

Transformational Leadership of School Heads in Public Elementary Schools in Bacolod City, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Addressing the nation's educational problems requires research on transformational leadership approaches in the Philippines. This study aims to provide information to help the education system develop efficient policies and interventions by recognizing context-specific variations among different schools. The focus is on measuring the extent of transformational leadership practices of school heads in public elementary schools in District V of the Division of Bacolod City. Using random sampling, 175 respondents were identified. The study employed descriptive and comparative research designs, utilizing an adapted, validated, and reliable survey questionnaire. Findings indicated that school heads were perceived to exhibit high level of transformational leadership, with Master Teachers and Grade 2 Teachers rating them very highly. The study concluded that there were no significant differences in leadership practices based on variables such as length of service, teaching position, marital status, and grade level taught. Generally, elementary school teachers assessed their school heads as transformational leaders. Supporting and developing transformational leadership among school heads is identified as a critical strategy for enhancing educational quality and overall school effectiveness. Transformational leaders are adept at identifying and meeting the unique needs of teachers, thereby increasing retention and job satisfaction. Such leadership fosters an environment conducive to learning and boosts teacher motivation. When school heads demonstrate transformational leadership qualities, they positively impact teacher morale and commitment. It is recommended to develop a training program and School Learning Action Cell (SLAC) sessions. These will guide school heads in implementing transformational leadership within their institutions, benefiting both teachers and students.

Keywords. Keywords: transformational leadership, school heads, descriptive, comparative, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Transformational leadership has become the most influential leadership philosophy in the past 20 years, significantly influencing employee and organizational performance and growth, especially in challenging environments (Buil et al., 2019). The productivity of a team and the minds of its members are greatly influenced by the actions and disposition of its leader (Menon, 2023). Job satisfaction, including workload, salary, and work culture, indicates strong motivation, maximizing employees' performance and positively impacting the company's performance (Lantu & Irfana, 2019). According to recent theoretical advancements and empirical research, leadership styles significantly impact both individual and organizational performance, for instance, organizational citizenship, satisfaction, and performance (Aboramadan et al., 2020; Lai et al., 2020; Tian et al., 2020). This leadership style emphasizes interpersonal interaction, meeting needs, encouraging, and providing a moral framework. It is crucial in educational institutions to build relationships, influence performance, and promote. Idealized influence is critical, inspiring subordinates to prioritize collective goals over personal interests. This leadership style is prevalent

in developing countries with high educational status, like Finland and the United States (Firmansyah et al., 2022; Hall, 2020; Leithwood et al., 2019; Kadiyono et al., 2020; Lusiani et al., 2020; Sabaruddinsah & Asiah, 2022; Newton et al., 2023). Several studies show that transformational leadership influences teacher performance. (Kartika et al., 2022; Muliati et al., 2022; Saptono et al., 2021)

Enhancing education in the Philippines and making it equitable, resilient, and flexible to the rapidly shifting global environment can be achieved by implementing transformational leadership across various educational programs (Sarong, 2023). Evaluating the leadership abilities of school heads is essential for fostering collaboration between educational authorities, teachers, students, parents, and the community (Pedroso et al., 2021). Transformational leadership practices significantly enhance student outcomes and institutional effectiveness, leading to higher engagement, academic achievement, and overall performance. It underscores the significance of effective leadership in driving educational excellence and societal development in the Philippines (Uy et al., 2024). Visionary leaders guide institutions toward long-term progress and educational change, enhancing effectiveness through adaptation, technology use, and diverse stakeholder needs. (Koh et al., 2019; Lipat, 2019; Zahari et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2019; Pagaura, 2022; Sarong, 2023).

Nevertheless, more in-depth research is needed to assess effective leadership practice strategies, regardless of whether the principal's leadership styles promote growth in dedication towards self, student, and institutional development (Kareem et al., 2023). In addition, Wang et al. (2019) emphasize the need for further research on the effectiveness of transformational leadership in different cultural settings, highlighting its influence on organizational norms and values.

Research on transformational leadership practices in the Philippines is crucial for addressing educational challenges. Understanding context-specific differences across schools is essential for developing effective policies and interventions in the education system. Understanding the long-term impact of transformational leadership on the school environment is also essential. Generally, this study aims to identify the extent of the practice of transformational leadership of school heads in public elementary schools. It is on this premise that the researcher opted to pursue this study so that the result can be used as the basis for developing a training program and school learning action cell (SLAC) sessions that will guide school heads to implement transformational leadership in their institutions to promote quality education.

FRAMEWORK

This study was anchored on the Transformational Leadership Theory. The phrase “transformational leadership” was first used by James Downton (1973). Transformational leadership is a leadership theory where a leader works with team members outside their self-interests to identify and implement necessary reforms, guiding change through influence, encouragement, and collaboration with dedicated group members, enhancing their maturity, ideologies, and concerns for accomplishment. The first indicator of a transformational leader's effectiveness is how much of an impact they have on their followers. Furthermore, this leader inspires followers to devise novel and inventive methods to question existing conditions and modify the surroundings that encourage achievement. Bass (1985) and Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) based the six critical components of transformational leadership on Downton's theory. They determined these into professional interaction, individual support, intellectual stimulation, participatory decision-making, articulating the school's vision and goals, and moral perspective (Enceria, 2014). It has been established that transformational leadership is a leadership style that positively impacts various organizational outcomes. Also, it has been linked to the effectiveness of leaders, work performance, and organizational behavior (Koo & Lee, 2021; Majeed & Jamshed, 2021).

Hence, empirical research indicates that leaders who consistently apply one or more transformational

leadership components significantly enhance the probability that they will inspire people to go beyond their initial goals and frequently surpass their expectations. They usually do better work and have more demanding standards. By selecting suitable approaches and styles of leadership, they can design work environments that provide employees with mildly challenging pressures. It is advisable to minimize the challenging factors present in the workplace that may cause employees to experience challenges and pressures (Lin et al., 2020).

Additionally, Yateno (2020) stated that organizational commitment is an active connection in which workers are prepared to sacrifice everything for the organization to help it accomplish its objectives and continue operating, as opposed to the passive allegiance of organizational employees. Furthermore, Horacio, Djaha, and Nursalam (2019) stated that human resources are crucial in government and private organizations, driving their operations and playing a critical role.

This study examines twokey areas: the extent of school heads' transformational leadership practices, and the impact in demographic variables (length of service, teaching position, marital status, and grade level). The findings will inform the development of programs to help school administrators enhance productivity through transformational leadership. The proposed training program for public school teachers in District V, Bacolod City, will be integrated into Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions. These sessions will feature activities and collaborative efforts tailored by the school head to address teachers' needs.

METHODS

This chapter presents the varied research methodologies used in this study. These include the research design, research locale, respondents, data-gathering instrument, validity and reliability of the instruments, data-gathering procedure, and statistical tools.

This study employed a descriptive and comparative research design. According to Shuttleworth (2019), descriptive research design is a scientific method that requires observing and describing a subject's behavior without influencing it. The descriptive approach in this study is to examine the extent of transformational leadership by the school head according to their demographic profile, such as length of service, teaching position, marital status, and grade level, and the relationship between those variables.

A comparative research design determines and compares the results between two or more groups that continue to exist in the given situation. (Devi, 2022). This research design aims to compare the significant differences between transformational leadership according to the demographic profile of the respondents.

The study was conducted in one hundred seventy-five (175) elementary public school teachers in District V in the Division of Bacolod City for the academic year 2023-2024. The respondents were permanent or regular teaching personnel, regardless of their position. District V is composed of seven (7) elementary schools and has 7 school heads located in Bacolod City and is under the province of Negros Occidental. Respondents from the seven districts' schools were selected through random sampling to achieve a representative distribution, ensuring each teacher had an equal chance of being included in the sample.

The research instrument is a survey questionnaire that aims to measure the extent of the public school teachers' transformational leadership of school heads. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part of the survey is the respondents' profiles, such as tenure of service, teaching position, marital status, and grade level taught. The second part of the survey is about the extent of the practice of transformational leadership of the school heads as assessed by their teachers. It is adapted from the Principal Leadership Questionnaire designed by Leithwood et al. (1996) and developed by Enceria Damanik (2014). They created the PLQ to create and partially evaluate a theoretical explanation of how teachers see transformational education leadership in their school heads. It is a 48-item questionnaire rated on a four-

point Likert scale (“almost always” to “never”).

Various statistical tools were employed to analyze the specific questions. Mean and standard deviation were used to measure the extent of school heads’ transformational leadership. Respondents were identified using random sampling. In addition, Mann-Whitney and Kruskal Wallis were used to find the significant difference between the extent of the practice of transformational leadership of school heads when grouped and compared according to the length of service, teaching position, marital status, and grade level taught.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter illustrates the data gathered to answer the questions of this study. The analyses, interpretations, and discussions were presented to provide a clear understanding of the data.

This study aimed to determine the extent of practice of transformational leadership of school heads. It also seeks to determine the significant differences in transformational leadership based on variables such as length of service, teaching position, marital status, and grade level taught.

Table 1. Extent of Practice of Transformational Leadership of School Heads

Variable Grouping	Mean	SD	Interpretation
As a whole	4.30	0.65	High
Length of Service			
Shorter (9yrs & below)	4.53	0.72	High
Longer (10yrs & above)	4.32	0.59	High
Teaching Position			
Teacher Position (T1-T3)	4.28	0.66	High
Master Teacher	4.55	0.55	Very High
Marital Status			
Single	4.37	0.63	High
Married	4.26	0.67	High
Other	4.47	0.48	High
Grade Level Taught			
Kinder	4.19	0.59	High
Grade 1	4.21	0.73	High
Grade 2	4.61	0.52	Very High
Grade 3	4.34	0.56	High
Grade 4	4.45	0.48	High
Grade 5	4.30	0.68	High
Grade 6	4.30	0.65	High

Results showed that when taken as a whole, elementary school teachers assessed their school heads as practicing a “high” extent of transformational leadership, given a mean of 4.30 and a standard deviation of 0.65. The general extent of elementary teachers conveys that the elementary teacher positively or highly regards their heads as transformational leaders.

It was supported by the study of Sholikhah and Purwanta (2020), which states that principals are highly transformational. The principal, a transformational leader with noble values like religion, discipline, and

independence, contributes to the school's vision, mission, goals, and programs by developing curriculum, preparing infrastructure, and collaborating with assistant teachers and student guardians. It allows for creative problem-solving, thinking outside the box, and strong imagination in achieving school goals (Malik, 2022).

Furthermore, according to the research, school heads have demonstrated a high degree of transformational leadership in terms of professional and values growth. It is a positive sign that school administrators support teacher professional development and values development, both aimed at improving the educational system (Badato, 2020). In addition, Manongsong (2019) stated that teacher respondents gave the school head's transformational leadership style an "excellent" rating regarding idealistic influence, inspirational motivation, individualized concern, and indicators of intellectual stimulation.

It implies that elementary school teachers highly value transformational leadership, marked by a strong vision, collaboration, and innovative problem-solving. This passionate and committed leadership style contributes to school success and long-term improvements. Teachers believe their principals effectively implement these practices, aligning with studies indicating their effectiveness in achieving school success.

Moreover, table 1 results showed that when grouped according to length of service, teaching position, marital status, and grade level taught, both groups of teachers perceive their school heads' transformational leadership as high regardless of their length of service. Also, in the teaching position, master teachers rate their school heads' transformational leadership higher than teachers in positions T1-T3, with a "very high" interpretation. Additionally, marital status categories rate the school heads' transformational leadership as high, with the "Other" category showing the highest mean. For the grade level taught, teachers across all grade levels perceive their school heads' transformational leadership as high, with Grade 2 teachers rating it as "very high."

The table implies that elementary school teachers, irrespective of their length of service, teaching position, marital status, or grade level taught, generally perceive their school heads as transformational leaders. Master teachers and Grade 2 teachers, in particular, perceive their school heads' transformational leadership exceptionally well.

Master teachers highly perceive the school head's transformational leadership due to their direct reporting relationship. In the Philippine educational system, school heads are the highest-ranking administrators in elementary or high schools, supervising master teachers and other staff. They are responsible for the overall operation of a school (Boga, 2019). Estacio (2022) suggests that in an era of shared decision-making and site-based management, school heads include various administrators and leaders, such as assistant principals, head teachers, and master teachers, all playing crucial roles in achieving school objectives.

School heads adopt a transformational leadership style to improve school setups, focusing on moral and ethical commitment, student well-being, and maintaining proximity to improve performance (Rehman, 2019). Bouchamma et al. (2021) affirmed that higher grade levels positively impact practices and attitudes, teacher professional development, transformational leadership, and reduce injustice among human capital factors. Additionally, transformational leadership significantly impacts teaching and learning outcomes in Grade 2 teachers, with effective practices like clear goals, professional development, and support enhancing teaching effectiveness and student achievement (Aureada, 2021).

This result implies that transformational leadership by school heads is highly valued across various teacher demographics, with particularly very high ratings from Master Teachers and Grade 2 teachers. This leadership style fosters a positive educational environment and enhances teaching and learning outcomes, underscoring its importance in effective school management.

Table 2. Significant Difference in the Extent of Practice of Transformational Leadership of School according to length of service and teaching position

Variable Grouping	n	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann-Whitney U	P-value	Significance at $\alpha = 0.05$	Decision
Length of Service							
Shorter (9&below)	82	89.52	7340.50	3688.50	0.705	Not Significant	Do not
Longer(10&above)	93	86.66	8059.90				Reject H ₀
Teaching Position							
T1 – T3	161	86.53	13931.50	890.50	0.186	Not Significant	Do not
Master Teacher	14	104.89	1468.50				Reject H ₀

Table shows that the computed value showed no significant difference when teachers were grouped according to length of service ($p=0.705$) and teaching position ($p=0.186$), which failed to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted, stating that no significant difference exists in the extent of transformational leadership among teachers when grouped according to these variables. These findings favor the idea that regardless of the length of service and teaching position of the elementary teachers, their assessment of the extent of transformational leadership practice of the school heads does not significantly vary or appears to be almost of the same extent or weight.

It was affirmed by the study of Morales (2022), which stated that transformational leadership and length of service are the same. It implies that assessment in transformational leadership remains the same when teachers are grouped according to the length of service. In addition, a study by Thanh and Quang (2022) supported this result by stating that the evaluation of public sector employees' work performance and their leadership style scores do not differ statistically significantly, according to transformational leadership and job position analysis.

However, Bulilan (2023) negated that transformational leadership style directly influences the length of service and current position. Furthermore, the length of service implies job satisfaction and effectiveness and efficiency in their jobs. More extended work experience is associated with higher expectations for their work performance and greater job satisfaction (Maruhom et al., 2024). It validates the result of the study of Baba (2019) that designation and experience significantly influence perceptions of transformational leadership, making individuals more critical of the type of leadership a leader possesses based on their employment status, service length, and current position.

It implies that teachers' perceptions of transformational leadership among school heads are consistent, regardless of their teaching experience or position. It suggests that teachers view their school heads' leadership practices similarly, indicating a potentially practical and uniformly applied leadership style. Designations within the school, such as being a master teacher, can also shape how transformational leadership is perceived, as these roles may interact with leadership in unique ways. Additionally, teachers' individual experiences within the school and in their careers can color their perceptions of leadership effectiveness. However, the study suggests that other factors, like designation and experience, can significantly influence how transformational leadership is perceived in different settings. Therefore, while the findings hold for this study, other factors may influence how transformational leadership is perceived in different settings.

Table 3. Significant Difference in the Extent of Practice of Transformational Leadership of School Heads according to marital status and grade level taught

Variable Grouping	n	Mean Rank	df	χ^2	P-value	Significance at $\alpha = 0.05$	Decision
Marital Status							
Single	46	92.75	2	1.694	0.429	Not Significant	Do not
Married	120	85.03					Reject H _o
Other	9	103.33					
Grade Level Taught							
Kinder	11	79.5	6	11.264	0.081	Not Significant	Do not
Grade 1	26	82.31					Reject H _o
Grade 2	21	112.43					
Grade 3	27	89.93					
Grade 4	30	96.42					
Grade 5	29	67.98					
Grade 6	31	88.15					

In addition, table 3 showed the results in the extent of practice of transformational leadership of school heads as assessed by the elementary school teachers when further grouped as to marital status ($p=0.429$), and grade level taught ($p=0.081$). The study found no significant differences in marital status and grade level taught among elementary teachers based on marital status or grade level taught. The p-values indicate no statistically significant differences in distributions across different groups, indicating that the null hypothesis cannot be rejected for either variable grouping.

Hence, Maruhom et al. (2024) and Morales (2022) in their study affirmed that marital status have no direct influence on the perceived transformational leadership styles of the respondents. Furthermore, this is supported by the findings of Skelton (2019) stated that the study found no significant difference in perceived principal instructional leadership functions or grade level teaching. On the contrary, in the study of (Russel, 2024) stated that there are significant differences between the grade levels according to the study of which stated that in his distinct focus study indicates that teachers at this grade level place a high importance on school leaders' active involvement with pupils as well as their physical presence.

In addition, it was revealed that demographic characteristics marital status and grade level taught of the teachers had little bearing on how school heads executed leadership styles. Similarly, the study uncovered that marital status do not bring differences in teachers' commitment level. The study revealed that teachers in the various departments (kindergarten, primary, and intermediate) have similar commitment level (Boye, 2023).

It implies that since the study found no significant differences in the perceived practice of transformational leadership by school heads based on marital status or grade level taught, it suggests that effective leadership is shaped by individual capabilities and professional settings. However, grade levels may have different expectations. Universal skills should be the primary objective of effective leadership development, and competence should be prioritized over personal characteristics during the hiring process. Policies should comprehensively assist school administrators, and further study should look into other aspects that affect a leader's effectiveness. Leadership training can be designed to meet the specific demands of various grade levels by understanding their particular needs. Additionally, school leaders may adapt to the changing educational context by fostering a culture of continuous learning and adaptability.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings suggest that transformational leadership is highly valued and positively perceived by elementary school teachers in Bacolod City. This leadership style, characterized by a strong vision, collaboration, and innovative problem-solving, contributes significantly to school success and long-term improvements in the educational environment. The study indicates that teachers perceive their school heads as successfully implementing these practices.

The study also suggests that elementary teachers perceive their school heads as transformational leaders regardless of their demographics, such as length of service, teaching position, marital status, or grade level taught. It implies a consistent and practical application of transformational leadership across various teacher profiles.

This consistency suggests that effective leadership is shaped by individual capabilities and professional settings rather than personal demographics. It underscores the importance of nurturing and developing transformational leadership qualities among school heads through targeted training and support programs. Such initiatives could further enhance school effectiveness and foster a positive educational environment conducive to both teacher and student success.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This research, as per this investigation, recommends the following:

To the district supervisor, it may be beneficial to design workshops and training sessions to adopt the transformational style of leadership in order to improve school heads' leadership skills, as it is perceived that there are variations in the school heads' leadership interaction per grade level.

In addition to the school heads, it may be recommended that a system of regular feedback and coaching, such as school learning action cell (SLAC) sessions, be implemented to support teachers' growth and development.

Furthermore, master teachers may help new teachers and their colleagues improve their practice of transformational leadership by providing technical assistance during School Learning Action Cell (SLAC) sessions and classroom observations.

Moreover, to the teacher, collaborating with colleagues in collaborative learning communities can benefit teachers as it allows them to exchange ideas, resources, and best practices. Collaborative learning promotes professional growth, innovation, and collective problem-solving. Additionally, teachers may engage in continuous professional development to enhance teaching skills, stay updated on best practices, and incorporate new instructional strategies and technologies into teaching practices to improve their learners' academic performance.

Therefore, future researchers should conduct follow-up studies to explore this context further. They should also investigate different leadership philosophies and how they impact teachers' performance at work. Additionally, conducting the study in private and secondary schools may provide valuable insights.

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