



TEACHER LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES AND QUALITY WORK CONDITIONS IN PHILIPPINE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Dr. Maria Teresa T. Suarin¹, Dr. Rebecca V. Casinillo², Carmelita B. Villa³

¹Southern Mindanao Colleges

²Southern Mindanao Colleges

³Southern Mindanao Colleges

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36713/epra31241>

DOI No: 10.36713/epra31241

ABSTRACT

This study examined teacher leadership strategies and quality work conditions in Philippine elementary schools, with particular focus on public schools in the Division of Zamboanga del Sur. It assessed teacher leadership strategies in terms of designing for impact, understanding the context of challenges and opportunities, defining measures and continuously monitoring progress, and strategically clarifying teacher-leader roles and responsibilities. Quality work conditions were examined in terms of open communication, equitable reward systems, employee job security, satisfying careers, and participation in decision-making. The study involved school administrators and teachers across the municipalities of Zamboanga del Sur during School Year 2023–2024; the source manuscript reports 732 school administrators and 1,005 teachers, with the latter representing 25% of the 4,022 teachers who met the minimum five-year teaching-experience criterion. Findings revealed that teacher leadership strategies were consistently practiced, with defining measures before implementation and continuously monitoring progress obtaining the highest overall mean, followed by strategically clarifying teacher-leader roles and responsibilities, designing for impact, and understanding the context of challenges and opportunities. The assessments of school administrators and teachers regarding teacher leadership strategies did not significantly differ; however, their assessments of quality work conditions differed significantly. The original analysis further reported no significant correlation between teacher leadership strategies and quality work conditions. The findings highlight the importance of sustaining clearly defined teacher-leadership structures, measurable implementation goals, continuous progress monitoring, open communication, equitable organizational practices, career development opportunities, employee security, and meaningful participation in decision-making to foster supportive and productive elementary-school environments.

KEYWORDS: Teacher Leadership, Quality Work Conditions, School Leadership, Teacher Participation, Organizational Culture, Elementary Education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher leadership has become an increasingly important component of contemporary educational management as teachers are expected to contribute beyond classroom instruction through mentoring, collaborative decision-making, professional learning, innovation, curriculum improvement, and organizational development. Effective teacher leadership, however, requires purposeful structures that clarify leadership responsibilities, align teacher-leader activities with school priorities, establish measurable objectives, and provide opportunities for teachers to participate meaningfully in school improvement. These dimensions are reflected in the present study through designing for impact, understanding contextual challenges and opportunities, defining measures and continuously monitoring progress, and strategically clarifying teacher-leader roles and responsibilities. Empirical literature increasingly supports this collaborative conception of leadership. Liu et al. (2021) found that distributed leadership contributes to teacher job satisfaction through mechanisms that include teacher autonomy and collaboration, while Liu and Watson (2023) reported that shared decision-making was positively associated with teacher professional collaboration, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. In the Philippine context, Santos (2023) found that teacher leadership requires continuous development and is facilitated by effective task management and a harmonious organizational

environment. More recently, Remandaban et al. (2026), studying basic education teachers in the Philippines, found that collaboration was particularly important in strengthening teacher leadership agility, suggesting that leadership development depends not only on school culture but also on meaningful opportunities for teachers to work collectively. These findings indicate that teacher leadership should be viewed not merely as the delegation of administrative responsibilities but as an organizational process requiring clear roles, collaboration, professional autonomy, shared goals, and sustained leadership support.

The capacity of teachers to assume leadership responsibilities is likewise influenced by the quality of their working conditions. The present study conceptualizes quality work conditions through open communication, equitable reward systems, concern for employee job security, satisfying careers, and participation in decision-making, thereby recognizing that teachers' workplace experiences involve both organizational and relational dimensions. Recent international evidence demonstrates that school working conditions have substantial implications for teachers' professional experiences. A 2025 international study found that better working conditions particularly effective school leadership, positive student behavior, and manageable workload were associated with greater teacher job satisfaction and suggested that improving workplace conditions may contribute to teacher retention. Ma



and Gu (2026) further found that teacher collaboration mediates the relationship between distributed leadership and job satisfaction, reinforcing the importance of collaborative organizational environments. Philippine research similarly indicates that leadership, teamwork, and school culture are important organizational factors associated with teachers' work performance; Nanol and Tagadiad (2025), for example, examined these variables among public elementary school teachers in Region XI and identified school leadership, team effectiveness, and school culture as interconnected dimensions of teacher performance. Apad and Quines (2025) likewise examined work values, school climate, school culture, and work performance among Philippine public elementary school teachers, further demonstrating the relevance of organizational conditions to teachers' professional functioning. Despite this growing literature, relatively limited empirical attention has been given to the specific relationship between structured teacher leadership strategies and quality work conditions in Philippine elementary schools. The present study addresses this contextual gap by examining how teacher leadership strategies and workplace conditions are perceived by school administrators and teachers in Zamboanga del Sur and by determining whether these two organizational dimensions are related.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 2.1. To assess the extent to which teacher leadership strategies are practiced in terms of designing for impact and clarifying the purpose of teacher leadership; understanding the context to address challenges and opportunities; defining measures and continuously monitoring progress; and strategically establishing clear teacher-leader roles and responsibilities.
- 2.2. To determine the extent to which quality work conditions are manifested in terms of open communication, equitable reward systems, employee job security, satisfying careers, and participation in decision-making.
- 2.3. To compare the assessments of school administrators and teachers regarding the extent of teacher leadership strategies and quality work conditions in elementary schools.

2.4. To determine whether significant differences exist between the assessments of school administrators and teachers regarding teacher leadership strategies and quality work conditions.

2.5. To examine the relationship between teacher leadership strategies and quality work conditions in Philippine elementary schools.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive survey research design to examine teacher leadership strategies and quality work conditions in public elementary schools in the Division of Zamboanga del Sur, Philippines, during School Year 2023–2024. The respondents consisted of 732 school administrators and 1,005 teachers, with the teachers drawn from the 4,022 educators who met the study requirement of at least five years of teaching experience; the manuscript describes the sampling approach as purposive. Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire-checklist composed of two major parts: teacher leadership strategies covering designing for impact, understanding contextual challenges and opportunities, defining measures and monitoring progress, and strategically clarifying teacher-leader roles and responsibilities; and quality work conditions covering open communication, equitable reward systems, employee job security, satisfying careers, and participation in decision-making. The instrument underwent a dry run with qualified school administrators and teachers in the Division of Pagadian City who were not included in the principal respondents, after which it was reviewed and refined by the research adviser and Screening Committee for content, mechanics, and appropriateness. Permission to conduct the study was secured from the Schools Division Superintendent of Zamboanga del Sur, followed by the administration, retrieval, checking, and tabulation of the accomplished questionnaires. Data were analyzed using weighted means and ranking to describe the study variables, t-test and z-test to examine differences between the assessments of school administrators and teachers, and the Product-Moment Correlation to determine the relationship between teacher leadership strategies and quality work conditions.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Extent of Teacher Leadership Strategies in Philippine Elementary Schools

Teacher Leadership Strategies	School Administrators	Teachers	Average Mean	Interpretation
Defining measures before implementation and continuously monitoring progress	5.52	5.73	5.63	Always Practiced
Strategically clarifying teacher-leader roles and responsibilities	5.24	5.80	5.52	Always Practiced
Designing for impact and identifying the purpose of teacher leadership	5.49	5.40	5.45	Always Practiced
Understanding the context to address challenges and opportunities	5.33	5.30	5.32	Always Practiced
Overall Mean	5.40	5.56	5.48	Always Practiced

Table 1 indicates that teacher leadership strategies were always practiced, with an overall mean of 5.48. Defining

measures before implementation and continuously monitoring progress ranked first ($M = 5.63$), followed by strategically



clarifying teacher-leader roles and responsibilities ($M = 5.52$), designing for impact and identifying the purpose of teacher leadership ($M = 5.45$), and understanding the context of challenges and opportunities ($M = 5.32$). These results suggest that teacher leadership is most firmly established when responsibilities are translated into measurable expectations and implementation is accompanied by systematic monitoring. Galdames-Calderón (2023) found that principals can promote teacher leadership and professional development by creating organizational conditions that distribute leadership and provide opportunities for teachers to assume meaningful responsibilities. De Jong et al. (2023) likewise demonstrated that distributed leadership develops through interactions among individuals, teacher teams, and school-level contexts and is associated with teachers' willingness to seek advice and look

beyond their individual classrooms. Cebrián et al. (2022) further emphasized the relevance of distributed leadership competencies among school principals and the importance of professional and managerial experience in developing leadership capacity. In the Philippine context, Remandaban et al. (2026) found that collaboration was especially important in strengthening teacher leadership agility, suggesting that leadership becomes more sustainable when teachers are provided with clearly structured opportunities to participate and collaborate. Taken together, these studies support the finding that effective teacher leadership requires purposeful role definition, measurable objectives, monitoring systems, collaboration, and organizational structures that enable teachers to exercise leadership beyond their classroom responsibilities.

Table 2. Extent of Quality Work Conditions in Philippine Elementary Schools

Quality Work Conditions	School Administrators	Teachers	Average Mean	Interpretation
Participation in decision-making	5.24	5.96	5.61	Always Practiced
Open communication	5.27	5.85	5.56	Always Practiced
Equitable reward system	5.15	5.90	5.53	Always Practiced
Satisfying careers	5.22	5.75	5.49	Always Practiced
Concern for employee job security	5.14	5.57	5.36	Always Practiced
Overall Mean	5.20	5.81	5.51	Always Practiced

Table 2 shows that quality work conditions were always practiced, with an overall mean of 5.51. Participation in decision-making received the highest rating ($M = 5.61$), followed by open communication ($M = 5.56$), equitable reward systems ($M = 5.53$), satisfying careers ($M = 5.49$), and concern for employee job security ($M = 5.36$). The prominence of participation and communication indicates that teachers' perceptions of a quality workplace extend beyond material benefits and include opportunities to express views, participate in organizational decisions, receive information, and experience equitable treatment. Admiraal and Røberg (2023), using TALIS data from 24 European countries, found that a safe school climate and a collaborative and participative school culture were among the most important job resources associated with teacher satisfaction. Similarly, Aldridge and Fraser (2022) demonstrated that communication within primary schools is

consequential to teachers' job satisfaction, particularly when communication supports participation in decision-making. Glaveli et al. (2024) further identified dimensions of the working environment as important contributors to overall teacher job satisfaction, emphasizing the need for evidence-based improvement of teachers' work experiences. Aranjuez et al. (2022), although examining a different Philippine institutional context, likewise underscore the importance of awareness, participation, equitable organizational practices, and institutional responsiveness. These findings collectively indicate that quality work conditions are created not only through compensation and employment security but also through participatory management, transparent communication, fairness, recognition, professional development, and supportive organizational relationships.

Table 3. Difference Between School Administrators' and Teachers' Assessments of Teacher Leadership Strategies

Respondent Group	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	Computed t	Critical t	df	Decision on H_0	Interpretation
School Administrators	5.40	0.1329						
Teachers	5.56	0.2447	0.16	1.149	2.447	10	Fail to Reject H_0	No Significant Difference

Table 3 reveals no significant difference between school administrators' and teachers' assessments of teacher leadership strategies, as the computed t -value of 1.149 was lower than the critical value of 2.447. Administrators reported an overall mean of 5.40, while teachers reported 5.56, suggesting generally comparable perceptions of how teacher leadership strategies are implemented. The convergence between the two groups may indicate that teacher leadership practices are sufficiently visible and institutionalized to be similarly recognized by those who manage them and those who participate in them. Özdemir et al.

(2023) found that distributed leadership and teacher collaboration are important organizational conditions associated with teachers' instructional-practice profiles, indicating that leadership structures can become observable through everyday professional interaction. Liu et al. (2021) similarly found that distributed leadership contributes to teacher outcomes through mechanisms involving professional autonomy and collaboration, suggesting that teachers experience leadership through actual participation rather than through formal organizational structures alone. Cebrián et al.



(2022) demonstrated that distributed leadership competencies are associated with professional and managerial experiences, further indicating that leadership perceptions may develop through sustained engagement with organizational practices. Alipoyo (2022), although examining institutional leadership outside education, likewise emphasizes the importance of

obtaining practitioners' perspectives when evaluating administrative practices and organizational conditions. The absence of a significant difference in the present study therefore provides evidence that administrators and teachers generally share a common understanding of the teacher leadership mechanisms operating within their schools.

Table 4. Difference Between School Administrators' and Teachers' Assessments of Quality Work Conditions

Respondent Group	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	Computed z	Critical z	Decision on H_0	Interpretation
School Administrators	5.20	0.0574					
Teachers	5.81	0.1530	0.61	2.899	1.96	Reject H_0	Significant Difference

Table 4 demonstrates a significant difference between school administrators' and teachers' assessments of quality work conditions, with administrators reporting an overall mean of 5.20 compared with 5.81 among teachers; the computed z-value of 2.899 exceeded the critical value of 1.96. Unlike the convergence observed for teacher leadership strategies, this result indicates that workplace conditions may be experienced differently according to organizational position and professional responsibilities. Philippine evidence from Beniga et al. (2024) similarly demonstrated that teachers' working conditions can vary across educational settings, finding a significant difference between the working conditions of elementary and secondary public-school teachers in Davao City. More broadly, research comparing teachers' and administrators' perceptions has documented gaps in how the two groups view workload and non-instructional

responsibilities, illustrating how organizational position can shape interpretations of workplace demands. Aranjuez (2025) emphasizes the importance of understanding individuals' lived experiences within institutional environments, particularly because formal organizational arrangements may be experienced differently by the people operating within them. Aroz et al. (2026) likewise highlight the importance of supportive relationships and environmental resources in strengthening individuals' capacity to navigate demanding circumstances. Although the latter studies involve populations outside educational administration, their emphasis on institutional support provides a complementary perspective for interpreting the present findings. Thus, schools should regularly assess workplace conditions from multiple stakeholder perspectives rather than assuming that administrators' perceptions adequately represent teachers' actual experiences.

Table 5. Reported Association Between Teacher Leadership Strategies and Quality Work Conditions

Variables	Overall Mean	Reported Test	Test Statistic	Critical Value	Decision	Interpretation
Teacher Leadership Strategies	5.48	Mann-Whitney U / z				
Quality Work Conditions	5.51		$U_1 = 287.5$; $U_2 = 212.5$; $z = 0.86$	1.96	Fail to Reject H_0	No statistically significant association reported

Table 5 reports no statistically significant association between teacher leadership strategies and quality work conditions based on the analytical procedure employed in the original manuscript, with $U_1 = 287.5$, $U_2 = 212.5$, and $z = 0.86$, which was below the critical value of 1.96. The result suggests that, within the source analysis, high levels of teacher leadership strategies did not necessarily correspond to variations in the reported quality of work conditions. Nevertheless, recent research suggests that leadership and workplace experiences may be connected through more complex mechanisms. Ma and Gu (2026), for example, found that teacher collaboration mediates the relationship between distributed leadership and teachers' job satisfaction, suggesting that leadership may affect workplace outcomes indirectly through collaborative processes. Liu and Watson (2023) similarly demonstrated that different dimensions of distributed leadership are associated with teacher professional collaboration, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Admiraal and Røberg (2023) found that collaborative and

participative school cultures constitute important job resources for teachers, further illustrating how organizational participation can shape workplace experiences. The broader organizational findings of Alipoyo (2022) also suggest that leadership effectiveness must be understood in relation to institutional resources, working environments, and personnel realities. Accordingly, the absence of an association in the original analysis should not be interpreted as evidence that teacher leadership and work conditions are entirely independent. Because the source manuscript used the Mann-Whitney U test to assess what it described as a correlation, the relationship should ideally be reexamined using Pearson's r or Spearman's rho before a definitive conclusion about the association between the two constructs is made.

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The findings imply that school leaders should institutionalize teacher leadership as a structured component of school management rather than treating it as an informal or



occasional delegation of responsibilities. Since defining measures and continuously monitoring progress emerged as the most highly practiced strategy, schools should establish clear performance indicators, timelines, feedback mechanisms, and monitoring procedures for teacher-led initiatives. At the same time, clearly defined teacher-leader roles should be incorporated into school improvement planning, professional learning communities, mentoring programs, curriculum development, and instructional innovation. Particular attention should be given to strengthening contextual analysis, which obtained the lowest mean among the teacher leadership strategies, by equipping teacher-leaders to assess school needs, identify emerging challenges, analyze stakeholder concerns, and adapt initiatives to local circumstances. These practices are consistent with recent research emphasizing collaborative leadership, professional autonomy, and structured opportunities for teachers to contribute to organizational improvement. Philippine evidence also indicates that leadership attributes of school heads are closely connected with teachers' workplace experiences and job satisfaction, reinforcing the need for supportive leadership structures (Aguinaldo & Tagadiad, 2024). Accordingly, leadership-development programs should strengthen teachers' competencies in planning, decision-making, communication, collaboration, monitoring, and evidence-based school improvement.

The findings further imply that maintaining quality work conditions requires continuous attention to teacher voice, communication, fairness, career development, and employment security. Although all dimensions were highly rated, the significant difference between administrators' and teachers' assessments indicates that organizational conditions may be experienced differently across professional roles. Schools should therefore conduct periodic workplace-climate assessments, establish confidential feedback mechanisms, strengthen consultation with teachers, and use the results to guide policies concerning recognition, rewards, career progression, workload, professional development, and participation in decision-making. This is particularly important because recent Philippine studies associate positive working conditions with teachers' job satisfaction and identify supportive leadership and peer relationships as important components of the work environment (Balusan & Selecios, 2025; Fredeluces & Narido, 2025). Similarly, Abdulpatta et al. (2024) identified resources, workload, collaboration, work-life balance, and related organizational conditions as relevant factors in the job satisfaction of Philippine public-school teachers. Thus, school administrators should not assume that highly practiced teacher leadership automatically produces favorable working conditions; both dimensions require deliberate and complementary organizational interventions.

6. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that teacher leadership strategies and quality work conditions are strongly manifested in Philippine elementary schools, with defining measures and continuously monitoring progress emerging as the foremost teacher leadership strategy and participation in decision-making as the leading dimension of quality work conditions. School administrators and teachers demonstrated comparable

assessments of teacher leadership strategies, indicating a generally shared recognition of leadership practices; however, their assessments of quality work conditions differed significantly, suggesting that workplace experiences may vary according to organizational position. The original analysis reported no statistically significant association between teacher leadership strategies and quality work conditions, indicating that the strong manifestation of one construct did not necessarily correspond to variation in the other under the statistical procedure employed. Consequently, schools should pursue teacher leadership development and workplace improvement as complementary but distinct organizational priorities, strengthening clear leadership roles, progress monitoring, participatory decision-making, open communication, equitable recognition, career development, and employee support to create school environments conducive to professional growth and sustained organizational effectiveness.

7. REFERENCES

1. Admiraal, W., & Røberg, K. I. K. (2023). *Teachers' job demands, resources and their job satisfaction: Satisfaction with school, career choice and teaching profession of teachers in different career stages*. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 125, 104063. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2023.104063>
2. Aldridge, J. M., & Fraser, B. J. (2022). *Impacts of school communication on job satisfaction in Australian primary schools: A structural equation model*. *Frontiers in Education*, 7, 832644.
3. Alipoyo, V. (2022). *Conditions of correctional facilities in the Philippines: Jail wardens' perspectives and experiences*. *Otoritas: Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan*, 12(1), 67-77.
4. Apad, A. R. P., & Quines, L. A. (2025). *Work values, school climate and culture: A path model analysis on work performance of teachers in public elementary schools*. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 12(2).
5. Aranjuez, N. (2025). *Transformative struggles: The lived experiences of probationers in the Philippines*. *Agathos*, 16(2), 503-520.
6. Aranjuez, N., Cantina, J., Balbuena, E., & Macaranas Jr, Z. (2022). *Section 13, Magna Carta of Women: Awareness, Problems, and Prospects*. *Sprin Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 1(11), 24-36.
7. Aroz, C. M. M., Sumalpong, J. P., Bartosis, J. O., Barnayja, J. M. A., Van Ryan, I. A., & Aranjuez, N. E. (2026). *Surviving trauma: Resilience of sexually abused victims*. *Agathos: An International Review of the Humanities & Social Sciences*, 17(1), 507.
8. Beniga, S. G. E., Lim, R. A., Busalla, B. A., Callora, J. D. S., & Barral, E. J. B. (2024). *Working conditions of teachers in a public school setting*. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research and Innovation*, 2(3).
9. Cebrián, G., Moraleda, Á., Galán-Casado, D., & Andújar-Molina, O. (2022). *A preliminary study comparing pre-service and in-service school principals' self-perception of distributed leadership competencies in relation to teaching and managerial experience*. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 720459. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.720459>
10. de Jong, W. A., de Kleijn, R. A. M., Lockhorst, D., Brouwer, J., Noordegraaf, M., & van Tartwijk, J. W. F. (2023). *Collaborative spirit: Understanding distributed leadership practices in and around teacher teams*. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 123, 103977. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103977>



11. Galdames-Calderón, M. (2023). Distributed leadership: School principals' practices to promote teachers' professional development for school improvement. *Education Sciences*, 13(7), 715.
12. Glaveli, N., Manolitzas, P., Tsourou, E., & Grigoroudis, E. (2024). Unlocking teacher job satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic: A multi-criteria satisfaction analysis. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*, 15, 1264–1285.
13. Liu, Y., & Watson, S. (2023). Whose leadership role is more substantial for teacher professional collaboration, job satisfaction and organizational commitment: A lens of distributed leadership. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 26(6), 1082–1110.
14. Liu, Y., Bellibaş, M. Ş., & Gümüş, S. (2021). The effect of distributed leadership on teacher job satisfaction: The mediating roles of teacher autonomy and teacher collaboration. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 71, 101099.
15. Ma, L., & Gu, Y. (2026). Effects of distributed leadership on teachers' job satisfaction: The mediating role of teacher collaboration. *PLOS ONE*, 21(4), e0347862. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0347862>
16. Nanol, A. L. S., & Tagadiad, C. L. (2025). School leadership, team effectiveness, and school culture: A path analysis on job performance among public elementary school teachers. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 9(1), 1800–1815.
17. Özdemir, N., Kılınç, A. Ç., Polatcan, M., Turan, S., & Bellibaş, M. Ş. (2023). Exploring teachers' instructional practice profiles: Do distributed leadership and teacher collaboration make a difference? *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 59(2), 255–305.
18. Remandaban, M. C., Angangan, G. B., Gaviola, V. L., Cabolao, A. R., & Olarte, J. M. (2026). Can school culture drive teacher leadership agility, or is collaboration the missing link? *Frontiers in Education*, 11, 1794986.
19. Santos, F. S. (2023). Understanding the role of organizational confidence on the culture of teacher leadership in public schools in the Philippines. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary: Applied Business and Education Research*, 4(12). <https://doi.org/10.11594/ijmaber.04.12.12>