



Visionary Leadership of Principals and School-Based Management Practices of Public Elementary Schools in the Division of Davao Del Norte

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the extent of principals' visionary leadership and school-based management practices in the Davao del Norte Division, as well as the relationship between these variables. Using probability sampling, 150 elementary public school teachers were selected as respondents. The data, collected through a descriptive-correlational survey method, were analyzed using Mean and Product-Moment correlation. The findings indicated that principals exhibited extensive visionary leadership and school-based management practices, and there was a significant relationship between these two variables. Based on these results, it was suggested that higher officials in the Department of Education should find ways to help school heads enhance their visionary leadership to ensure proactive school-based management practices. Additionally, future researchers are encouraged to further explore these variables using other research methods.

Keywords: Visionary leadership, school-based management practices, descriptive correlation, Davao del Norte Division, Philippines

Introduction

School-Based Management (SBM) is linked to public relations efforts aimed at enhancing stakeholder engagement in school planning and execution. School principals, as administrators, are responsible for various aspects including financial operations, facility maintenance, student scheduling, staffing, public relations, disciplinary policies, coordination of the instructional program, and overall school affairs (Viggayan, 2017). The Department of Education officially implemented SBM in all public schools in 2012 with the goal of continuously improving learning outcomes by addressing the specific needs of pupils and the community. However, challenges in the implementation of SBM can impede school improvement.

A study by Bala (2017) on the challenges faced by SBM committees in the North West Zone of Nigeria identified issues such as members' refusal to attend meetings, poor communication, and lack of commitment. These findings are consistent with those of Adediran (2010), who also noted poor motivation among SBM committee members. Additionally, research by Kiragu et al. (2013) revealed that 50% of respondents believed SBM increased the workload for teachers and other stakeholders. Specific challenges included lack of commitment, inadequate personnel, lack of accountability and transparency, conflicts among stakeholders, delays in decision-making, unclear demarcation of duties, lack of cooperation from stakeholders, conflicts of interest, lack of competent school administrators, and lack of goodwill.

In the Philippines, SBM stakeholders have encountered several issues, including increased workload for both internal and external participants, decreased efficiency, inconsistent school performance, a greater need for staff development, confusion about new roles and responsibilities, and difficulties in coordination. Additional barriers include stakeholders' lack of understanding of SBM and its operations, insufficient decision-making skills, poor communication and trust among stakeholders, limited teacher involvement, and reluctance from some administrators and teachers to delegate decision-making authority (Lopez, 2022). Moreover, school heads and principals often become lenient in their policies out of gratitude towards stakeholders, leading to conflicts within the school organization. These conflicts can create significant gaps in the organization (Pepito & Acibar, 2019).

Similarly, observations in the Division of Davao del Norte indicated that while school-based management practices were present, they were not extensively implemented due to teachers' divided attention and failure to document assigned tasks because of complicated schedules. However, these observations had not been validated by research. In light of these issues, the researcher explored the extent of principals' visionary leadership and school-based management practices in public elementary schools in the Davao del Norte Division and investigated the correlation between these two variables. In this academic endeavor, the researcher shed light regarding principals' visionary leadership and school-based management practices. More so, this undertaking also hopes to provide insights to the DepEd officials in crafting policies, programs, interventions, projects, activities that would motivate teachers to be proactive of the school-based management practices as inspired by their principals' visionary leadership.

This study is primarily based on Transformational Leadership Theory as outlined by Leithwood (1994). This leadership style posits that the primary focus of leadership should be on the commitments and capacities of organizational members. It assumes that higher levels of personal commitment to organizational goals and greater abilities to achieve those goals result in increased effort and productivity (Leithwood et al., 1999).

Leithwood (1994) identified eight dimensions of transformational leadership: building a school vision, establishing school goals, providing intellectual stimulation, offering individualized support, modeling best practices and key organizational values, demonstrating high performance expectations, creating a productive school culture, and developing structures to foster participation in school decisions. Transformational leadership is essential for the successful transition to a system of self-managing schools.

In relation to school-based management practices, schools must be led by visionary leaders. Visionary leadership can be characterized by four key attributes: providing guidance and direction to achieve organizational goals, initiating and influencing change with rational ideas, serving as the main source of information both within and outside the organization, and setting examples and becoming role models for members in implementing rights and obligations within the organization.

Additionally, Mukti (2018) emphasized that a visionary leader is competent in expressing ideas for renewal, communicating, and implementing organizational change and improvement. Visionary leaders can optimize existing resources to achieve effective change, including the efficient division of workload and wages (Yasman et al., 2015). This aligns with Poi and Sendow (2015), who stated that a good division of labor and fostering togetherness are strengths of visionary leaders.

Drawing from these expert opinions, it can be concluded that a visionary leader strives to realize effective organizational change and create strategies to achieve goals (Iskandar, 2013). Christianingsih (2011) supported this, stating that visionary leadership acts as a driving force, communicator, and determinant of change, capable of improving the quality of the institution.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research approach, specifically utilizing a descriptive correlational method. Quantitative research involves examining a particular group of people, known as a sample population, using scientific inquiry. It relies on observed or measured data to investigate questions about this sample population. Social scientists, including communication researchers, use quantitative research to observe phenomena or occurrences affecting individuals, aiming to generate knowledge and understanding about the social world. A descriptive correlational study focuses on describing the relationships between variables without attempting to establish causality (Allen, 2017). This study was classified as quantitative because it relied on numerical data for analysis and interpretation. It was descriptive in nature as it aimed to determine the extent of principals' visionary leadership and school-based management practices. Additionally, it was correlational as it sought to measure the connection between principals' visionary leadership and school-based management practices in public elementary schools in the Davao del Norte Division.

Research Respondents

This study focused on 150 public elementary teachers in the Division of Davao del Norte. It was noted that for simple regression analysis, a minimum of 50 samples is required, with around 100 samples generally recommended for most research scenarios (Hair et al., 2018). Therefore, the inclusion of 150 respondents was deemed sufficient to fulfill the study's objectives. In terms of inclusion and exclusion criteria, elementary teachers with a minimum of 2 years of teaching experience were selected for this study. This criterion was chosen because their tenure of 2 years in the public school system would enable them to assess both their principals' visionary leadership and the school-based management practices effectively. As a result, elementary teachers from private schools were not included in the study. Additionally, respondents were given the option to withdraw from participation if they felt uncomfortable or awkward while answering the survey questionnaire. They were under no obligation to participate, and their decision to withdraw was fully respected. The welfare of the respondents was prioritized throughout the research process.

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 principals' visionary leadership while the second set was about the school-based management practices of public elementary schools.

The visionary leadership questionnaire was adapted from Al-frijawy (2023). The instrument consisted of 20 items. It had the following indicators, namely: flexibility (1-5), team spirit (1-5), vision (1-5), and conscience (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 school-based management practices questionnaire was adapted from Kaabi (2015). The instrument consisted of 18 items. It had the following indicators, namely: effective school leadership (1-4); budget allocation (1-3); management strategies (1-4); staff development (1-2); curriculum and instruction (1-3); and resources (1-2). The questionnaire was subjected to a pilot testing having a result of .78 suggesting that the items have relatively *high* internal consistency.

Table**Table 1****Summary on the Extent of Visionary Leadership of Principals**

No	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1	Flexibility	3.58	Extensive
2	Team Spirit	3.45	Extensive
3	Vision	3.67	Extensive
4	Conscience	3.57	Extensive
Overall		3.58	Extensive

Table 1 provides the summary on the extent of principals' visionary leadership. It is exhibited that the overall mean of principals' visionary leadership is 3.58, which is in an extensive level. This means that principals' visionary leadership is oftentimes evident.

Data show that all four (4) indicators are in an extensive level. As arranged chronologically, vision has the highest mean score (3.67). This is followed by flexibility (3.58), conscience (3.57), and team spirit (3.45).

The findings from these results carry significant implications, as they demonstrate the widespread presence of various dimensions of visionary leadership among principals. The consistently high mean scores across all four indicators indicate that principals frequently exhibit these visionary leadership qualities. These findings hold crucial implications for educational institutions and school leadership, emphasizing the pivotal role of visionary leadership in guiding schools towards progress and success. Principals who demonstrate these qualities are better equipped to foster a positive work culture that values ethical behavior, collaboration, adaptability, and a shared vision.

The extensive presence of visionary leadership among school heads reaffirms the widely accepted notion articulated by Rinel (2018), which posits that visionary leadership entails a leader's ability to conceive, shape, and execute forward-thinking ideas derived from societal interactions, key stakeholders, and personal insights, reflecting the institution's future aspirations. Such leaders should effectively communicate this vision through both words and actions, integrating various leadership styles to amplify its impact. Effective communication with their teams is central to the effectiveness of visionary leaders. Thus, visionary leadership emerges as a valuable approach for leaders to navigate changes and enhance the excellence and competitiveness of educational institutions.

Similarly, Nwachukwu (2017) described a visionary leader as someone who can craft a compelling vision and effectively communicate it to their team, thereby garnering their support to achieve the set goals. This underscores the notion that while a leader may excel in conceptualizing a vision and mission, without proficient communication and execution skills, realizing that vision can prove challenging. Visionary leadership stands out and is esteemed for its ability to vividly convey the institution's vision and mission, while also energizing and empowering its followers. Such leadership fosters unity, trust, dedication, and enhanced performance within the organization.

Additionally, Nashihudin (2022) emphasized that principals with a visionary outlook possess a clear and compelling vision for advancing top-tier educational institutions. This well-defined vision serves as the cornerstone, guiding educational institutions towards increased competitiveness. When executed comprehensively, this vision acts as a guiding light for visionary leadership, charting the course for the organization's future. Such a vision, when articulated by a leader, inspires their team, influencing actions and shaping the future direction. Leaders with a profound vision significantly influence how this vision is communicated and embraced by their teams. When a leader's vision is robustly supported by every facet of the organization, it provides a roadmap for all members in their respective roles. In pursuing the realization of this vision, a leader who can establish and steer this direction epitomizes visionary leadership.

Table 2**Summary on the Extent of School-Based Management Practices**

No	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1	Effective School Leadership	3.55	Extensive
2	Budget Allocation	3.58	Extensive
3	Management Strategies	3.66	Extensive

4	Staff Development	3.58	Extensive
5	Curriculum and Instruction	3.58	Extensive
6	Resources	3.59	Extensive
Overall		3.59	Extensive

Table 2 provides the summary on the extent of school-based management practices. It is exhibited that the overall mean of the school-based management practices is 3.59, which is in an extensive level. This means that the school-based management practices are oftentimes evident.

Data show that all six (6) indicators are in an extensive level. As arranged chronologically, management strategies have the highest mean score (3.66). This is followed by resources (3.59), budget allocation (3.58), staff development

(3.58), curriculum and instruction (3.58), and effective school leadership (3.55).

The implications drawn from these results hold significant importance, as they demonstrate the extensive presence of various dimensions of school-based management practices among the participants. The consistently high mean scores across all six indicators underscore the prevalence of these practices in the management of educational institutions. These findings underscore the comprehensive nature of school management and underscore the necessity for effective practices across various domains. Recognizing the prevalence of these practices can assist educational institutions in fostering a culture of collaborative management, transparency, and shared decision-making among staff members.

The positive findings of this study align with the conclusions of Karmila and Wijaya (2020), who assert that School-Based Management (SBM) delegates responsibility and decision-making for school operations to stakeholders such as principals, teachers, parents, the community, and sometimes even students. SBM represents an educational management approach that empowers schools to manage and allocate resources, fostering collaboration and support from diverse entities to achieve quality education. Furthermore, Mawanda et al. (2018) highlight that SBM offers schools autonomy to shape their policies to enhance the quality of school performance, necessitating active collaboration between the school, community, and government.

Moreover, Amon (2021) emphasizes that SBM is a structured approach that delegates both responsibility and authority to the school itself, ensuring its efficient functioning. Maisaroh (2019) underscores that SBM represents a formal mechanism that grants decision-making powers to schools, encompassing functions such as budget allocation, staff management, and program development. By empowering local school actors with sufficient autonomy and adaptability, schools are better positioned to achieve their objectives and fulfill their targets through enhanced collaboration among stakeholders.

Table 3

Significance of the Relationship Between the Extent of Visionary Leadership of Principals and School-Based Management Practices

Visionary Leadership of Principals Indicators	Dependent Variable	r-value	p-value	Decision on Ho
Flexibility	School-Based Management Practices	0.475	0.000	Rejected
Team Spirit		0.459	0.000	Rejected
Vision		0.489	0.000	Rejected
Conscience		0.468	0.000	Rejected
Overall		0.472*	0.000	Rejected

*Significant at 0.05 significance level.

Presented in Table 3 are the data on the significance of the relationship between principals' visionary leadership and school-based management practices. Reflected in the hypothesis, the relationship was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The overall r-value of .472 with a p-value of <0.05 signified the rejection of the null hypothesis. It means that there is a significant relationship between principals' visionary leadership and school-based management practices. This shows that the principals' visionary leadership is correlated with the school-based management practices.

Doing a pairwise correlation among the measures of both variables, it can be gleaned that flexibility, team spirit, vision, and conscience revealed computed r-values of 0.475, 0.459, 0.489, and 0.468 respectively with p-values which are less than 0.05 in the level of significance. This implies that as flexibility, team spirit, vision, and conscience increases, the school-based management practices also increase.

The rejection of the null hypothesis, with a significant p-value of less than 0.05, underscores that visionary leadership plays a vital role in shaping school-based management practices. This correlation suggests that the more visionary and effective the leadership, the more likely it is that school management practices will be well-implemented. The pairwise correlation among the various aspects of visionary leadership reveals that these visionary leadership attributes are positively associated with school-based management practices. As flexibility, team spirit, vision, and conscience increase, the effectiveness

of school management practices also increases. This indicates that the presence of visionary leadership qualities, such as adaptability, collaboration, a clear vision, and ethical decision-making, has a direct impact on the efficiency and success of school-based management.

The findings are consistent with Saputra's (2020) study, which highlights the principal's pivotal role in determining whether a school becomes highly effective or highly ineffective. The collaborative framework of school-based management underscores the importance of principals and teachers exercising leadership across various domains within a school, including visionary, transformational, and mentor leadership roles. This suggests that a shift in leadership roles and effective principal leadership is crucial for the success of school-based management.

Similarly, Bergeron (2011) noted that principals, in their managerial capacity, must embody essential managerial functions and skills. Foundational managerial responsibilities for principals encompass planning, organizing, directing, and overseeing school operations. Additionally, they should demonstrate proficiency in conceptual planning, fostering robust interpersonal relationships through effective communication, and applying practical technical skills.

Lessa et al. (2018) emphasized the significant role that school management plays in determining educational quality. Salmagundi (2015) revealed that effective school management indirectly impacts critical aspects such as curriculum efficacy, adequacy of learning resources and infrastructure, and the overall learning process. From a managerial perspective, Kompri (2017) stressed that high-performing schools excel in maximizing the potential of all school resources.

Conclusions

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

The prevalence of principals' visionary leadership indicates that it is frequently observable within schools. In fact, all dimensions, including flexibility, team spirit, vision, and conscience, are often evident among teachers. Additionally, the extent of school-based management practices is high, with all indicators, particularly effective school leadership, budget allocation, management strategies, staff development, curriculum and instruction, and resources, being rated highly. Furthermore, there is a relationship between principals' visionary leadership and school-based management strategies, leading 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 play a pivotal role in supporting visionary leadership of principals and effective school-based management practices by providing the necessary resources, training, and guidance. They may ensure that principals have access to professional development programs that focus on visionary leadership skills, strategic planning, and effective decision-making. Additionally, DepEd officials may facilitate regular communication and collaboration among principals, allowing them to share best practices and innovative approaches.

Moreover, school heads may significantly contribute to the enhancement of their visionary leadership and school-based management practices by prioritizing transparent communication and active engagement with all stakeholders, fostering a shared vision for the institution's future. Encouraging collaboration among teachers, staff, and parents, while also delegating decision-making authority, can help in promoting effective school-based management. Additionally, continuous professional development for both school leaders and educators is essential to stay updated on evolving educational trends and maintain a culture of innovation within the school.

Furthermore, teachers may actively contribute to strengthening principals' visionary leadership and school-based management by providing valuable feedback and insights from their classroom experiences, aiding in informed decision-making. They may also actively engage in professional development opportunities and training, aligning their teaching methods with the school's goals and vision. Collaborative communication and open dialogue between teachers and principals create a supportive environment where the exchange of ideas and innovative practices can thrive, ultimately enhancing the overall effectiveness of school management.

Lastly, future researchers may play a pivotal role in enhancing principals' visionary leadership and school-based management practices by conducting rigorous studies and evaluations of different educational strategies and leadership models. Their research findings may offer evidence-based insights that help inform and refine the decision-making process for school leaders. Additionally, collaborating with schools and educational institutions to implement and assess innovative approaches can bridge the gap between research and practice, leading to more effective and adaptable management practices in the future.

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