, 2014; Pan, et al, 2017; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015).

The specific leadership domains that are significantly related to the school performance are Inspiring a shared vision ( $r = .691, p < .001$ ) and Encouraging the heart ( $r = .388, p = .045$ ). With respect to inspiring a shared vision, the more the school heads passionately believe that they can make a difference in the development of their school assignment as well as in the lives of the students and teachers under their care, the higher is the school performance. As regards, the dimension "Encouraging the heart", the more the school heads are able to implement reward and recognition programs in their schools the higher is the school performance.

The domain "Inspiring a shared vision" also had a strong positive correlation with SBM practice ( $r = .590, p = .001$ ) and performance improvement ( $r = .693, p < .001$ ). The overall transformational leadership also had a significant positive correlation with performance improvement ( $r = .405, p = .036$ ). The positive correlation between the inspiring a shared vision and SBM practice means that the more the school heads passionately believe that they can make a difference in the development of their school assignment as well as in the lives of the students and teachers under their care, the higher is the leadership, curriculum and learning, accountability and resource management. Such finding strengthens the study that the principal's shared vision with the stakeholders has a substantial and direct effect on student achievement. In short, there is a direct correlation between the behavior of the principal in the school and the average academic achievement of student in the school to be (Marzano et al., 2005).

On the other hand, the significant relationship between inspiring a shared vision and performance improvement conveys that when school heads believe that they can make a difference in the development of their school assignment, the more they are able to influence enrolment increase, decrease dropout rate, increase completion rate, and increase National Achievement Test. Such finding supports the study that the domains of transformational leadership reflect the performance of the students in terms of Drop rate, Cohort survival rate, Completion rate and National Achievement Test (Buenvinida, 2019).

Table 13. Relationship between School Heads' Transformational Leadership and Schools' Performance

	Performance		SBM Practice		School Improvement	
	Coef	p	Coef	p	Coef	p
Modeling the way	.237	.233	.229	.250	.222	.266
Inspiring a shared vision	.691**	<0.001	.590**	.001	.693**	<.001
Challenging the process	-.213	.285	-.285	.149	-.152	.450
Enabling others to act	.331	.092	.322	.101	.308	.119
Encouraging the heart	.388*	.045	.351	.073	.378	.052
Leadership	.402*	.038	.340	.083	.405*	.036

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level; \* . Significant at 0.05 level

## Conclusion

The elementary schools in the Division of La Union City are compliant to DepEd Order No. 83, s. 2012. However, much is desired to elevate its compliance to advanced stage. Significantly, the high practice of transformational leadership and this is translated in the school improvement and performance marked by the introduction and sustained process of stakeholders' participation and significant students' learning outcomes. Remarkably, higher practice of transformational leadership among school heads yields higher school performance particularly along Inspiring a shared vision and Encouraging the heart. Thus, transformational leadership is an effective leadership approach in managing DepEd schools as it ushers significant changes and reforms in the development of schools and its stakeholders.

## Recommendation

In view of the foregoing findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are hereby presented:

1. The school heads in non-central schools need to focus on improving their practice of transformational leadership for them to be competitive with those assigned in the central schools;
2. DepEd Central, Regional, and Division Offices should strengthen the transformational leadership of the school heads through training and other capacity building activities through training since the study has shown its effectiveness in creating high school performance;
3. Inspiring a shared vision and Encouraging the heart must be given more emphasis in

using transformational leadership because they significantly influence school performance;

4. Through coaching and mentoring, the school heads in the Division of La Union City must further enhance their SBM practice (through coaching and mentoring) from maturing level to advance level to address higher school performance and improvement.
5. A similar study may be conducted in the Division of La Union particularly in the secondary level to have a complete picture of the SBM and school performance of DepEd schools.

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