



## **Relational Leadership of School Heads as Determinant of Stakeholder Involvement in Public Secondary Schools in IGACOS Division**

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### **Introduction**

Each stakeholder in education plays a unique role and can help increase support for educational goals. Stakeholder involvement in education plays an important part, as the purpose of each stakeholder is to reach a common educational goal through team effort. When multiple stakeholders are engaged, the team effort increases the chances of success in reaching these goals. Therefore, a team effort on the part of stakeholders is involved in achieving educational goals (Watts, 2022). To create effective education systems and effective learning environments, all stakeholders need to come together in a meaningful way, through collaboration and therefore connection. And successful collaboration between all stakeholders means deep listening as well as active doing (Alomes, 2020). However, minimum participation of stakeholders in school affairs is being observed.

In US, educated immigrant parents understood the United States schooling system and were not concerned with interfering with teachers' instruction, but were aware of the importance of communicating with teachers. These parents were aware of cultural expectations and made the most of the resources provided by schools to assist in supporting their children's education. Yet, there remained a population of parents who maintained their cultural beliefs about their role in their children's education. These parents continued to be a source of contention among educators who considered these parents uninvolved and unconcerned about their children's education (Đurišić & Bunijevac, 2017).

Educators were frustrated by the lack of parental involvement by minority families in public schools, yet schools continued to develop parental involvement programs which marginalized low socio-economic and minority parents while providing support and resources for parents of White and middle-class children (Kavanagh & Hickey, 2013). For instance, lack of parental interest in children's education, insufficient funding from the state, lack of resources, recruitment of underqualified teachers, and multi-grade teaching are some of the identified barriers to effective education (du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). In the Philippines, the public secondary school's enduring issue has been stakeholders' lack of understanding of their roles in the school's activities. The level of performance of the school operation is in some ways impacted by their passive engagement. Even pupils lack a sense of community in the majority of the observed realities. These thoughts and attitudes may have an impact on academic activities. They are not responsible for being students, do not participate in school activities, and have poor attitudes toward both teachers and other students. In order for pupils to feel like they belong at the school, they must get along well with faculty, staff, and fellow students (Lacanilao, 2020).

The researcher noticed that stakeholder participation in the Division of IGACOS is extremely low. When general or homeroom PTA meetings were held, some parents chose not to attend. Even on family day at school, parents were pressed for time. Private sectors, meanwhile, were very receptive to requests for assistance from schools for school reform. Despite these observations, no official study had been undertaken to investigate the aforementioned issues. In the Division of IGACOS, no study had been done to examine the involvement of stakeholders in public secondary schools.

Given these circumstances, the researcher investigated the extent to which the stakeholders in public secondary schools, specifically in the IGACOS Division, were involved in relational leadership by school heads. It also sought to investigate the relationship between the two variables. The researcher's goal in this academic journey was to provide information about the relational leadership of school leaders and the involvement of stakeholders. This undertaking also aimed to offer policymakers insights into how to create policies, programs, interventions, projects, and other initiatives that can help public secondary schools increase stakeholder involvement.

Several theories and models have been associated with relational leadership and stakeholders' involvement. The theory for this study was based primarily on the leader-member exchange (LMX) theory (Gerstner and Day, 1997; Graen et al., 1982; Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995; Liden et al., 1997). According to Graen & Uhl-Bien (1995), the central concept of LMX theory is that leadership occurs when leaders and followers are able to develop effective relationships (partnerships) that result in incremental influence and thus gain access to the many benefits these relationships bring (Gerstner & Day, 1997).

The theory described how effective leadership relationships develop (Liden et al., 1997; Uhl-Bien et al., 2000) among dyad "partners" (e.g., leaders and members, teammates, peers) to generate bases of leadership influence (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1991; Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995), as well as demonstrates the benefits of these leadership relationships for organizational outcomes (Gerstner & Day, 1997). LMX is an entity perspective because it focuses on the

properties and behaviors of individuals as they engage in interactions with one another (cf., Dachler & Hosking, 1995). Uhl-Bien et al. (2000) described the relationship development process as beginning with two individuals, who engage in an interaction or exchange sequence (a series of interactions).

Another theory that supported this study is the transformational leadership theory by Burns (1978). In this theory, it was believed that the extent to which a leader is transformational, is measured first, in terms of his influence on the followers. The followers of such a leader feel trust, admiration, loyalty and respect for the leader and because of the qualities of the transformational leader are willing to work harder than originally expected. These outcomes occur because the transformational leader offers followers something more than just working for self gain; they provide followers with an inspiring mission and vision and give them an identity. The leader transforms and motivates followers through his or her idealized influence (earlier referred to as charisma). In addition, this leader encourages followers to come up with new and unique ways to challenge the status quo and to alter the environment to support being successful.

In the context of this study, the good qualities of school leaders specifically their relational leadership do not only affect their employees but also those who are part or members of the school community. Having a wide range of positive influence may encourage stakeholders to give their counterpart for the betterment of the school.

Moreover, Fullan's (1983) Change Process Theory was used for this study. Fullan posited that change processes within a school are important if stakeholders within the school are to formulate strategies to improve schools. Change takes place over time, and change involves the acquisition of new skills through the medium of practice, continuous feedback, and organizational conditions at the level of the school (Fullan, 1983). These conditions determine the success of the process, and successful change is achieved through an interaction of organizational conditions within the internal and external environment of the school (Fullan, 1983).

Fullan (1983) posited that change process at the campus level of the school must include strategies for improving schools. The theory of change focuses on how change occurs using knowledge as the foundational base grounded on eight organizational factors including leadership focused on curriculum and instruction, district level support, emphasis on student development, high expectations for students, support systems and processes for monitoring performance of staff and achievement of students, continuous staff development, parental involvement, and promoting a healthy school climate (Fullan, 1983).

Four process variables embedded in the factors include leadership aptitudes, a value system for stakeholders, intentional communication, and collaborative planning and collaborative implementation. When the eight organizational factors and the four process variables are supported, there is improvement in the achievement of the goals of the school, coupled with a strong sense of community and a capacity for further improvement through focused innovation and school-wide strategies (Fullan, 1983).

In essence, the principal also has a social, cultural, and even political role in the community (Hopkins, 2015). This is an essential role for school principals to get support from various parties in the community. School principals cannot avoid such conditions for various reasons, including the school is a mini-community of other communities as a whole (Epstein, 2018); the school is part of a social system in which the school is involved to strengthen the values developed by the community where the school is located (Touraine, 2017); the school educates students from the surrounding community, integrates with the community, together with the community so that they can live in the community (Schrag, 2016); and the community has the best aspirations for people's lives in the future. These values should be developed by the school. The community needs a school presence (Belfield & Levin, 2015; Munn, 2018). These four reasons become essential foundations for school principals that there is an excellent opportunity for school principals to develop schools together with all internal and external components as community representatives

A strong principal relational leadership can only be carried out effectively by principals who have social, cultural, and political awareness by immersing them amid internal and external school communities. The ability of principals to position themselves proportionally during interactions is an effective approach in strengthening schools to get the maximum quality of community support. However, schools are institutions that must understand the hopes and aspirations of the community better. Schools need to identify, integrate, and agree on, and manage school programs by involving the community as a whole (Banks, 1997; Findlay, 2003).

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## 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. 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 (Allen, 2017).

This study was considered as quantitative since it depended on the numerical data when analyzing and interpreting the data. It was descriptive since its purpose was to determine the extent of relational leadership of school heads and stakeholder involvement. In addition, this academic pursuit was

correlational since its purpose was to measure the connection between relational leadership of school heads and stakeholder involvement in public secondary schools in IGACOS Division.

#### Research Respondents

This study catered the 200 public secondary teachers in the Division of IGACOS. It was claimed that 200 samples are enough when testing the Pearson Correlation analysis (Memon et al., 2020). Hence, the 200 respondents were enough to address the purpose of this study. In the inclusion and exclusion criteria, secondary teachers with 5 years teaching experience were chosen in this endeavor since their 5 years stay in the public school would help them to assess the relational leadership of school heads and the stakeholder involvement in public secondary schools. 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 is respected. Apparently, the respondents' welfare was given utmost importance in the conduct of the study.

#### 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 the on relational leadership of school heads while the second set was about the stakeholder involvement. The relational leadership questionnaire was adapted from Carifio (2010). The instrument consisted of 25 items. It had the following indicators, namely: inclusive (1-5); empowering (1-5); caring (1-5); ethical (1-5); and vision and intuition (1-5). The questionnaire was subjected to a pilot testing having a result of .76 suggesting that the items had relatively *high* internal consistency

The stakeholders' involvement questionnaire was adapted from the study of De Torres (2021). It is also subjected to pilot testing which revealed a result of .75, suggesting that the items have relatively *high* internal consistency. The tool has a total of 32 items. It has three variables, namely: leadership and governance (1-12), learners' achievement (11-20), and school's programs and reforms (21-30)

## Table

**Table 1**

### Summary on the Extent of Relational Leadership of School Heads

No	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1	Inclusive	4.14	Extensive
2	Empowering	4.22	Very Extensive
3	Caring	3.33	Moderately Extensive
4	Ethical	3.35	Moderately Extensive
5	Vision and Intuition	4.28	Very Extensive
<b>Overall</b>		<b>3.86</b>	<b>Extensive</b>

Table 1 provides the summary on the extent of relational leadership of school heads. It is exhibited that the overall mean of relational leadership is 3.86, which is in an extensive level. This means that the relational leadership of school heads is oftentimes evident.

Data show that all five (5) indicators reveal a varying result ranging from moderately extensive to very extensive result. As arranged chronologically, vision and intuition have the highest mean score (4.28). This is followed by empowering (4.22), inclusive (4.14), ethical (3.35), and caring (3.33).

These findings hold significant implications for the effectiveness of school leadership and its impact on the school community. The high scores in vision and intuition indicate that school heads possess the ability to envision a compelling future for the institution and make insightful decisions based on their intuitive understanding of complex situations. Empowering leadership is evident, signifying that school heads empower their staff and stakeholders, fostering a culture of trust, autonomy, and growth. The inclusive leadership dimension suggests that school heads value diversity and promote an environment where all voices are heard and respected. The relatively lower scores in ethical and caring leadership dimensions may warrant further attention and development to enhance ethical decision-making and a supportive, nurturing atmosphere within the school. Overall, these results underscore the importance of relational leadership in school administration, as it has the potential to foster positive change, drive growth, and create a cohesive and thriving educational community.

With the extensive status of the relational leadership of school heads, this reaffirmed the widely held belief of Lasater (2016) citing that relational leadership is incredibly helpful in lowering teacher attrition. Relationships are the foundation of educational leadership. Nicholson and Kurucz (2019) came to the conclusion that relational leaders who build and nurture caring relationships help organizations thrive. Owens (2015) mentioned that principals who practice relational leadership have a positive impact on attrition and are essential in minimizing the influence of other stresses on that decision.

Moreover, Rayner (2020) emphasized that when leading an organization, the relational leadership approach stresses the relationships between people. Relational leadership places a high importance on process orientation, purposefulness, inclusivity, and empowerment. Relational leaders give others the power. They are aware of the advantages and disadvantages that each team member possesses, and they seek to maximize advantages and minimize disadvantages. A relational leader cares about others' professional development. Relational leaders are able to convey their clear purpose to others. Every action taken by purposeful leaders is directed toward a single objective.

**Table 2**

**Summary on the Extent of Stakeholder Involvement**

No	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1	Leadership and Governance	4.12	Extensive
2	Learners' Achievement	4.32	Very Extensive
3	School Programs and Reforms	4.28	Very Extensive
<b>Overall</b>		<b>4.24</b>	<b>Very Extensive</b>

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

Data show that all three (3) indicators reveal a varying result ranging from extensive to very extensive level. As arranged chronologically, learner's achievement has the highest mean score (4.32). This is followed by school programs and reforms (4.28), and leadership and governance (4.12).

The findings highlight the positive impact of active stakeholder engagement on three key indicators: learner's achievement, school programs and reforms, and leadership and governance. The extensive level of stakeholder involvement across these indicators underscores its critical role in driving positive change and fostering a supportive and thriving learning community. As a result,

nurturing and sustaining this high level of engagement should be prioritized to further enhance the educational experiences and outcomes of all stakeholders involved. The data's implications emphasize the need for continued collaboration, participation, and support from all members of the school community to create a holistic and impactful educational environment that fosters learners' success, promotes effective school programs and reforms, and ensures sound leadership and governance practices.

The favorable findings of this study supported the notion of Bruns et al. (2011) validating that numerous stakeholders' involvement and participation has proven to improve school management, according to studies. Ice et al. (2015) clarified that to assist school improvement, collaboration between the school and community people is encouraged. Additionally, Olguin and Keim's (2009) study emphasizes the value of administrators, parents, the community, and students participating actively in the design and implementation of various school operations.

Smith and Goodwin (2014) claimed that there are more chances for the improvement plan to be implemented when stakeholders actively participate in its creation. Additionally, according to Tobergte and Curtis (2013), accountability has a favorable impact on stakeholders' attitudes, expectations, and discipline in the educational setting. Preston (2013) further mentioned that the level of community involvement in schools should theoretically increase with improved stakeholder connections to the school. In other words, school-based community involvement may act as a catalyst for the creation of a different kind of school-based community involvement.

As highlighted in the results, Bangayan-Manera (2020) espoused that all parties involved in education will cooperate to give pupils a welcoming and encouraging learning environment that would eventually benefit their local communities. Schools are organizations that can prepare kids to help shape the society in which they live and work by giving them knowledge, attitudes, and skills that are beneficial to that society. The teaching and learning process that encourages all students to nurture their capacities to a high degree is viewed from this perspective as the formal educational institution where future citizens are developed.

**Table 3**

**Significance of the Relationship Between Relational Leadership of School Heads and Stakeholder Involvement**

Relational Leadership of School Heads	r-value
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	<b>Dependent Variable</b>		<b>p- value</b>	<b>Decision on Ho</b>
Inclusive		0.572	0.000	Rejected
Empowering		0.582	0.000	Rejected
Caring	Stakeholder Involvement	0.552	0.000	Rejected
Ethical		0.563	0.000	Rejected
Vision and Intuition		0.588	0.000	Rejected
<b>Overall</b>		<b>0.571*</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>Ho is Rejected</b>

\*Significant at 0.05 significance level.

Presented in Table 3 are the data on the significance of the relationship between relational leadership of school heads and stakeholder involvement. Reflected in the hypothesis, the relationship was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The overall r-value of .571 with a p-value of <0.05 signified the rejection of the null hypothesis. It means that there is a significant relationship between relational leadership of school heads and stakeholder involvement. This shows that relational leadership of school heads is correlated with stakeholder involvement.

Doing a pairwise correlation among the measures of both variables, it can be gleaned that inclusive, empowering, caring, ethical, and vision and intuition revealed computed r-values of 0.572, 0.582, 0.552, 0.563 and 0.588 respectively with p-values which are less than 0.05 in the level of significance. This implies that as inclusive, empowering, caring, ethical, and vision and intuition increases, the stakeholder involvement also increases.

The result is in consonance to the study conducted by Rayner (2020) stressing that in schools, it all comes down to relationships, which is why the relational leadership model is so prevalent in education. The relational leadership model emphasizes the relationships among people when leading an organization. A relational school leader seeks to gain the insight of all stakeholders. This might be a principal visiting teams of teachers on a professional development day to gain insight into how to improve school arrival and dismissal. When it comes to strengthening relationship with parents as stakeholders, school leaders can develop authentic parent relationships with strategic planning and inviting participation in school matters.

More so, Bower and Griffin (2011) mentioned that because many schools struggle with lack of parent participation, leaders are motivated to understand why and how it fails. For example, participation matters; yet schools rarely achieve familial involvement to the expected degree. Epstein (2001) emphasized that principals can positively influence parent connections and student achievement by removing barriers to familial involvement (Epstein, 2001). Engaged school leaders who value familial involvement seek ways to reduce these barriers and ask how they can best respond to families' needs. Families of diversity wish for accessibility, invitation, and welcome from their school leaders and families.

## Conclusions

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

The extent of relational leadership of school heads implied that it was oftentimes evident. Specifically, vision and intuition, and empowering were perceived to be always evident. Meanwhile, inclusive was oftentimes evident while caring and ethical were occasionally evident.

The extent of stakeholder involvement was always evident in the schools. In particular, learner's achievement and school programs and reforms were always evident while leadership and governance was oftentimes evident.

Based on the findings, relational leadership of school heads and stakeholder involvement were correlated. Also, relational leadership of school heads significantly influenced stakeholder involvement. In fact, all domains of relational leadership, namely, inclusive, empowering, caring, ethical, and vision and intuition significantly influenced stakeholder involvement by registering a p-value of .000 which was less than .05 in the level of significance. This led to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Further, the result indicated that for every unit increased in the five domains of relational leadership, the stakeholder involvement increased.

## Recommendations

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

The higher officials in the Department of Education may craft effective policies, programs, projects, interventions and activities which may strengthen stakeholder involvement by equipping school heads of the necessary techniques and strategies in empowering themselves of relational leadership.

Meanwhile, school heads may assess themselves of the status of their relationship with their stakeholders. They may find means and concrete programs or activities that would encourage stakeholder involvement in the school community. They may not only ask the presence of the stakeholders when they need something but also in all school activities wherein the voice of the stakeholder is being heard.

More so, teachers may take an effort in providing assistance to school heads in strengthening the relationship between the school and the stakeholder. They may find means to build a healthy relationship with the stakeholders. They may also keep on inviting the identified stakeholders in all school activities.

Lastly, future researchers may explore relevant information about the relational leadership of school heads and stakeholder involvement. They may consider using other research approaches such as qualitative research and mixed methods further explore the involved variables in this study.

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