



LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR OF SCHOOL HEADS AND WORK ENGAGEMENT OF PUBLIC-SCHOOL ELEMENTARY TEACHERS IN DAVAO DE ORO DIVISION

Caitlin Charisse S. Oviedo

Master of Arts in Educational Management, Rizal Memorial Colleges, Inc.

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36713/epra28460>

DOI No: 10.36713/epra28460

ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between leadership behavior of school heads and work engagement of teachers in selected public elementary schools in the Davao de Oro Division. A total of 166 teachers participated using adapted survey instruments. Findings revealed that school heads demonstrated a high level of leadership behavior, with very high ratings in human relations, instructional leadership, and trust and decision making, while conflict resolution was rated high. Teachers likewise exhibited a high level of work engagement, with high levels of absorption and dedication, and a moderate level of vigor. Results further showed a significant positive relationship between leadership behavior and teachers' work engagement, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. All leadership indicators were significantly correlated with work engagement, indicating that stronger leadership practices are associated with higher teacher engagement. Regression analysis confirmed that leadership behavior significantly predicts teachers' work engagement. Human relations, instructional leadership, trust and decision making, and school budgeting and income generation all emerged as significant predictors. Based on the findings, it is recommended that DepEd and school administrators strengthen leadership development programs focusing on human relations, instructional leadership, conflict resolution, and participatory decision-making to further enhance teachers' work engagement, particularly their vigor and sustained motivation in teaching.

KEYWORDS: Leadership Behavior; Work Engagement; Public Elementary Schools; Davao De Oro Division

INTRODUCTION

Work engagement among teachers is a critical factor in ensuring high-quality instruction and improved student outcomes, as it reflects a state of vigor, dedication, and absorption in one's work. Engaged teachers demonstrate sustained motivation, a strong sense of professional commitment, and a willingness to go beyond basic job requirements. However, work engagement remains a perennial challenge in the education sector due to factors such as excessive workloads, limited professional development opportunities, inadequate recognition, and the emotional demands of teaching. These issues can diminish motivation, increase burnout risks, and hinder teachers' ability to remain fully engaged, making effective school leadership a crucial element in addressing and sustaining teacher engagement.

Many researchers revealed that the level of work disengagement is a universal concern (Musenze et al., 2020). In Total Reward Survey, explain that the number of employees who have high engagement is very low, which is less than a quarter of the global working population, and around 39% have medium work engagement. Meanwhile, according to the latest Global Workplace report, it was found that a large number of employees (up to 85%) are not engaged at work (Oehler & Adair, 2019). Therefore, educational organizations need to anticipate this challenge so that the level of teachers' engagement is high.

In the Philippines, teachers face various challenges that hinder their work engagement, including inadequate resources, high job demands, and insufficient support from school leaders. These issues can lead to occupational stress, burnout, and decreased job satisfaction, impacting their effectiveness and overall well-being (Arceta, 2020). Teachers in Metro Manila have shown worrying signs of low work engagement that are closely tied to heavy workloads, high occupational stress, and low job satisfaction. A large descriptive-causal study of 1,098 private secondary teachers across Metro Manila reported that lower motivation and job satisfaction significantly reduce teachers' organizational commitment and work engagement, linking poor engagement to job-related demands and resource shortfalls (Manalo et al., 2020).

Moreover, in Caloocan City, Eden (2025) revealed that excessive workloads, extended work hours, urgent report deadlines, financial burdens, special assignments, and professional development demands are key challenges disrupting teachers' work-life balance, exacerbating role conflict, stress, and family disengagement, underscoring the need for flexible policies and institutional support. This is despite DepEd policies regulating workloads, the respondents still face work-life imbalance.

At Camanlangan National High School, Davao de Oro, there is a concerning pattern: many teachers leave their positions at the Department of Education (DepEd) due to excessive tasks. This issue is not unique; there has been a steady increase in teacher resignations across the Davao Region. From 2020 to 2022, 964 teachers left their roles, primarily due to



burdensome administrative tasks and non-teaching duties. Davao de Oro Division contributed significantly, with 119 resignations.

Despite the recognized importance of leadership behavior in influencing teacher motivation and performance, there was limited empirical evidence on how the leadership practices of school heads affect the work engagement of teachers within the local context of Davao de Oro. Conducting a study on the relationship between leadership behavior and the work engagement of teachers would be essential to address pressing challenges in the education sector, particularly in sustaining a motivated and committed teaching workforce. Leadership behavior significantly shapes the school environment, influences teacher morale, and determines the availability of support and resources that can either foster or hinder engagement. This study would be timely and necessary to ensure that schools cultivate an environment where teachers remain inspired, productive, and resilient amid increasing demands in the profession.

The findings of the study would be disseminated through various platforms to ensure that stakeholders could use the results for informed decision-making and practice improvement. A formal presentation would be conducted for school heads, teachers, and division officials during a district or division-wide meeting, highlighting key insights, implications, and recommended leadership strategies. Printed summaries and digital copies of the research would be shared with the Schools Division Office and participating schools to serve as reference material for policy enhancement and professional development planning. The results might also be presented at educational conferences and published in academic journals to contribute to the wider body of knowledge on teacher engagement and effective school leadership. Through these dissemination efforts, the study would promote leadership practices that foster a supportive work environment, sustain teacher engagement, and ultimately improve educational outcomes.

THE STUDY'S OBJECTIVES

The study investigated the relationship between professional leadership of school heads and performance of public elementary teachers. Specifically, it sought to:

1. To assess the level of leadership behavior of school heads as perceived by public school elementary teachers in terms of:
 - 1.1 human relations;
 - 1.2 trust and decision making;
 - 1.3 instructional leadership; and
 - 1.4 conflict resolution.
2. To determine the level of work engagement of elementary teachers in terms of:
 - 2.1 vigor;
 - 2.2 dedication; and
 - 2.3 absorption.
3. To examine whether there is a significant relationship between leadership behavior of school heads and work engagement of teachers.
4. To identify which domains of leadership behavior of school heads significantly influence the work engagement of teachers.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology for this study, encompassing the research design, research participants, research tools, data collection procedure, and data analysis to be utilized in this investigation.

Method Used

This research adopted a quantitative approach, specifically utilizing a descriptive correlational design. Quantitative research systematically explores phenomena through the collection of numerical data and the application of statistical or computational analyses. It focuses on measurable characteristics and is appropriate for examining phenomena that can be expressed in numerical form. The main purposes of quantitative methods include identifying patterns, calculating averages, making predictions, assessing possible causal relationships, and generalizing findings to a broader population or group (Lim, 2024).

The descriptive correlational research design emphasized the detailed description of variables and the evaluation of the strength and direction of their relationships. This approach investigated and predicted how variables naturally relate to each other in real-world contexts without manipulating conditions or establishing cause-and-effect links. Its primary goal was to clarify the nature of associations among two or more variables while refraining from asserting causal conclusions (Bhat, 2024).

In the context of this study, a quantitative descriptive correlational study was appropriate for investigating the leadership behavior of school heads and work engagement of public school elementary teachers in Davao de Oro Division because it allowed for systematic measurement and analysis of the relationship between these two variables within the natural school setting. This research design enabled the collection of numerical data that describe the current leadership behaviors and levels of teacher engagement, providing a clear snapshot of existing conditions. Additionally, it facilitated the examination of the strength and direction of associations between leadership practices and teacher work engagement without



manipulating the school environment. This approach provided valuable empirical evidence that can guide school administrators and policymakers in understanding how different leadership behaviors relate to teacher motivation and commitment, which is essential for developing effective strategies to enhance educational outcomes.

Sources of Data

The sources of data in this study were primarily the responses of the 166 public elementary school teachers from selected schools in the Davao de Oro Division. These teachers were chosen as the main respondents because they directly experience and observe the leadership behavior of their school heads and are actively engaged in their respective teaching assignments. Their perceptions and responses provided the primary quantitative data needed to determine the level of leadership behavior of school heads and the level of work engagement among teachers.

In addition to the primary data gathered from the survey questionnaires, secondary sources were also considered to support the study. These included related literature, published studies, and official documents from the Department of Education that provided context and theoretical grounding for the variables being examined. However, the main analysis and interpretation of results were based on the primary data obtained from the respondents. The study ensured that all responses were treated with confidentiality and used solely for academic and research purposes.

Data Gathering Instrument

This study used an adapted survey questionnaire to gather data, specifically crafted for its research objectives. The questionnaire was structured into two distinct sections to effectively address the research aims. The first section evaluated the leadership behavior of school heads, while the second section focused on measuring the work engagement of teachers. **Leadership Behavior.** The leadership behavior questionnaire is adapted from Panis (2020). The instrument consisted of 20 items. It was composed of four (4) indicators, namely: human relations (1-5), trust and decision making (1-5), instructional leadership (1-5), and conflict resolution (1-5). The questionnaire was subjected to a pilot testing leading to a Cronbach Alpha of .85 suggesting that all the items in survey measure the intention of the study. Below was the rating scale of participation in decision making of teachers.

Mean Interval	Descriptive Level	Descriptive Interpretation
4.20-5.00	Very High	The leadership behavior of school heads is always evident.
3.40-4.19	High	The leadership behavior of school heads is oftentimes evident.
2.60-3.39	Moderate	The leadership behavior of school heads is occasionally evident.
1.80-2.59	Low	The leadership behavior of school heads is seldom evident.
1.00-1.79	Very Low	The leadership behavior of school heads is never evident.

Work Engagement. The work engagement of teachers questionnaire was adapted from Magboo et al. (2023). The instrument consisted of 15 items. It had the following indicators, namely: vigor (1-5), dedication (1-5), and absorption (1-5). It was subjected to pilot testing, the instrument resulted in a Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient of .87, demonstrating a high degree of internal consistency and reliability. Below was the rating scale of productivity of teachers.

Mean Interval	Descriptive Level	Descriptive Interpretation
4.20-5.00	Very High	The work engagement of teachers is always evident.
3.40-4.19	High	The work engagement of teachers is oftentimes evident.
2.60-3.39	Moderate	The work engagement of teachers is occasionally evident.
1.80-2.59	Low	The work engagement of teachers is seldom evident.
1.00-1.79	Very Low	The work engagement of teachers is never evident.

The research instrument for this study was revised to ensure closer alignment with the research objectives and goals. It was evaluated for content validity by three expert validators. Following this evaluation, the survey questionnaire underwent pilot testing at Pongpong Integrated School with thirty (30) public elementary teachers who were not part of the designated respondent group to assess its reliability. The researcher consistently incorporated feedback, suggestions, and comments from the advisor, panel members, and expert validators in an iterative process. This procedure was essential for refining the instrument and ensuring it accurately measures the intended constructs.

Sampling Technique

This study targeted 166 public elementary teachers from Davao De Oro Division. By applying Slovin's Formula with a margin of error set at 0.05, the initial population of 285 teachers teaching Grades 1 to 6, each with a minimum of five years of teaching experience, is reduced to 166. This approach aligned with Memon et al. (2020), who suggest that although a minimum sample size of 50 is acceptable for Pearson analysis, a sample size of 100 is generally preferred in research contexts. Therefore, the selection of 166 teachers was more than adequate to fulfill the objectives of the study.

The researcher employed a probability sampling technique called cluster random sampling to select the samples. This method involved dividing a larger population into smaller subgroups, or clusters, and then randomly selecting some of these clusters to create the sample. Cluster random sampling is particularly advantageous for handling large populations and attaining the desired sample size, as it streamlines the research process by minimizing the number of participants



needed when the overall population is too large to study comprehensively (Simkus, 2023). In this study, the researcher ensured that the chosen schools were adequately represented in the sample.

The researcher set specific criteria for selecting respondents, which include both inclusion and exclusion standards. Inclusion criteria for this study consisted of public elementary teachers from Davao De Oro Division who are currently teaching Grades 1 to 6 and have at least five years of continuous teaching experience. Teachers meeting these criteria were considered eligible respondents to ensure relevant and reliable data. Exclusion criteria applied to teachers who have less than five years of teaching experience, those teaching grade levels outside Grades 1 to 6, and those who are on extended leave or not actively engaged in teaching during the data collection period. Withdrawal criteria allowed respondents to voluntarily discontinue participation at any point in the study without facing any negative consequences or penalties, ensuring their rights and comfort were respected throughout the research process.

Table 1 showed the distribution of the respondent. The table presented the distribution of respondents across the six participating schools. A total of 166 respondents were included in the study, representing 100% of the sample population. Schools A and B each contributed 27 respondents or 16.26% of the total respondents, while

Table 1
Profile of the Respondents

School	Number of Respondents	Percentage
School A	27	16.26%
School B	27	16.26%
School C	28	16.86%
School D	28	16.86%
School E	28	16.86%
School F	28	16.86%
Total	166	100%

Schools C, D, E, and F each had 28 respondents, equivalent to 16.86%. The data indicated that the respondents were almost equally distributed among the participating schools, ensuring balanced representation in the study.

Procedure of the Study

The researcher followed a rigorous procedure and strict protocol in collecting the data to ensure accuracy and consistency. Throughout the process, the researcher prioritized the well-being and safety of the respondents, taking necessary precautions to protect their rights and comfort. All aspects of ethical considerations were carefully observed and strictly adhered to in this study, ensuring that the research was conducted with integrity and respect for the participants.

Permission to Conduct the Study. When the researcher received the Ethics Committee Certificate last November 11, 2025 and the Endorsement from the Dean of Graduate Studies last November 22, 2025, the researcher officially requested permission and endorsement from the Division of Davao de Oro last January 27, 2026. Subsequently, an endorsement letter was sent to the appropriate school heads to gain the essential final authorization and support for the study. This paved the way for the researcher to set the schedule for the distribution of the survey questionnaire with the approval of the School Head.

Distribution and Retrieval of the Questionnaire. Following this, a schedule was established for conducting the survey questionnaire which started from February 9, 2025 to February 23, 2025, ensuring adherence to health and safety protocols. The questionnaire was distributed directly to participants, with all necessary precautions meticulously followed. Participants received a comprehensive briefing on the study's objectives and had a one hour to complete the survey. The distribution and collection of the questionnaire took place on school days.

Collation and Statistical Treatment of Data. All the data gathered were tallied, tabulated, analyzed and interpreted confidentially and accordingly. This was made possible with the help of the designated Statistician.

Statistical Treatment

For more comprehensive interpretation and analysis of the data, the following statistical tools were utilized. These tools were used to answer the statement of the problem and the hypotheses of the study.

Mean. It is the average of a set of numbers. This was used to measure the level of leadership behavior of school heads and work engagement of teachers. It answered the statement of the problem 1 and 2.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. This was utilized to determine the relationship between leadership behavior of school heads and work engagement of teachers. It answered the statement of the problem 3 and the first hypothesis.

Regression Analysis. This determined the significant influence of leadership behavior of school on work engagement of teachers. It answered the statement of the problem 4 and the second hypothesis.



Ethical Consideration

In carrying out this study, the researcher followed rigorous protocols to safeguard the well-being of the participants. Particular emphasis was placed on addressing important ethical issues that were vital in quantitative research. These concerns mainly stemmed from the study's methodology. Ethical challenges pertinent to this research included conducting the study properly while ensuring that confidentiality and anonymity were upheld. The study adhered to the guidelines established by the Rizal Memorial Colleges Ethics Review Committee.

Social Value. The study on leadership behavior of school heads and work engagement of public school elementary teachers in Davao de Oro Division holds significant social value as it would contribute to improving the quality of education, which is fundamental to community development and social well-being. Effective leadership that promotes teacher engagement could lead to better teaching practices, increased student achievement, and a more positive school climate, all of which benefit not only the school community but also society as a whole. The findings would provide insights that could help educational leaders and policymakers create supportive environments where teachers feel motivated and valued, fostering a culture of continuous improvement. In this way, the study would support efforts to build stronger, more educated communities that would be more equipped to face social challenges and promote sustainable development.

Informed Consent Form. In this undertaking, the researcher secured informed consent through a clear and respectful process that ensured respondents fully understand the purpose, procedures, and their rights. Each respondent received a consent form written in simple language that explains the study's goals, what participation involves, and the voluntary nature of their involvement. The form also assured respondents that their information was kept confidential and that they might withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. Before signing, respondents had the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification, ensuring that their consent was given freely and with full knowledge of what participation entails. This process promoted trust and transparency, which were essential for ethical research and the social value of the study.

Vulnerability of the Research Respondents. The researcher addressed the vulnerability of the respondents in the study on leadership behavior of school heads and work engagement of public school elementary teachers in Davao de Oro Division through careful measures designed to protect their well-being and rights throughout the research process. Special attention was given to creating a safe and respectful environment where respondents felt comfortable sharing their honest opinions without fear of judgment or negative consequences. The researcher ensured that sensitive topics were approached with care and that respondents could choose not to answer questions that make them uncomfortable. Confidentiality was strictly maintained to prevent any risk of exposure or harm. These steps safeguarded vulnerable respondents and upheld ethical standards, which enhanced the social value of the study by promoting trust and encouraging genuine participation.

Risks, Benefits, and Safety. The researcher ensured the risk, benefits, and safety of the respondents in the study through careful planning and ethical practices. Potential risks, such as discomfort or stress from answering questions, were minimized by designing the survey to be respectful and non-intrusive. The possible benefits, including contributing to improved leadership and teacher engagement, were clearly explained to the respondents. Safety measures included protecting the confidentiality of their responses and securing all data collected to prevent unauthorized access. The researcher also provided respondents the option to withdraw from the study at any point without any negative effects, ensuring their comfort and security throughout the process. These efforts upheld the well-being of respondents and strengthened the social value of the study by encouraging honest and willing participation.

Privacy and Confidentiality of Information. In alignment with the Data Privacy Act of 2012, which safeguarded individuals' essential right to privacy, respondents were confident that their information remained confidential and was not shared without their informed consent. The researcher secured the privacy and confidentiality of the respondents' information protecting their identities and responses. Personal information was separated from the data and replaced with codes to ensure anonymity. All data were stored in secure locations accessible only to the researcher and used solely for the purposes of this study. Respondents were informed that their answers were not shared with others outside the research team and did not affect their work or relationships.

Justice. In this undertaking, the researcher ensured justice through fair and equal treatment of all respondents. Selection was based on clear and appropriate criteria to include teachers who meet the study's requirements, without favoritism or discrimination. Every respondent received the same information about the study, opportunities to participate, and respect throughout the research process. The researcher also made sure that no respondent would face any disadvantage or harm as a result of their involvement or non-involvement.

Transparency. The researcher ensured transparency through open and honest communication with the respondents. Clear explanations of the study's purpose, procedures, and expected outcomes were provided before data collection begins. Respondents were encouraged to ask questions and expressed any concerns they may have, which the researcher addressed thoroughly. Information about how the data were used and reported was also shared to build trust. This transparent approach fostered a respectful and cooperative relationship between the researcher and respondents, enhancing the social value of the study by promoting ethical research practices and participant confidence.



Recruitment. The researcher ensured a fair and ethical recruitment process in the study. Clear criteria were established to select respondents who meet the study's requirements, ensuring that the sample accurately represents the target population. Invitations to participate were communicated respectfully and clearly, providing sufficient information about the study's purpose and what participation involves. Respondents were given adequate time to decide whether to join the study, and their choice was respected without any pressure or coercion. This approach promoted inclusiveness and fairness, which enhances the social value of the study.

Conflict of Interest (COI). The researcher avoided conflict of interest in the study through full disclosure of any personal or professional relationships that could influence the research process. Any potential sources of bias were identified and managed to maintain objectivity and fairness throughout the study. The researcher ensured that decisions related to data collection, analysis, and reporting was made independently, without favoritism or undue influence from external parties. Respondents were assured that their participation and responses were handled impartially and confidentially. These measures protected the integrity of the research and strengthen its social value by promoting trust and credibility among all stakeholders.

Adequacy of Facilities. In the conduct of the study, the researcher ensured the adequacy of facilities in the study through careful planning and preparation. Appropriate and accessible locations were selected to provide a comfortable and conducive environment for respondents during data collection. Necessary materials such as questionnaires, writing instruments, and seating arrangements were provided in sufficient quantity and quality to support the smooth flow of the research activities. If any technology or equipment was required, it was tested and set up in advance to avoid disruptions. These preparations created favorable conditions for respondents, encouraging their full participation and enhancing the overall quality and social value of the study.

Permission from Organization/Location. The researcher followed established procedures throughout the study. Upon receiving approval from the panelists, advisor, and the Ethics Review Committee, a formal request for authorization was submitted to the Schools Division Superintendent through an official letter to commence the research. Moreover, formal communications, including the endorsement from the Schools Division Superintendent, were sent to the principals of the schools participating in the study.

Qualification of the Researcher. The researcher is a Master of Arts in Educational Management candidate at Rizal Memorial Colleges, Inc., with an academic background strengthened through continuous revisions guided by the thesis adviser and expert panelists to ensure the quality and rigor of the study. Professionally, the researcher is a public school teacher at Pongpong Integrated School, P-5, Pongpong, Cagan, Andap, New Bataan, Davao de Oro, under the New Bataan District, Division of Davao de Oro. Assigned to teach Grade 1 and Grade 2 learners across all subject areas, the researcher is directly immersed in classroom instruction and school operations, which provides firsthand experience relevant to the study on leadership behavior and teacher work engagement. In addition, the researcher holds multiple coordinators, including LIS, MAPEH, ICT, LR, SBFP, WINS, School Clinic, and CRLA, reflecting active involvement in instructional support, learner welfare, and school management functions that further strengthen the relevance and credibility of the research undertaking.

Results

The study revealed that the overall leadership behavior of school heads was **High** ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.611$), indicating that effective leadership practices were frequently demonstrated in schools. Among the leadership dimensions, **Human Relations** obtained the highest rating ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 0.522$), followed by **Instructional Leadership** ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 0.523$) and **Trust and Decision Making** ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 0.578$), all interpreted as **Very High**. **Conflict Resolution** received a **High** rating ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.590$). These findings suggest that school heads effectively foster positive relationships, promote collaborative decision-making, and provide instructional support that contributes to a productive school environment.

Teachers' overall work engagement was likewise found to be **High** ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 0.576$). Among its dimensions, **Absorption** recorded the highest mean ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 0.542$), followed by **Dedication** ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.579$), while **Vigor** obtained a **Moderate** rating ($M = 3.35$, $SD = 0.511$). The results indicate that teachers are generally committed, focused, and emotionally invested in their work, although their energy and resilience may vary depending on workplace demands and conditions.

Correlation analysis showed a **significant positive relationship** between leadership behavior and teachers' work engagement ($r = 0.388$, $p < 0.001$). All leadership dimensions were significantly associated with vigor, dedication, and absorption, with **Human Relations** demonstrating the strongest relationship with overall work engagement ($r = 0.406$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that supportive interpersonal relationships, trust, effective communication, and instructional guidance from school heads contribute to higher levels of teacher engagement.

Regression analysis further revealed that leadership behavior significantly predicts teachers' work engagement ($R = 0.388$, $R^2 = 0.151$, $F = 7.15$, $p < 0.001$), explaining **15.1%** of the variance in work engagement. Among the predictors, **Human Relations** emerged as the strongest influence ($\beta = 0.406$), followed by **Instructional Leadership** ($\beta = 0.397$), **Trust and Decision Making** ($\beta = 0.383$), and **Conflict Resolution** ($\beta = 0.374$). The findings confirm that school heads' leadership



behaviors play a significant role in enhancing teachers' vigor, dedication, and absorption, thereby promoting greater professional commitment and effectiveness in the school setting.

Summary

The main focus of the study was to determine the significance of the relationship between leadership behavior of school heads and work engagement of teachers in public elementary schools. The study was conducted in the selected public elementary schools of Davao de Oro Division. There were one hundred sixty six (166) teachers who participated in this study utilizing adapted research instruments. Below were the summary of the findings.

- 1) The findings reveal that the overall level of leadership behavior of school heads is high ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.611$), indicating that leadership behaviors are oftentimes evident in the school setting. Among the indicators, human relations ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 0.522$), instructional leadership ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 0.523$), and trust and decision making ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 0.578$) were rated very high, while conflict resolution ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.590$) was rated high.
- 2) The findings reveal that the overall level of work engagement of teachers is high ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 0.576$), indicating that work engagement is oftentimes evident among teachers. Among the indicators, absorption ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 0.542$) and dedication ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.579$) were rated high, while vigor ($M = 3.35$, $SD = 0.511$) was rated moderate.
- 3) The findings reveal a significant positive relationship between leadership behavior of school heads and work engagement of teachers ($r = 0.388$, $p = 0.000$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance. All indicators of leadership behavior show significant positive correlations with work engagement, including human relations ($r = 0.398$), instructional leadership ($r = 0.395$), trust and decision making ($r = 0.382$), and school budgeting and income generation ($r = 0.375$), indicating that better leadership practices are associated with higher teacher work engagement.
- 4) The regression analysis shows that leadership behavior of school heads significantly predicts teachers' work engagement ($F = 7.15$, $p = 0.000$), with an R value of 0.388 and an R^2 value of 0.151, indicating that 15.1% of the variance in teachers' work engagement is explained by leadership behavior. All indicators significantly contribute as predictors, including human relations ($\beta = 0.398$, $t = 5.560$, $p = 0.000$), instructional leadership ($\beta = 0.395$, $t = 5.460$, $p = 0.000$), trust and decision making ($\beta = 0.382$, $t = 5.280$, $p = 0.000$), and school budgeting and income generation ($\beta = 0.375$, $t = 5.200$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that stronger leadership behavior leads to higher levels of teacher work engagement.

Conclusions

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

- 1) In terms of leadership behavior, school heads demonstrate a strong overall level, particularly in human relations, instructional leadership, and trust and decision making, indicating effective day-to-day leadership practices within schools. However, conflict resolution is comparatively lower, suggesting that managing disagreements and resolving school-related issues remains an area that needs further strengthening to achieve more balanced leadership effectiveness.
- 2) For work engagement, teachers show a generally high level of work engagement, with strong performance in absorption and dedication, reflecting their deep involvement and commitment to teaching. Nonetheless, vigor is only at a moderate level, implying that teachers' energy, resilience, and sustained enthusiasm in work may still need enhancement to further strengthen their engagement.
- 3) Moreover, the findings reveal a significant positive relationship between leadership behavior of school heads and teachers' work engagement. This indicates that improved leadership practices, particularly in relationships, decision making, and instructional support, are associated with higher levels of teacher engagement, suggesting that leadership plays a key role in motivating and involving teachers in their work.
- 4) Finally, leadership behavior of school heads significantly influences teachers' work engagement. This confirms that strengthening leadership practices leads to better teacher engagement, meaning that effective leadership is a critical factor in enhancing teacher motivation, commitment, and overall performance in schools.

The significant and positive association between the leadership behavior of school heads and teachers' work engagement corresponds with the Leader–Member Exchange (LMX) Theory proposed by Dansereau, Graen, and Haga (1975), as cited in Sobral and Furtado (2024). This theory asserts that leaders cultivate differentiated relationships within a team, resulting in variations in relationship quality. These relationships develop through social exchanges between leaders and subordinates, with high-quality exchanges characterized by mutual trust, support, and respect, fostering loyalty and commitment. The LMX framework underscores the critical role of leader–follower relationships and emphasizes the value of nurturing constructive and supportive interactions in organizational settings.

In the context of schools, this theoretical perspective is particularly applicable to understanding how school heads' leadership behavior influences teacher engagement. By establishing strong professional relationships with teachers, school heads promote a culture of open communication, consistent support, and meaningful recognition. Such interactions enhance teachers' sense of professional belonging and value, thereby strengthening intrinsic motivation and commitment to their roles. High-quality leader–teacher exchanges encourage greater vigor, dedication, and absorption among educators,



resulting in a more engaged, productive, and effective teaching workforce. These findings highlight the necessity of fostering positive leader–teacher relationships to sustain effective school leadership and maximize teacher engagement.

Recommendations

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

- 1) Based on the findings, it is recommended that DepEd officials implement a comprehensive capacity-building program for school heads that focuses on enhancing all domains of leadership behavior, particularly human relations, which has the strongest influence on teacher work engagement. This program should include practical workshops on effective communication, conflict resolution, team-building, and mentoring strategies to strengthen interpersonal relationships with teachers. Additionally, training on instructional leadership, decision-making, and school budgeting and income generation should be provided, including hands-on exercises, case studies, and simulation activities that allow school heads to apply these skills in real school scenarios.
- 2) Moreover, school heads may implement specific and operational strategies to strengthen their leadership behavior and, in turn, enhance teachers' work engagement. For human relations, school heads may conduct regular one-on-one or small group meetings with teachers to provide feedback, recognize achievements, and address concerns, fostering a supportive and collaborative work environment. In terms of instructional leadership, they may actively monitor classroom practices, provide mentoring, and facilitate professional development sessions that align with curriculum goals. For trust and decision-making, school heads may involve teachers in participatory decision-making processes and transparently communicate the rationale behind key decisions to build confidence and commitment. Lastly, regarding school budgeting and income generation, school heads may ensure timely and fair allocation of resources, involve teachers in planning discussions, and regularly report on the utilization of funds to promote accountability and shared responsibility.
- 3) Furthermore, teachers may actively engage with and leverage the leadership behaviors of their school heads to enhance their own work engagement. Specifically, teachers may participate in collaborative meetings, provide constructive feedback, and communicate openly with school heads to strengthen human relations and foster a supportive work environment. They may also take initiative in professional development opportunities, instructional planning sessions, and school projects, aligning their efforts with the school's goals and decisions to enhance dedication and absorption. Additionally, teachers may actively contribute to discussions on resource allocation and school programs, offering suggestions and monitoring outcomes, to support transparency and shared responsibility.
- 4) Lastly, future teachers may conduct further studies that explore the relationship between leadership behavior of school heads and teachers' work engagement using mixed-methods approaches, combining surveys with interviews or focus group discussions to gain deeper insights into how specific leadership practices influence teacher motivation and performance. Researchers may also consider examining additional contextual factors, such as school size, teacher experience, and available resources, to determine how these variables interact with leadership behavior and work engagement. Furthermore, future studies may implement longitudinal designs to track changes over time and identify causal relationships, as well as develop and test intervention programs that enhance school heads' human relations, instructional leadership, and decision-making skills to assess their direct impact on teachers' dedication, absorption, and vigor in the workplace.

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