



Instructional Leadership Capacity of School Heads as a Leading Construct of Teacher Leadership in Public Elementary Schools of Davao Del Norte Division

Maylanie D. Detalla*

The Rizal Memorial Colleges, Inc., Philippines

Abstract— This study uncovered the relationship between instructional leadership capacity of school heads and teacher leadership of public elementary teachers in Davao del Norte Division since it had never been explored specifically in the local setting. With the use of probability sampling, 150 elementary teachers in the public schools were selected as the respondents. Utilizing the descriptive-correlational survey method, the data collated were analyzed through the use of Mean and Product-Moment correlation. Results revealed that there was a very extensive instructional leadership capacity of school heads and an extensive teacher leadership. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between the two variables. Moreover, all domains of instructional leadership capacity of school heads were found to have significantly influenced teacher leadership. Based on the findings, it was further suggested that higher officials in the Department of Education and school heads may identify means on how to help teachers to be effective leaders in the teaching-learning processes. More so, future researchers may further explore the involved variables considering other factors and research methods.

Index Terms— Instructional leadership capacity, Teacher leadership, Descriptive correlation, Davao del Norte Division, Philippines.

1. Introduction

Teachers are leaders all day. They lead by example in the way they act, speak, and behave. They lead their students through challenging activities and rigorous learning. Then, they take on additional teacher leadership roles inside and outside the classroom. Activities, events, and extracurricular programs are what build positive school culture and often require additional leadership support from teachers. Endless academic and social opportunities for students within schools benefit from teacher initiative and leadership capabilities. In schools, there are always selfless teachers who support students at all costs. Trusted by students and staff alike, these teachers are known to make decisions based on students' needs. Their dedication to improve students' academic and social experiences is proven by their willingness to dedicate lunches and after-school hours with students to grow their activities and

programs. Unfortunately, teachers tend to become resistant to lead since it entails responsibilities.

In US, teachers have encountered challenges in accepting leadership roles. Lack of time and resources, difficulty balancing roles, frustrations, and burnout are barriers that many teachers leaders face [1]. Other factors that inhibit teacher leadership include poor relationships with peers or administration, poor communication, school climate, and resistance to change [2]. Researchers also commonly agreed on teacher leaders being chosen by principals, but some warn to use caution [3]. A lack of support and encouragement from school administrators and teaching colleagues often poses the biggest obstacles for teacher leaders. Lead teachers found that school norms of privacy and isolation made it difficult to foster collegiality and promote the sharing of ideas [4].

In the Philippines, the concept of teacher leadership still struggles to thrive in school organizations. Two phenomena that make it a challenge for teacher leadership to blossom: one is the traditional 'principal-oriented' nature of leadership that is heavily entrenched to its system and second, the lack of leadership training and the teacher classification that they follow. These conditions critically limit the role that teachers play in the school [5]. Teacher leadership in the country is evident through the multiple ancillary tasks that teachers need to handle. A person seeks for multiple ancillary functions only because of promotion. This underscores the potential negative impact on individual's job satisfaction, quality of living, and work performance [6].

In Mindanao, it was revealed that multiple ancillary functions of teachers is one of the problems encountered by schools in Davao Del Sur, Region XI [7]. He cited that teachers, while performing their main function as classroom adviser, are also given extra non-teaching functions called ancillary functions as their additional workload since there is a need to assign these teachers as subject area coordinators, grade level head, canteen manager, sports coordinator, SBM coordinator, club moderators, cluster subject area coordinator, coaches in different contests in cluster, division, regional and even at

*Corresponding author: benchomblero@gmail.com

national levels which resulted into poor performance of teachers as well as students. However, combining multiple ancillary function emphasized positive impacts on an individual's well-being. This also affects their leadership as a teacher [8].

In the Division of Davao del Norte, it was observed that teachers cannot fully perform their duties as leaders because of overwhelming tasks. More so, they were not properly guided in doing their other non-teaching responsibilities since everything has been entrusted to them. However, these circumstances were purely observation since the researcher had not come across a study about teacher leadership in the local context considering the instructional leadership capacity of school heads.

Given these situations, the researcher was compelled to explore the extent of instructional leadership capacity of school heads and teacher leadership specifically in the public elementary schools in Tagum del Norte Division. Furthermore, it investigated the correlation of the two variables. In this academic endeavor, the researcher shed light regarding instructional leadership capacity of school heads and teacher leadership. This undertaking hoped to provide insights to the policy makers in crafting policies, programs, interventions, projects, activities that would motivate all school leaders to be proactive in upgrading their instructional leadership which would pave a way on guiding teachers to be leaders on their own way.

The theory for this study was based primarily on the Instructional Leadership Model [9]. Instructional leadership is defined as the principals' behaviors aimed at promoting and improving the process of teaching and learning in schools involving teachers, students, parents, school planning, school management, school facilities and resources.

Based on this model, there are three dimensions in instructional leadership activities, namely determining school missions, managing instructional programs and creating school learning environment. While instructional leadership sub-dimensions in this model include eleven leadership functions, which include drawing on school goals, explaining school goals, supervising and evaluating teaching, coordinating curriculum, monitoring student progress, assure instructional time, maintaining learning support, providing incentives for teachers, enforcing academic standards, promote professional development and provide incentives for learning [10].

School leadership practices are among the key elements that contribute to the effectiveness of education change as well as external factors. The findings from previous studies show the importance of instructional leadership principals in managing change [11]. When education changes take place, instructional leaders with the help of teachers are responsible for achieving school academic goals and are willing to devote their efforts in implementing school changes with emphasis on pedagogical aspects, teaching methods, and learning to improve academic quality of the school. This suggests that school leaders act as instructional leaders to mobilize changes among teachers.

The role of instructional leadership is influential and relevant in managing education changes in the 21st-century towards preserving the quality of education in the country. Principals

can act as instructional leaders who prioritize teaching and learning in schools. School leadership practices are among the key elements that contribute to the effectiveness of education change as well as external factors. The findings from previous studies show the importance of instructional leadership principals in managing change [12].

Another theory that supported this study is the Four-Factor Model of Teacher Leadership [13]. The teacher leadership model combined several factors to measure the level of teacher leadership in schools. The first three factors were developed based on previous research [14]. The three-factor model formed a leadership dimension to explain teacher leadership. The first factor is Sharing Expertise (SE) that involves teachers' perception towards their pedagogical skills and classroom management, as well as teachers' willingness to share their expertise with colleagues [13]. The next factor is Sharing Leadership (SL) which refers to reciprocal relationships between the principal and the teachers in school.

There are two sub-factors for Sharing Leadership, which are Sharing Leadership Opportunities (SLO) and Sharing Leadership Engagement (SLE). The subfactor SLO depends on the principal's attitude in providing teachers with the opportunity to be involved in leadership practices in school. In contrast, SLE reflects the teachers' tendency to assume responsibilities and leadership tasks. The third factor is Supra Practitioner (SP) which refers to teachers' perceptions towards their willingness to perform tasks and responsibilities that transcend the roles assigned to them. Finally, the last element, which is Principal Selection (PS) focuses on the principal's control of teachers' participation in leadership activities [13].

2. Methodology

A. Research Design

This study employed a descriptive correlational technique in its quantitative research methodology. In descriptive research, the study's variables remain unchanged by the researcher. It described the variables' natures that are at play [15]. A correlational investigation, on the other hand, ascertains whether or not two variables are associated. This refers to determining if an increase or decrease in one variable causes an equivalent rise or fall in the other [16].

This study was categorized as quantitative since it relied on numerical data for data analysis and interpretation. It was descriptive since its goal was to evaluate the instructional leadership capacity of school heads and teacher leadership. This academic endeavor was also correlational because it evaluated the relationship between instructional leadership capacity of school heads and teacher leadership of public elementary teachers in Davao del Norte Division

B. Research Respondents

There were 150 public elementary teachers who were invited to answer and be part of this study. In fact, 50-100 samples were considered for simple regression analysis. Hence, the 150 samples were more than enough for the intention of this study [17].

In the inclusion and exclusion criteria, elementary teachers with 3 years teaching experience were chosen in this endeavor since their 3 years stay in the public school would help them to assess the instructional leadership capacity of their school heads and how did it influence teacher leadership. Respondents who felt awkward and uncomfortable in answering the survey questionnaire were free to withdraw from their participation. They were not forced to be part of the study. Their decision to withdraw was respected. Apparently, the respondents' welfare was given utmost importance in the conduct of the study.

C. Research Instruments

As to the form of gathering data, this study utilized an adapted survey questionnaire. The questionnaire that was employed in this undertaking was divided into two sets. The first set was focusing on the instructional leadership capacity of school heads while the second set was about teacher leadership.

The instructional leadership capacity questionnaire consisted of 19 items [18]. It had the following indicators, namely: assessment of learning (1-5), developing programs and/or adopting existing programs (1-4), implementing programs for instructional improvement (1-5), and instructional supervision (1-5). The questionnaire was subjected to a pilot testing having a result of .72 suggesting that the items have relatively *high* internal consistency.

The teacher leadership questionnaire had a total of 31 items [19]. It had seven variables, namely: school culture (1-6), teacher leadership work (1-8), teacher leadership demand (1-6), and teacher leader supply (1-11). The questionnaire was subjected to a pilot testing having a result of .74 suggesting that the items have relatively *high* internal consistency.

The instruments in this study were contextualized to achieve the purpose of this study. The researcher integrated all the comments and suggestions of the adviser, panel members and expert validators for the refinement of the tools and to achieve construct validity.

Table 1 provides the summary on the extent of instructional leadership capacity of school heads. It is exhibited that the overall mean of instructional leadership capacity of school heads is 4.26, which is in a very extensive level. This means that instructional leadership capacity of school heads is always evident.

Data show that all four (4) indicators are in varying results ranging from very extensive to extensive level. As arranged chronologically, instructional supervision has the highest mean score (4.46). This is followed by implementing programs for instructional improvement (4.27), assessment of learning (4.17), and developing programs and/or adopting existing programs (4.14).

The comprehensive analysis of the results reveals a diverse spectrum of effectiveness across four key indicators, ranging

from very extensive to extensive levels. In chronological order, instructional supervision emerges as the top-performing indicator underscoring a commendable proficiency in overseeing and enhancing teaching practices. Following closely is the implementation of programs for instructional improvement indicating a proactive commitment to advancing the quality of education. The assessment of learning comes next with showcasing a consistent dedication to evaluating and refining educational outcomes. Lastly, developing programs and/or adopting existing programs secures a commendable result emphasizing a strategic approach to curriculum development. These findings collectively suggest a well-rounded and effective approach to educational leadership, with instructional supervision taking precedence, and an overarching commitment to continuous improvement and student assessment.

With the very extensive instructional leadership capacity of school heads, this reaffirmed the widely held belief that managing the instructional program, defining the school's vision, mission, and goals, and creating a positive school atmosphere are central to instructional leadership. An instructional leader, as the head of the institution, must redefine their role and become a lifelong learner in a quest for educational excellence. This represents a significant departure from the traditional administrative responsibilities of a school head. Collaborating with teachers to manage the educational program becomes the primary focus. Instructional leaders can support the growth of their staff by leveraging their strengths and addressing their weaknesses [20].

In the same vein, it was emphasized that the head of an educational institution carries numerous responsibilities towards the community, parents, teachers, and students. Teachers in particular need an encouraging, energizing, and knowledgeable leader in the classroom. Effective principals possess a range of leadership philosophies and practices. Instructional leadership involves establishing and communicating clear objectives for teachers and students, as well as providing support through coaching, mentoring, and professional development. When principals adopt an instructional leadership role, student achievement improves. Therefore, effective instructional leaders can enhance student achievement and improve educational experiences within their schools [21].

In addition, instructional leaders are responsible for setting clear objectives, allocating resources to education, overseeing the curriculum, reviewing lesson plans, and evaluating teachers. School principals must possess the necessary theoretical knowledge, skills, experience, and receive ongoing training in school leadership and administration to fulfill these responsibilities [22].

Table 1
Summary on the extent of instructional leadership capacity of school heads

No.	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1	Assessment of Learning	4.17	Extensive
2	Developing Programs and/or Adopting Existing Programs	4.14	Extensive
3	Implementing Programs for Instructional Improvement	4.27	Very Extensive
4	Instructional Supervision	4.46	Very Extensive
Overall		4.26	Very Extensive

Table 2
Summary on the extent of teacher leadership

No.	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1	School Culture	4.17	Extensive
2	Teacher Leadership Work	3.49	Extensive
3	Teacher Leadership Demand	4.17	Extensive
4	Teacher Leader Supply	3.64	Extensive
Overall		3.88	Extensive

Table 3
Significance of the relationship between the extent of instructional leadership capacity of school heads and teacher leadership

Instructional Leadership Capacity of School Heads Indicators	Dependent Variable	r-value	p-value	Decision on Ho
Assessment of Learning	Teacher Leadership	0.526	0.000	Rejected
Developing Programs and/or Adopting Existing Programs		0.515	0.000	Rejected
Implementing Programs for Instructional Improvement		0.520	0.000	Rejected
Instructional Supervision		0.518	0.000	Rejected
Overall		0.520*	0.000	Rejected

*Significant at 0.05 significance level

Table 2 provides the summary on the extent of teacher leadership. It is exhibited that the overall mean of teacher leadership is 3.88, which is in an extensive level. This means that teacher leadership is oftentimes evident.

Data show that all four (4) indicators are in an extensive level. As arranged chronologically, school culture and teacher leadership demand have the highest mean score (4.17). This is followed by teacher leadership supply (3.64), and teacher leadership work (3.49).

The comprehensive analysis of the results reveals a noteworthy and extensive presence of teacher leadership within the educational context. The data further indicates that all four indicators are consistently at an extensive level, emphasizing the pervasive nature of teacher leadership across various dimensions. These findings collectively affirm the substantial and frequently evident role of teacher leadership as a driving force in shaping the educational landscape and addressing the diverse demands within the profession.

The favorable findings of this study supported the findings that teacher leadership is really a collective effort that empowers teachers to make positive contributions to the school community while establishing expectations for all teachers [23]. Promoting teacher leadership programs can aid in recruiting, motivating, and rewarding accomplished teachers [24].

Furthermore, training teacher leaders is necessary for teachers to understand the informal and formal responsibilities of the teacher-leader role. Training can encourage teachers' willingness to initiate positive changes in their schools. Teacher leadership programs must nurture the development of confidence and the desire of teachers to move outside their comfort zone and embrace the idea of exerting influence on school reform [25].

Presented in Table 3 are the data on the significance of the relationship between instructional leadership capacity of school heads and teacher leadership. Reflected in the hypothesis, the relationship was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The overall r-value of .520 with a p-value of <0.05 signified the rejection of the null hypothesis. It means that there is a significant relationship between instructional leadership capacity of school heads and teacher leadership. This shows that instructional leadership capacity of school heads is correlated with teacher leadership.

Doing a pairwise correlation among the measures of both variables, it can be gleaned that assessment of learning, developing programs and/or adopting existing programs, implementing programs for instructional improvement, and instructional supervision revealed computed r-values of 0.526, 0.515, 0.520, and 0.518 respectively with p-values which are less than 0.05 in the level of significance. This implies that as assessment of learning, developing programs and/or adopting existing programs, implementing programs for instructional improvement, and instructional supervision increases, the teacher leadership increases.

The results suggest a significant correlation between the instructional leadership capacity of school heads and teacher leadership within the educational setting. These findings imply a positive relationship, indicating that as the effectiveness of assessment of learning, the strategic development of programs, the implementation of instructional improvement initiatives, and the quality of instructional supervision increase, there is a corresponding increase in teacher leadership. This correlation underscores the interconnectedness of instructional leadership and teacher leadership, emphasizing the role of school heads in influencing and fostering teacher leadership within the educational context.

The result is in consonance to a particular study revealing that the instructional leader's task of managing the instructional program focuses on supervision and evaluation of instruction, coordination of curriculum and monitoring of student progress which are crucial functions for an effective school. This component of instructional leadership involves the school leader's contribution to instructional practices including the provision of necessary resources required by teachers to cater for students learning and improvement. Additionally, instructional leaders set high standards and expectations to ensure that a positive learning climate is established in the school. Likewise, they make sure that instructional time is protected and professional development is supported. The presence and visibility of the school leader impacts the school learning climate indirectly effecting student achievement [26].

Similarly, it was claimed that instructional leadership practices focused staff on teaching and learning, inspired teacher belief in the achievement of all students, built teacher capacity and commitment to change, provided practical assistance in developing faculty knowledge and instructional

skills, and created school conditions for teacher potential to meet the needs of all students. Instructional leadership, principal self-efficacy, and collective teacher efficacy were found to have statistically significant relationships as practices within a school that can be changed to potentially raise student learning and lead to school improvement [27].

It was emphasized that principals, by title and position, serve as the individuals who provide direction, influence, and support to teachers, staff, and students, and many often consider principals the primary leaders of their schools. Yet, a principal is not the sole influencer of a school. In fact, the idea of instructional leadership extends to others like teacher leaders, instructional coaches, and assistant principals [28].

3. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were offered:

The extent of instructional leadership capacity of school heads implies that it is always evident. In fact, implementing programs for instructional improvement and instructional supervision are always evident from the school heads while assessment of learning and developing programs and/or adopting existing programs are oftentimes evident.

Meanwhile, the extent of teacher leadership is extensive. Apparently, all indicators are found to be oftentimes evident specifically on school culture, teacher leadership at work, teacher leadership demand, and teacher leader supply.

Based on the findings, instructional leadership capacity of school heads and teacher leadership are related. All domains of instructional leadership capacity of school heads are linked to the teacher leadership.

4. Recommendations

The following suggestions were offered based on the conclusions of the study:

Given the very extensive instructional leadership capacity of school heads and the extensive manifestation of teacher leadership within the educational landscape, it is recommended that DepEd officials capitalize on these strengths to further enhance the overall effectiveness of the educational system. Encouraging collaborative initiatives that leverage the proficiency of school heads in instructional leadership can foster an even more supportive and innovative learning environment. Additionally, acknowledging and promoting teacher leadership through targeted professional development programs and recognition mechanisms can empower educators to play a more active role in shaping and refining educational practices. By capitalizing on these existing strengths, DepEd officials may have an opportunity to cultivate a more dynamic and collaborative educational ecosystem, ultimately contributing to sustained improvements in teaching and learning outcomes.

Moreover, in light of the very extensive instructional leadership capacity of school heads and the extensive presence of teacher leadership, it is recommended that school heads continue to prioritize and strengthen their collaborative efforts

with teachers. Building on the demonstrated proficiency in instructional leadership, school heads may actively engage teachers in decision-making processes, allowing them to contribute to curriculum development, instructional strategies, and school-wide initiatives. Encouraging and formally recognizing teacher leadership can further amplify the positive impact on school culture and performance. Additionally, fostering a culture of continuous professional development for both school heads and teachers will ensure that their leadership skills remain sharp and adaptable to evolving educational needs.

Furthermore, with the recognition of the very extensive instructional leadership capacity of school heads and the extensive prevalence of teacher leadership, it is suggested that teachers actively embrace and contribute to the collaborative leadership culture within the school. Teachers may capitalize on the opportunities presented by school heads to engage in decision-making processes, offering insights into curriculum development, instructional strategies, and professional development initiatives. By leveraging their leadership potential, teachers may play a pivotal role in shaping the educational landscape, contributing to a dynamic and thriving learning environment that benefits both students and the broader school community.

Lastly, for future researchers, the findings highlighting the very extensive instructional leadership capacity of school heads and the extensive teacher leadership present an opportune area for in-depth exploration and nuanced investigation. It is recommended that future research may delve into the specific strategies employed by school heads to cultivate such extensive instructional leadership and how these strategies translate into enhanced teacher leadership. Considering the evolving landscape of education, future research may explore innovative approaches to further enhance instructional leadership and teacher leadership within the context of emerging educational paradigms and technological advancements.

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