The Interplay of Shared Leadership of School Heads on Teamwork Attitude of Public Elementary Teachers in Davao City Division

Madelyn O. Escobar

The Rizal Memorial Colleges, Inc., Philippines

Doi: https://doi.org/10.55248/gengpi.5.0624.1558

A B S T R A C T

This study determined the extent of shared leadership and the teamwork attitude of teachers in the public elementary schools in Davao City Division. Also, it investigated the association of the involved variables. With the use of probability sampling, 200 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, Product-Moment correlation and Regression Analysis. Results revealed that there was a very extensive shared leadership of school heads and teamwork attitude of teachers. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between the two variables. Moreover, all domains of shared leadership were found to have significantly influenced the teamwork attitude of teachers. Based on the findings, it was further suggested that higher officials in the Department of Education and school principals may identify means on how to help teachers develop a teamwork attitude. Apparently, school heads need to strengthen their shared leadership for the attainment of teachers’ teamwork attitude.

Keywords: Shared leadership, teamwork attitude, descriptive correlation, Davao City Division, Philippines

Introduction

The way in which team members interrelate with each other will have an effect on the output and actions of the team as whole. Team capabilities have to meet mission and objective necessity and to enable teams to resolve possible group clashes attentively and a real team can be defining as a sum of individuals who are systematized in their research work, have strong aims, applicable skills, reciprocal trust, integrated assurance, good communication, conveying skills, suitable leadership, internal and external provision of individuals. The success of any group or team depends on the higher group effort, positive and constant behavior of individuals towards specific goals and a proper planning, cooperation and communication in group. Individuals are accountable for their contributions and productivities. Unfortunately, with the diverse personalities of teachers, school heads’ leadership is being tested in encouraging teamwork among his teachers.

In Turkey, when the Turkish Ministry of National Education implemented a training program on collaboration and teamwork without teachers’ input, they were less willing to embrace it (Duyar et al., 2013). The authors of the Turkish study emphatically call on the centralized systems integral to the country to rethink education. Nonetheless, barriers like the ones in Turkey exist elsewhere. In Australia, Polega et al. (2019) expressed concerns about overburdened teachers. He noted that pushing teachers to take on extra duties without extra pay could undermine teamwork. A similar U.S. study stated that teachers develop resentment toward the process when they participate in teamwork without feeling like they have influence.

Another barrier noted by several studies was the scarcity of time (Amorim Neto et al., 2018). In some cases, principals are concerned about the challenge of finding common time for all team members to meet (Zavera & Tingguri, 2017). Other studies note the challenge of team members who misuse time or fail to use it productively (Ketterlin-Geller et al., 2015). In this sense, van der Mescht and Tyala (2008) alert us to teachers who undermine the process of collaboration—what the authors call sabotage. Such teachers may not contribute as much to the process, or they may act as disruptive elements.

Meanwhile, in a study conducted by Dugang (2020) in Bohol, it was revealed that school heads and teachers have relatively lesser overall teamwork in problem solving and team processes. It is a fact that teachers’ job is beyond the four corners of the classroom since learning happens everywhere wherein the learners gain experience. This aspect demands the teachers to render exigencies on the service, requiring the teachers to spend more than the regular working hours, and in worse cases, demand teachers out of their time and resources (Sarabia & Collantes, 2020). Teachers are overburdened with teaching and ancillary duties such as department head, curriculum head, program coordinator, or focal person. In this case, teamwork has never been emphasized but it is more on passing the responsibilities to others in order to lessen the burden.

In the Division of Davao City, the researcher observed that teamwork has been not practiced due to some undeniable factors. The barriers to teamwork included time constraints due to heavy workload, relationship concerns such as lack of trust, conflicts, communication issues, teaching and personality differences, and unwillingness to participate. Conflicts, unclear goals, poor communication, and little time can negatively impact teamwork. These observations verified the claim of Macabulos and Vicera (2019) revealing that teachers had problems and issues on lack of cooperation/
teachers have different ideas/opinions on a certain topic that makes the work more complicated, lack of time and lastly on creating unhealthy competition among teachers.

Given these circumstances, the researcher aimed to learn more about how shared leadership of school heads and teamwork attitude of teachers are practiced in the public elementary schools, specifically in Davao City Division. It also investigated the relationship between the two variables. The researcher was driven to examine the relevant variables considering the dearth of studies involving shared leadership of school heads and teamwork attitude of teachers. This undertaking also offered the policymakers some insights into creating policies, programs, interventions, and activities that would help public schools strengthen shared leadership of school heads and teamwork attitude of teachers.

This study was mainly anchored to 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) related 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 enhancing teachers’ teamwork attitude. Apparently, in this theory, employees who have showcased positive attitude towards teamwork or place high regard to collaboration are created by leaders who have exemplified shared leadership. This is so true in the educational context wherein school principals have the capacity to motivate and empower teachers.

Another theory that supported this study is the Theory of Shared Leadership by Craig et al. (2007). As Acar (2010) noted, shared leadership represents a fundamental shift away from the notion of a single, appointed leader, to the idea that team members mutually influence each other and collectively share leadership roles, responsibilities and functions. Recent empirical work has provided evidence for the important role of shared leadership in groups (Nielsen and Daniels, 2012; Nicolaides et al., 2014; Sousa and Van Dierendonck, 2016; Sun et al., 2016).

More interestingly, some studies even found that shared leadership is more influential than convectional vertical leadership for team effectiveness (Pearce and Sims, 2002; Ensley et al., 2006). For example, Ramthun and Matkin (2012) stated that shared leadership is often advantageous, since members are more likely to follow the person having the best knowledge and skills than depending solely on the vertical influence process of traditional leadership. Indeed, many other empirical studies have also demonstrated that teams with shared leadership yield higher team effectiveness (Pearce and Sims, 2002; Wang et al., 2014; Serban & Roberts, 2016).

Leadership scholars realized the importance of shared leadership and worked to understand how to conceptualize it, measure it, and to assess what impacts it brings to teams. Conceptually, shared leadership is a team-centric phenomenon (Ensley et al., 2006; Serban and Roberts, 2016) whereby team members engage in “leadership roles and responsibilities on behalf of the team” (Robert and You, 2018), and “accepts their colleagues’ leadership” (Aubé et al., 2017). Furthermore, shared leadership is not a static process; it is defined as an emergent, dynamic phenomenon that unfolds over time (Avolio et al., 2009; Drescher et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2014).

According to Carson et al. (2007), shared leadership is considered in terms of a continuum ranging from low to high, which implies that shared leadership is not a rigid either-or category, but occurs in every group at various levels (Liu et al., 2014). Additionally, shared leadership is also demonstrated to be positively related to team functioning (Bergman et al., 2012), team proactive behavior (Eskutlu, 2012), team and individual learning (Liu et al., 2014), team member diversity and emotional conflict (Acar, 2010), team members’ trust, autonomy and satisfaction (Robert & You, 2018).

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 shared leadership of school heads and teamwork attitude of teachers. In addition, this academic pursuit was correlational since its purpose was to measure the connection between shared leadership of school heads and teamwork attitude of public elementary teachers in the Davao City Division.

Research Respondents

This study catered the 200 public elementary teachers in the Division of Davao City. 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, elementary teachers with 2 years teaching experience were chosen in this endeavor since their 2 years stay in the public school would help them to assess the shared leadership of school heads and teamwork attitude of among teachers. 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

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 shared leadership while the second set was about the teamwork attitude of public elementary teachers. 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 .72 suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency.

The teamwork attitude questionnaire was adapted from Baker et al. (2008). The instrument consists of 30 items. It has the following indicators, namely: team structure (1-6); leadership (7-12); situation monitoring (13-18); mutual support (19-24); and communication (25-30). The questionnaire was subjected to a pilot testing having a result of .76 suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Table 1**

Summary on the Extent of Shared Leadership of School Heads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Descriptive Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Planning and Organizing</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>Extensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>Very Extensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Support and Consideration</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>Extensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Development and Monitoring</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>Very Extensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>Very Extensive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 4.22, which is a very extensive level. This means that shared leadership of school heads is always evident.

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

The data analysis presents a distinctive pattern across the four indicators, showcasing a spectrum of results spanning from extensive to very extensive levels. These findings underscore the diverse dimensions of shared leadership demonstrated by school heads. The higher scores in problem-solving and development/monitoring highlight a strong commitment to collaborative decision-making, skill enhancement, and vigilance in the teaching community. The mid-range scores in planning and organizing indicate an active role in shaping operational aspects, while the support and consideration dimension, while also notable, presents an opportunity for further enhancement. The implications of these results emphasize a dynamic leadership approach that embraces various facets of empowerment, collaboration, and growth.
With the very extensive status of the shared leadership, this reaffirmed the widely held belief of Furr and Leithwood (2017) clarifying that the school leaders make sure that everyone involved in the school understands and supports the direction, goals, and objectives they have set. Together with knowledge, abilities, and attitudes, school leaders should be able to provide technical help on instruction that closely link to curriculum, practice, and performance. They also foster a learning environment that guarantees access to great education that is inclusive, pertinent, and empowering.

Similarly, Elmore and Pons (2020) believed that shared leadership may have its greatest effect by reducing teacher isolation and boosting dedication to the common good of the school. He used the term “shared leadership” widely to refer to teachers' participation in and influence over choices affecting the entire school. This interpretation of shared leadership signifies a growing scholarly consensus on the individuals involved in the performance of leadership roles. It also sets the perspective apart from that of researchers who combine the notion of shared leadership with instructional leadership.

Table 2

Summary on the Extent of Teamwork Attitude of Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Descriptive Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Team Structure</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>Extensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>Very Extensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Situation Monitoring</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>Extensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mutual Support</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>Very Extensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>Extensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>Very Extensive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 provides the summary on the extent of teacher empowerment. It is exhibited that the overall mean of teacher empowerment is 4.22, which is in a very extensive level. This means that teacher empowerment is oftentimes evident.

Data show that all five (5) indicators reveal a varying result ranging from extensive to very extensive level. As arranged chronologically, leadership has the highest mean score (4.32). This is followed by mutual support (4.27), team structure (4.17), situation monitoring (4.17), and communication (4.17).

The data analysis presents a discernible pattern across the five indicators, illustrating a range of results spanning from extensive to very extensive levels. These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of the teamwork attitude embraced by teachers. The implications of these results underscore a dynamic teamwork attitude that encompasses various dimensions of effective education. Teachers' dedication to leadership, mutual assistance, structured teamwork, situational awareness, and communication collectively contribute to an educational ecosystem that promotes shared responsibility, positive collaboration, and the continuous pursuit of educational excellence. This holistic approach nurtures a vibrant learning environment, enriches student experiences, and advances the overall mission of education.

The favorable findings of this study supported the notion of Cherkowski and Schnellert (2018) indicating that in order for an organization to be successful and, more particularly, for teaching to be effective, teamwork is seen as essential. Working together prevents teachers from working alone, enhances instructional methods, and boosts student accomplishment. Successful teamwork also benefits from a culture of open communication and a shared sense of goals and values. Effective teams are also adaptable and take into account the individual members' expertise. Vangrieken et al. (2015) mentioned that instead of being imposed from the top down, the work is produced through collective group effort.

Gerlach (n.d.) stated that teachers must see themselves as members of teams and collaborators in the process of learning if they are to succeed. The idea that teamwork is a process between partners who share common goals and collaborate to attain the goals is a recurring theme among definitions of teams. People can share ideas about their work through teamwork, which helps them advance their careers. Teamwork is not something that just happens. It calls for diligence, dedication, and a readiness to rise to the demands of teamwork. Sharing expectations, valuing each other's distinctive personality qualities, respecting variety, and displaying a good attitude toward cooperation are all ways to improve team effectiveness. When a team functions effectively, the work is less demanding, more enjoyable, and fulfilling for all team members, and it benefits students more.

Table 3

Significance of the Relationship Between Shared Leadership of School Heads and Teamwork Attitude of Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shared Leadership of School Heads</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>r-value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Decision on Ho</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning and Organizing</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.514</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.525</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Support and Consideration  0.509  0.000  Rejected
Development and Monitoring  Teamwork Attitude of Teachers  0.518  0.000  Rejected
Overall  0.517*  0.000  Rejected
*Significant at 0.05 significance level.

Presented in Table 3 are the data on the significance of the relationship between shared leadership of school heads and teamwork attitude of teachers. Reflected in the hypothesis, the relationship was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The overall r-value of .517 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 of school heads and teamwork attitude of teachers.

This shows that shared leadership of school heads are correlated with teamwork attitude of teachers. Doing a pairwise correlation among the measures of both variables, it can be gleaned that planning and organizing, problem solving, support and consideration, and development and monitoring revealed computed r-values of 0.514, 0.525, 0.509, and 0.518 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, and development and monitoring increases, the teamwork attitude of teachers also increases.

The result is in consonance to the study conducted by Ketterlin-Geller et al. (2014) revealing that facilitating a culture of teamwork among teachers is one of the many tasks of principals. Duyar et al. (2013) found that principal leadership and teacher teamwork rank high among variables that affect job satisfaction and self-efficacy. Effective leadership emphasizes teamwork and collaboration rather than a singular manager. According to van der Mescht and Tyala (2008), successful principals support teamwork by establishing a cohesive climate in which team members from distinctive backgrounds with various areas of expertise collaborate to reach a shared goal. When principals facilitate successful teams by focusing on a wide variety of skills, teachers become part of teams with a comprehensive range of ideas, expertise, and experiences that can be shared and reflected upon.

Fostering teamwork involves much more than simply addressing specific barriers. Principals need to engage in a deeper transformation of the school culture. For example, Szczesiul and Huizenga (2014) reveal that team members end up feeling like the process does not really matter when principals fail to offer appropriate oversight or make decisions without consulting them. Furthermore, principals must be aware of tensions that may arise when the culture transforms from power to creative collaboration.

Conclusions

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

The extent of shared leadership of school heads of the public secondary schools implies that it is always evident. Specifically, problem solving, development and monitoring are perceived to be always evident while planning and organizing, and support and consideration are oftentimes evident. Meanwhile, the extent of the teamwork attitude of teachers is oftentimes evident. In particular, leadership and mutual support are always evident among teachers while team structure, situation monitoring, and communication are oftentimes evident. Moreover, shared leadership of school heads and teamwork attitude of teachers are correlated. 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 craft effective policies, programs, projects, interventions and activities which promote shared leadership among school heads. They may create more initiatives that would further empower teachers in showcasing a positive teamwork attitude.

Meanwhile, school head may keep on assessing their shared leadership. They may also assess the kind of teamwork attitude that their teachers are showcasing. More so, they may craft a contextualized initiative that would strengthen teachers’ positive teamwork attitude by showcasing also their shared leadership capacities.

More so, teachers may make an effort of developing initiatives to practice collaboration at school by exemplifying a positive teamwork attitude. They may also conduct a self-reflection in order to assess themselves concerning the extent of their teamwork attitude. In doing so, they may create a personalized activity helping them to develop a positive teamwork attitude.

Lastly, future researchers may explore relevant information about shared leadership of school heads. They may consider using other research approaches to further explore the involved variables in this study.

References


