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Shared Leadership of School Heads and Teacher Empowerment in Public Elementary Schools in Davao Del Norte Division

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A B S T R A C T

Empowering teachers has been one of the responsibilities of leaders. However, these variables had never been explored specifically in the local setting. With this, the study determined the extent of shared leadership and the teaching empowerment of public elementary teachers in Davao del Norte Division. Also, it investigated the association of the involved variables and the domains of shared leadership that significantly influence teaching empowerment. With the use of probability sampling, 130 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 an extensive shared leadership and very extensive teacher empowerment. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between the two variables. Based on the findings, it was further suggested that higher officials in the Department of Education may find means on how to empower teachers highlighting the relevance of shared leadership. Apparently, school heads with the help of their shared leadership may craft programs to further empower teachers.

Keywords: Shared leadership, teaching empowerment, public elementary n teachers, descriptive correlation, Davao del Norte Division, Philippines

Introduction

Teachers are the most important keystones of schools, having an important influence on the healthy functioning of the education systems, the realization of educational activities and the development of organizational goals. Teachers should be encouraged, empowered, and supported in various ways to increase their qualifications and unlock their potential. In addition to increasing the qualifications of teachers should also be supported in various ways (Podolsky et al., 2019). However, teacher empowerment has not been given much attention.

Most reasons that lead to higher job satisfaction also empower teachers (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). However, teachers have never been satisfied in their job. In fact, over 15% of school teachers in the United States (US) annually leave their teaching jobs at schools (Goldring et al., 2014). Likewise, the European Union (EU) nations also face serious teacher shortages (European Commission, 2018). Numerous studies proved that teachers have found high levels of job displeasure (Wangai, 2012). For instance, Al-Yaseen and Al-Musaileem (2015) have discovered that work anxiety is the key reason behind the low job satisfaction among Kuwaiti teachers, resulting in unsatisfactory functioning, absence of desire to work, and low levels of innovation.

In the Philippine setting, Filipino teachers were not empowered due to poor school condition. Teachers were discovered to struggle in delivering the content of class materials and possess poor teaching strategies/skills. Due to the lack of professional development opportunities, teachers were unprepared to teach the content based on the assigned schedule and have more diversified teaching methodology. Moreover, the absence of proper support and materials led to lesser time for teachers to efficiently instruct the content (Magallanes et al., 2022). Dizon et al. (2019) further supported this claim stating that there is a lack preparation for teaching development.

In the Division of Davao del Norte, the researcher observed that teachers are not empowered due to limited opportunities for professional growth and even promotion. Teachers opted to look for other sideline due to low offered salary. Also, teachers were bombarded with so many ancillary services leading to unpreparedness when it comes to classroom instruction. Given these situations, the researcher explored the extent of shared leadership and teacher empowerment in the public elementary schools specifically in Davao del Norte Division. Furthermore, it investigated the correlation of the two variables.

The scarcity of studies involving shared leadership and teacher empowerment since it was only investigated in the global and national setting motivated the researcher to explore the involved variables. Apparently, this undertaking also hoped to provide insights to the policy makers in crafting policies, programs, interventions, projects, activities that would be helpful to public schools in intensifying teacher empowerment through the aid of shared leadership.

Several theories and models were associated with shared leadership of school principals and teacher empowerment. The theory for this study was based primarily on Psychological Empowerment which is derived from Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory. This concept was further developed by Conger

and Kanungo (1988), who described empowering as a motivational process in which individuals develop their self-efficacy. This idea was expanded by Thomas and Velthouse (1990), who claimed that empowerment should be understood as a multidimensional structure consisting of a combination of four elements: meaning, self-determination, competence, and impact. These authors claimed that psychological empowerment provides energy to a person's behaviour and causes a person's intrinsic motivation towards one's work role, which obviously creates conditions for better job performance.

Yildiz et al. (2017) noted that psychological empowerment promotes teacher autonomy, greater involvement in decision-making, a sense of control in relation to their work and feeling of trust toward both themselves and their organization. In general, psychological empowerment includes the teachers' experience of mastery and motivational energy, and can be associated with positive attitudes, behaviours, and performance. It is the teachers' perception of how much they want (meaning dimension), are able (decision-making) and know how to (confidence in ones' competence) successfully perform what is expected of them at work (Tvarijonavičius et al., 2016). In other words, psychological empowerment refers to the way employees experience their work and their personal perception about their role in relation to the organisation (Ambad & Bahron 2012).

According to researchers, psychological empowerment can be used as a tool to motivate teachers and to increase their level of performance in teaching and research (Sotirofski, 2014). An employee who feels psychologically empowered feels freedom to make choices while fulfilling a duty (Celik & Atik, 2020), and also tries to improve the performance by working "smarter" or by seeking out new and better ways of doing things (Fernandez & Moldogaziev, 2013). Thus, psychological empowerment promotes proactive rather than passive attitude to one's work roles (Kim & Lee, 2020).

In the educational context, teacher empowerment is defined as a process that encourages the teacher to be involved in decision-making, expands their decision-making capabilities and trust in them as a decision-maker, encourages taking responsibility and gives a sense of control over the process (Ahrari et al., 2021; Yildiz et al., 2017). A psychologically empowered teacher is characterized by greater autonomy, responsibility, belief in their competences and application of them in work practice, ability to teach their students effectively (Muhammad &Hussain, 2020; Shah, 2014). They believe and care about what they do, are more satisfied, engaged and innovative (Yildiz et al., 2017).

It is the empowerment of teachers that makes better use of the school's intellectual resources to foster student achievement, which is especially important when schools are under-resourced. It should be noted that psychological empowerment should not be perceived as a static phenomenon or a characteristic of a person, but as a process in which an employee (teacher) can feel more or less psychologically empowered. This process can be influenced both by the school principals' behavior and by other processes taking place in the workplace (a school) as well as in the organization.

Another theory that supported this study was the Leader Member Exchange (LMX) theory originated in the study of socialization and the social exchange theory and has been studied for 30 years. Nahrgang et al. (2009) proposed that the innermost facet of Leader Member Exchange theory is the unique reciprocal relationship that leaders can develop with their employees affecting attitudes and behaviors while negotiating their role within the relationship. LMX has been studied extensively in the organization and somewhat in educational settings.

Northouse (2006) referred to dyadic relationships as being a member of either the "in group," or "out group." The in group is relationships with employees of high quality, and the out group is low quality relationships with employees. High quality relationships as those in which the leader feels confident enough in the employees abilities to expand their job responsibilities, referred to as the "in group." These relationships are developed over time and through interactions and exchanges between the leader and follower. The quality of exchanges between the leader and employee develop over time and determine whether the employee will receive in group or out group status. The category determines the level of responsibility, decision making, and resources the follower receives from the leader.

Employees who have demonstrated themselves as desiring to be successful are more empowered by the leader and are classified as being a member of the in group and given more job latitude, decision making opportunities, open communication lines, and funding consideration; these employees and the leader maintain a high-quality Leader Member Exchange. Northouse (2006) relates a high-quality Leader Member Exchange relationship as one with high levels of trust, respect, and commitment. On the contrary, out group members work within the requirements of their employment agreement while the leader provides support and assistance required by the position. Therefore, out group members do their jobs only to the point of what the job description requires and seldom volunteer to contribute additional time or energy to the job. High quality Leader Member Exchanges go beyond job descriptions, with leaders being influential, building relationships, and supporting the subordinate with greater autonomy and responsibility.

Within the context of this study, the shared leadership of the school principal which leads to teacher empowerment belongs in group category which has been emphasized in the Leader Member Exchange theory. Apparently, in this theory, empowered employees are created by leaders who have exemplified values and who have the heart to empower employees. this is so true in the educational context wherein school principals have the capacity to motivate and empower teachers.

Methodology

Research Design

This study was a quantitative research approach utilizing the descriptive correlational approach. Quantitative research is a way to learn about a particular group of people, known as a sample population. Using scientific inquiry, quantitative research **relies on data that are observed or measured** to examine questions about the sample population. It is used by social scientists, including communication researchers, to observe phenomena or occurrences affecting individuals. The purpose of quantitative research is to generate knowledge and create understanding about the social world (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller,

2014). Moreover, a descriptive correlation study is a study in which the researcher is primarily interested in describing the relationships between variables without attempting to establish a causal relationship (Noah, 2021).

This research journey was considered as quantitative since it relied on the numerical data when analyzing and interpreting the data. It was descriptive since its purpose was to determine the extent of shared leadership of school heads and teacher empowerment. In addition, this academic pursuit was correlational since its purpose was to measure the association between shared leadership of school heads and teacher empowerment in selected public elementary schools in the Division of Davao del Norte.

Research Respondents

This study considered the 130 public elementary teachers in the Division of Davao del Norte. It was claimed that 50 to 100 samples were enough when testing the regression analysis (Hair et al., 2018). Hence, the 130 respondents were enough to address the purpose of this study.

Probability sampling specifically two-staged cluster sampling was used to identify the sample of the study. It is a kind of sampling technique in which the likelihood or probability of each piece being included may be defined. In other words, every member of the population must have an equal and independent probability of being included in the sample (Ragab & Arisha, 2018).

In the inclusion and exclusion criteria, all elementary teachers with 2 years teaching experience were chosen in this endeavor since the two years stay in the public school would help them to assess the shared leadership of school principals and teacher empowerment. In this academic quest, those elementary teachers in the private schools were not considered. Furthermore, 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.

Research Instruments

A survey questionnaire had been the primary source of gathering data. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first part was focusing about the shared leadership of school heads while the second section was about teacher empowerment.

The shared leadership survey questionnaire which was used in this study was adapted from the developed instrument of Cermino (2007). It is a 20-item survey which consists of four indicators, namely: planning and organizing (1-5), problem solving (1-5), support and consideration (1-5), and development and monitoring (1-5). The questionnaire was subjected to a pilot testing having a result of .74 suggesting that the items have relatively *high* internal consistency.

The questionnaire on teacher empowerment was adapted from Short and Rinehart (1992). It is a 38-item research tool emphasizing the following dimensions: decision-making (1-10), professional growth (11-16), status (17-22), self-efficacy (23-28), autonomy (29-32), and impact (33-38). The questionnaire was subjected to a pilot testing having a result of .75 suggesting that the items have relatively *high* internal consistency.

The instrument in this study was 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

Table 1

Summary on the Extent of Shared Leadership of School Heads

No	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1	Planning and Organizing	4.28	Very Extensive
2	Problem Solving	4.15	Extensive
3	Support and Consideration	4.17	Extensive
4	Development and Monitoring	4.12	Extensive
Overall		**4.18**	**Extensive**

Table 1 provides the summary on the extent of shared leadership of school heads. It is exhibited that the overall mean of shared leadership of school heads is 4.18, which is in extensive level. This means that shared leadership of school heads is oftentimes evident.

Data show that all four (4) indicators have varying results ranging from extensive to very extensive level. As arranged chronologically, planning and organizing (4.28) has the highest mean. This is followed by support and consideration (4.17), problem solving (4.15), and development and monitoring (4.12).

The favorable findings of the study mirrored the idea of Carpenter (2015) emphasizing that leaders work with everyone to create policies and procedures that provide teachers the leadership structure to directly impact school improvement through professional learning community collaborative efforts.

Martina et al. (2018) stressed that shared leadership of school heads include the ability to participate in collaborative decision-making, influence and support other team members, foster motivation, and take responsibility for outcomes.

Meanwhile, Reyes-Guerra et al. (2021) claimed that while leading others, principals set goals and objectives for them to achieve. As a leader, he/she must have an impact on how events are interpreted, how goals and strategies are chosen, how work is organized, how people are motivated to achieve goals, how to maintain cooperative relationships, how members develop their skills and confidence, and how to enlist the support and cooperation of people outside the organization. Additionally, Price (2021) underscored that shared leadership is a successful means of helping schools remain relevant and competitive in an everchanging environment. It increases group spirit and trust and has a positive effect on how members collaborate on their shared beliefs and goals.

Table 2

Summary on the Extent of Teacher Empowerment

No	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1	Decision-Making	4.15	Extensive
2	Professional Growth	4.27	Very Extensive
3	Status	4.26	Very Extensive
4	Self-efficacy	4.17	Extensive
5	Autonomy	4.26	Very Extensive
6	Impact	4.30	Very Extensive
Overall		**4.24**	**Very Extensive**

Table 2 provides the summary on the extent of teacher empowerment. It is exhibited that the overall mean of teacher empowerment is 4.24, which is in a very extensive level. This means that teacher empowerment is always evident.

Data show that all six (6) indicators have varying results ranging from extensive to a very extensive level. As arranged chronologically, impact (4.30) has the highest mean. It is followed by professional growth (4.27), status (4.26), autonomy (4.26), self-efficacy (4.17), and decision-making (4.15). The favorable findings of this study substantiated the notion of Calisici Celik & Kiral (2022) indicating that teachers are the most important keystones of schools, having an important influence on the healthy functioning of the education systems, the realization of educational activities and the development of organizational goals. Moreover, teacher empowerment was the instrument to boost trust of teachers among them.

Furthermore, Lee et al. (2011) denoted that in the field of school improvement, it has been suggested that empowering teachers to take up leadership roles is likely to benefit the process of school reform. In schools adopting shared decision-making, it is easier for principals to initiate school reform. In a recent study, on teacher empowerment and receptivity in curriculum reform in China, it was found that teachers' professional growth, a factor of teacher empowerment, can enhance their perception of reform outcomes.

Ganiban et al. (2019) believed that empowered employees are influenced by their leaders, who follow their leaders' behaviors and internalize their duties. In connection to that, Vrhovnik et al. (2018) emphasized that empowering teachers in education systems is the task of school principals. For this reason, principals should be able to use various empowerment strategies to increase the potential of their employees, motivate them in various ways and prompt them for work (Kiral, 2015). Therefore, principals should be empowering leaders (Kiral, 2020; Konan & Celik, 2017) and use empowerment strategically.

Table 3

Significance of the Relationship between the Domains of Shared leadership and Teacher Empowerment

Shared Leadership Indicators	Dependent Variable	r-value	p- value	Decision on Ho
Planning and Organizing		0.485	0.000	Ho is Rejected
Problem and Solving		0.465	0.000	Ho is Rejected
Support and Consideration		0.473	0.000	Ho is Rejected
	Teacher Empowerment			
Development and Monitoring		0.462	0.000	Ho is Rejected
Overall		**0.471***	**0.000**	**Ho is Rejected**

*Significant at 0.05 significance level.

Presented in Table 3 are the data on the significance of the relationship between the domain of shared leadership and teacher empowerment. Reflected in the hypothesis, the relationship was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The overall r-value of 0.471 with a p-value of <0.05 signified the rejection of the null hypothesis. It means that there is a significant relationship between shared leadership and teacher empowerment. This shows that shared leadership is correlated with teacher empowerment.

Doing a pairwise correlation among the measures of both variables, it can be gleaned that planning and organizing, problem solving, support and consideration, development and monitoring revealed computed r-values of 0.485, 0.465, 0.473, 0.462, respectively with p-values which are less than 0.05 in the

level of significance. This implies that as planning and organizing, problem solving, support and consideration, development and monitoring increase, teacher empowerment also increases.

The result is in consonance to the study conducted by Elmazi (2018) revealing that principals play a great role in empowering teachers. A principal is the leader of the school and at the same time is the manager of the school. In the educational context, principals are among the key authorities that dispose power. Like all managers, school principals have to accomplish the organizational goals and do the work with and through teachers. This requires exercise of influence and power. They use power to influence the behavior of teachers and students. According to several researchers, positive relationship between the principal and teachers evokes school success. Moreover, power is thought of as a tool by which leaders influence followers. It is a universal phenomenon. The ability to lead through influence and persuasion is an effective leader's behavior, as it is an indispensable element of effective leadership.

Similarly, Cabanuglo (2021) emphasized that shared leadership and employee empowerment develop positive feelings in employees towards the organization, the work they do and themselves. These positive emotions create confidence for employees to try new methods and techniques in their work. Employees who approach their work with an innovative mindset will be more beneficial to their organizations and increase their own satisfaction. Principals need to empower their staff with shared leadership, decision-making authority and promote reflection and collaborative investigation to allow teacher leadership to improve teaching and learning (Musselman et al., 2014). They are the key to empowering the individuals throughout a school environment and school transformation will only occur when these individuals are empowered (Cope, 2017).

Conclusions

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

The extent of knowledge management practices in the public elementary schools implies that it is oftentimes evident. In fact, all dimensions are oftentimes evident, namely, knowledge management strategy plan, support for organizational learning, organizational performance management practices, training related practices, and human resource related practices.

Meanwhile, the extent of teaching effectiveness of teachers is oftentimes evident. Apparently, all indicators are found to be oftentimes evident specifically on assessment and evaluation, interaction with students, teaching and learning, and preparedness of teachers.

Based on the findings, knowledge management practices and teaching effectiveness are related. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Recommendations

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

The higher officials in the Department of Education may acknowledge and capitalize on the extensive knowledge management practices evident within the education system. Prioritizing professional development programs that reinforce effective knowledge sharing, organizational learning, and supportive human resource practices may contribute to even more robust teaching outcomes. Additionally, promoting collaborative platforms and technological tools to facilitate seamless knowledge exchange among educators can amplify the positive impact on teaching effectiveness. Emphasizing these aspects will not only enrich the overall teaching and learning experience but also foster a culture of continuous improvement within the education system.

Moreover, school heads may recognize and actively support the extensive knowledge management practices already in place within their institutions. Given the evident correlation with teaching effectiveness, school leaders may encourage a culture that values collaborative knowledge sharing, embraces innovative instructional approaches, and prioritizes ongoing professional development. Providing platforms for educators to share best practices, fostering a supportive environment for organizational learning, and implementing efficient knowledge management strategies may further enhance teaching outcomes. School heads may also consider leveraging technology to facilitate seamless information exchange and collaboration among teachers.

Furthermore, teachers may actively engage and participate in the extensive knowledge management practices within their educational settings. Embracing collaborative knowledge-sharing platforms, actively contributing to organizational learning initiatives, and taking advantage of professional development opportunities may significantly enhance individual teaching effectiveness. Teachers may recognize the value of ongoing learning, both from their colleagues and through personal development efforts, as a means to continually refine instructional methods and strategies. Embracing technology for effective information exchange and staying connected with the broader educational community may further enrich their knowledge base.

Lastly, future researchers may conduct in-depth investigations into specific mechanisms and interventions within knowledge management practices that yield the most significant impact on teaching effectiveness. Exploring nuanced aspects such as the role of technology, the effectiveness of collaborative

platforms, and the influence of organizational culture on knowledge exchange may provide valuable insights. Additionally, conducting longitudinal studies to assess the sustained effects of knowledge management initiatives on teaching outcomes over time may contribute to a more comprehensive understanding. Moreover, considering variations across different educational contexts, levels, and subjects may offer a nuanced view of the generalizability of findings.

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