



# LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF SCHOOL HEADS AND TRUST IN MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS IN PANABO CITY DIVISION

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Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36713/epra23114>

DOI No: 10.36713/epra23114

## ABSTRACT

The study explored the relationship between leadership practices of school heads and trust in management of teachers in public secondary schools of Panabo City Division. Also, it investigated the association of the involved variables and the domains of leadership practices of school heads that significantly influence trust in management of teachers. With the use of probability sampling, 166 public secondary teachers 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 high leadership practices of school heads and a high trust in management of teachers among the respondents. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between the leadership practices of school heads and trust in management of teachers. Moreover, all domains of leadership practices of school heads, namely, leading strategically, managing school operations and resources, focusing on teaching and learning, developing self and others, and building connections, were found to have significantly influence the trust in management of teachers. Based on the findings, it was further suggested that higher officials in the Department of Education may identify means on how to strengthen the leadership practices of school heads which would boost trust in management of teachers. More so, future researchers may further explore the involved variables considering other factors and research methods.

**KEYWORDS-** Leadership Practices, Trust in Management, Descriptive Correlational Panabo City Division, Philippines

## INTRODUCTION

Teachers' trust in management is essential for creating a collaborative and supportive work environment. Apparently, the leadership practices of school heads play a crucial role in shaping teachers' trust in management by promoting transparency, fairness, and open communication. However, teachers encountered circumstances in the school wherein there are inconsistent or ineffective leadership practices of school heads. This leads to feelings of uncertainty and frustration. As a matter of fact, there is a growing sense of distrust among staff and parents toward school management, stemming from perceived lack of transparency in decision-making processes. Many stakeholders feel that their voices and concerns are not adequately heard or addressed, leading to feelings of alienation and skepticism about leadership intentions. This erosion of trust can hinder collaboration and engagement, ultimately impacting the overall effectiveness of the school community.

In India, teaching is not considered as one of the most sought after career. This stems from the general perception that people harbor about this profession which is, that anyone can become a teacher as it takes minimal skill and is nothing but glorified baby-sitting. This situation leads to mistrust in the school administration (Hossain, 2018). In South Africa, lack of trust has also been found, in some cases, to be due to the actions of strong teacher unions. Many school principals have been incapable of leading due to lack of training, or lack of acceptance of their role, by the school community. This lack of support, in some cases, has led to principals quitting, or leadership being taken on by school staff that does not have the support of the community (Baxter & Ehren, 2023). Teacher turnover is high in US public schools, and it is growing. Teachers experience considerable strain as a result of high levels of turnover due to increased demand on their expertise and diminished trust (McClusky, 2022).

In the Philippine setting, poor trust between Filipino teachers and school heads has been linked to various factors, including ineffective communication, lack of transparency, and inconsistent leadership practices (Llego, 2020). Teachers often feel alienated when school leaders fail to involve them in decision-making processes or disregard their professional insights, leading to a sense of disempowerment (Mendoza & Espiritu, 2024). Additionally, when administrative actions are perceived as unfair or unsupportive, it creates a gap in trust, which can negatively affect teacher morale and performance (Carillo & Flores, 2020). Building trust requires fostering open communication, equitable leadership, and ensuring that teachers feel valued and respected in their roles.

Meanwhile, in the local context specifically in Mindanao, poor trust of teachers towards school heads is influenced by several region-specific challenges, such as cultural diversity, conflict-prone areas, and inconsistent leadership practices. Teachers in these areas feel unsupported or misunderstood when school leaders fail to acknowledge their unique challenges, such as security concerns or socio-cultural dynamics, in decision-making. Furthermore, a lack of



transparent communication and inclusive leadership approaches can exacerbate feelings of distrust, resulting in reduced teacher morale and commitment (Ingay, 2019).

Despite the extensive research on leadership practices and teacher trust, there remained a significant gap in understanding the specific leadership behaviors that effectively build and sustain trust in management among teachers, particularly in diverse educational contexts of Panabo City Division. The situation regarding poor trust of teachers in Mindanao could not fully represent the real scenario in Panabo City Division. Hence, the researcher investigated the level of trust of teachers, taking into account the school heads' leadership practices. Additionally, the study examined the correlations between the variables.

This study offered important insights for policymakers, guiding the creation of policies, programs, interventions, and initiatives to enhance school heads' leadership practices and strengthen teachers' trust in management. Furthermore, this research sought to benefit the wider school community. The researcher also intended to share the findings at the school, division, regional, national, and international conferences. Also, the researcher was determined to publish the results in a Scopus-indexed journal.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The related literature and studies of this study provided inputs about the leadership practices of school heads and trust in management of teachers. Also, it presented varied studies showcasing the association of the involved variables in this study. The independent variable is leadership practices of school heads. It has five indicators namely: leading strategically, managing school operations and resources, focusing on teaching and learning, developing self and other, and building connections (Dellomas & Deri, 2022). Meanwhile, the dependent variable is trust in management of teachers. It has three indicators namely: trust in management competencies, trust in management integrity, and work relationship (Damanius, Bumanglag, Lazaro, Serrano & Encarnacion, 2022).

Leadership is the potential of a person in the developing process of motivating the others to collaborate or to be satisfied with work practice, and implement activities in lieu to a specified plan and objective. Leadership, by nature, is the process of influencing the group under appropriate situation and duration in order to stimulate the personnel in using their willing attempt to achieve their organizational objective. It could be seen that leadership would lead to a valuable benefit for a group and organization. Being a leader means an art of influencing other people so that those people have their confidence towards the leader, respect and collaborate with him with sincerity. The school administrators as leaders have to give an importance to leadership and try to develop themselves as good leaders in order to join in the leading education stepping to truly educational reform (Bullo et al., 2023).

Principals are tasked with a lengthy list of responsibilities related to the leadership of a school. This list may include completing and filing state or federal reports, supervising students, teachers, and other staff members, managing the school's budget, and attending numerous meetings. Simply managing a school is no longer enough. Today's principals are accountable for the oversight of teaching, curriculum, and assessment cycles, evaluation of teachers, fostering relationships with teachers and other stakeholders, evaluating and implementing discipline plans, developing a multi-year plan for needed resources, all while still managing the school building. The extensive responsibilities of today's school leaders require a depth of understanding in finance, curriculum, child development, human resource management, time management, community and public relations, and effective communication skills. Some leadership traits and practices may be more effective than others when guiding a school through these challenging times (Altun & Bulut, 2021).

Becoming an inspiring school leader is by no means an easy task, regardless of the context of service. However, the core operational concepts for educational leadership remain the same. There is an argument that leadership cannot just be attributed only to a single individual; essentially, it is a mixture of unique reasons. The effective and sustainable governance of any institution depends on the willingness of the school officials to develop and implement initiatives that might guarantee a continuous increase in efficiency and a pleasant professional relationship between the administration and its constituents. Consequently, efficiency is what school heads are requesting from their teachers in the educational sectors (Aquino et al., 2021).

To perform efficiently and effectively, school heads must perform five functions. These include planning (delineating priorities, determining goals, and implementing action-coordinated plans); staffing (scouting the right teacher with the necessary skills and expertise that are required for the success of the organization); organizing (assembling and successfully implementing to achieve the organizational objectives, to decide which tasks are to be carried out, how duties are to be divided, who communicates to whom and when actions are to be taken); controlling (tracking and reviewing performance and ensure that expectations are met and achieved); and, directing (responding positively after outcomes have been linked to future potential, the justification for difference, and trying to make teachers reasonably strengthen their productivity) (Noureen et al., 2020).

Recognizing the value of improving the leadership skills of the school head is closely related to the need for organizations to recruit and retain high-performing teachers. The heart of successful leadership practice includes personal skills (advancement of self-awareness, critical and complex management of stress and well-being and conflict resolution); interpersonal skills (building relationships through constructive communication, gaining



authority and strength, promoting productivity, and resolving and reclosing tensions); and group skills (inspiring and empowering others, building successful performance, and leading progressive adjustment) (Connolly et al., 2019).

Five outstanding leadership practices published that provide the foundation for organizational performance by suggesting what attitudes and behaviors school officials need to accomplish to become successful leaders. These include: modeling the way (creating expectations of success and providing a precedent for everyone to follow); inspiring a shared vision (coming up with new ideas and generating an ideal and distinctive picture of what an organization should become); challenging the process (looking at challenges as tools for learning); enabling others to act (fostering cooperation, establishing trust, and generating momentum); and Encouraging the heart (creating and maintaining elevated expectations, keeping the people committed to them by preserving the connection between incentives and performance). Driven by these abilities, a school head is likely to succeed (Connolly et al., 2019).

The challenge to keep every school head in route to quality formal education is dependent on several yet interdependent factors. Even with clear vision in mind and achievable goals at heart victory over quality hangs mid-air unless a technical road map is put in place. Therefore, school heads necessarily must adhere to specific professional standards and competencies that will help them manage schools and lead people to realize a common vision and goals (Connolly et al., 2019).

### Statement of the Problem

This study determined the relationship between the leadership practices of school heads and trust in management of public secondary teachers in Panabo City Division. More specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of leadership practices of school heads as perceived by public secondary teachers in terms of:
  - 1.1 leading strategically;
  - 1.2 managing school operations and resources;
  - 1.3 focusing on teaching and learning;
  - 1.4 developing self and other; and
  - 1.5 building connections?
2. What is the level of trust in management of public secondary teachers in terms of:
  - 2.1 trust in management competencies;
  - 2.2 trust in management integrity; and
  - 2.3 work relationship?
3. Is there a significant relationship between leadership practices of school heads and trust in management of teachers?
4. Which domains of leadership practices of school heads significantly influence the trust in management of teachers?

### METHODOLOGY

#### Research Design

This research utilized a quantitative approach, focusing on the descriptive correlational method. Quantitative research is designed to examine factors impacting a specific group of individuals, known as the sample population. This approach involves gathering a range of numerical data through different techniques and then performing statistical analysis to summarize, compare, or reveal relationships among the data (Sreekumar, 2023).

The descriptive correlational design is employed in studies that seek to present a snapshot of situations and identify the relationships between various variables. Descriptive research is a methodological strategy aimed at illustrating the features of a phenomenon or subject being studied (Singh, 2023). Unlike descriptive research, which mainly offers a static overview, correlational research focuses on measuring multiple relevant variables and evaluating the relationships between them (Stangor & Walinga, 2019).

This research was classified as quantitative because it used numerical data for analysis and interpretation. It adopted a descriptive approach, focusing on evaluating the extent of leadership practices of school heads and the level of trust teachers have in management. Additionally, it was correlational as it examined the relationship between school heads' leadership practices and teachers' trust in management within the public secondary schools of Panabo City Division.

#### Research Respondents

This research centered on 166 public secondary teachers in the Division of Panabo City. With the help of the Slovin Formula observing the .05 margin of error, the total population of 285 public secondary school teachers who have ten (10) years of teaching experience was calculated to 166. According to Putra and Sulaiman (2017), a minimum sample size of 30 is generally recommended for correlational studies to ensure reliable results. A sample smaller than this may lead to inaccurate assessments of relationships. Therefore, the 166 respondents ensured robustness in the findings.

To select the sample, the researcher used a probability sampling method, specifically cluster random sampling. In this approach, the population was divided into smaller groups, or clusters, and then clusters are randomly chosen to



form the sample. Cluster random sampling is particularly useful when dealing with large populations and sample sizes, as it helps to manage the study's scope by reducing the total number of participants if the entire population is too extensive to study comprehensively (Simkus, 2023). In this study, the researcher ensured that all identified schools are well-represented by their samples.

The researcher set specific criteria to guide the selection of respondents. To be included in the study, secondary teachers needed to have at least ten years of teaching experience. This requirement was based on the assumption that teachers with five years of experience are better equipped to evaluate their school heads' leadership practices and their own trust in management. Consequently, teachers with fewer than three years of experience were excluded from the study. Additionally, participants were given the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time if they felt uncomfortable with the survey questionnaire. Their right to withdraw was fully respected, highlighting the research's commitment to prioritizing the respondents' welfare and well-being.

### Research Instrument

For data collection, this study employed a modified survey questionnaire designed specifically for this research. The questionnaire was organized into two separate sections to thoroughly cover the research objectives. The first section focused on evaluating the leadership practices of school heads, while the second section assessed the level of trust teachers have in management.

The leadership practices questionnaire was adapted from Dellomas and Deri (2022). The instrument consisted of 34 items. It was composed of five (5) indicators, namely: leading strategically (1-7), managing school operations and resources (1-6), focusing on teaching and learning (1-8), developing self and other (1-8), and building connections (1-5). The questionnaire was subjected to a pilot testing having a result of .82 suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency. This high reliability score supports the reliability of the instrument for further data collection, ensuring that the responses are likely to be consistent and valid. Therefore, the questionnaire is considered suitable for use in the actual study, as it demonstrates a solid foundation for accurate and dependable results.

The trust in management questionnaire was adapted from Damanius, Bumanglag, Lazaro, Serrano and Encarnacion (2022). The instrument consisted of 22 items. It had the following indicators, namely: trust in management competencies (1-10), trust in management integrity (1-8), and work relationship (1-4). The questionnaire was subjected to a pilot testing having a result of .84 suggesting that the items had relatively high internal consistency. The questionnaire exhibited strong internal consistency, meaning the items were well-aligned in measuring the same concept. This high reliability score reflected that the instrument is likely to produce stable and consistent results across different samples. As a result, the questionnaire was considered a reliable tool for data collection in the main study.

### Data Analysis

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

Mean. This was used to measure the level of leadership practices of school heads and trust in management. It answered statement of the problem 1 and 2.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. This was utilized to determine the relationships between leadership practices of school heads and trust in management. It answered statement of the problem 3.

Regression Analysis. This was employed to assess the significant influence of leadership practices of school heads on trust in management. It was used to answer statement of the problem 4.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Presented in this chapter are the findings based on the results of data gathered, the conclusions drawn from the findings and the recommendations for consideration.

The main focus of the study was to determine the significance of the relationship between leadership practices of school heads and trust in management of teachers in public secondary schools. The study was conducted in the selected public schools of Panabo City Division. There were one hundred sixty-six (166) teachers who participated in this study. Descriptive correlational method of research was used in this study utilizing adapted research instruments. The said instruments were validated by the panel of experts and subjected to pilot testing before it was made ready for administration. Mean, Pearson Product Correlation of Coefficient, and Regression Analysis were the statistical tools used in analyzing the data. The hypotheses raised in this study were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

The level of leadership practices of school heads is high indicating that they are consistently implementing effective strategies in their roles. This suggests that school heads are actively engaged in practices that support and guide their school communities, which may positively influence school performance. Overall, the findings reflect strong leadership, contributing to an environment where effective management and development are prioritized.



Meanwhile, the level of trust in management of is high. This indicates a positive perception of the leadership and decision-making abilities of the school heads. This suggests that teachers feel confident in the management's competencies, integrity, and ability to foster strong work relationships. Overall, the findings imply that trust in management plays a key role in promoting a productive and collaborative work environment.

It was found out that there is a significant relationship between leadership practices of school heads and trust in management of teachers. Moreover, all dimensions of leadership practices of school heads are related to trust in management of teachers. The significant relationship between the leadership practices of school heads and trust in management suggests that effective leadership directly impacts teachers' confidence in their management.

Moreover, the leadership practices of school heads significantly influence the trust in management. All domains of leadership practices of school heads have impact on trust in management. Of which, focusing on teaching and learning has greatly influenced trust in management. This means that leadership practices of school heads play a significant role in shaping teachers' trust in management. The domain of focusing on teaching and learning emerges as the most impactful, highlighting its central role in building trust within the school community.

### Conclusions

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

The level of leadership practices of school heads means that it is oftentimes evident. Notably, focusing on teaching and learning is always evident while leading strategically, managing school operations and resources, developing self and others, and building connections are oftentimes evident.

Meanwhile, the level of trust in management of teachers is high. All indicators are in a high level which include trust in management competencies, trust in management integrity, and work relationship.

Based on the findings, leadership practices of school heads and trust in management are related. All domains of leadership practices of school heads are linked with the trust in management of teachers. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Also, all domains of leadership practices of school heads significantly influenced the trust in management. In fact, teaching and learning has the most significant influence on trust in management. This leads to the rejection of the second null hypothesis.

The significant and positive correlation between the leadership practices of school heads and trust in management of teachers supports the principles established in Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory by Dansereau, et al. (1975). In the context of this study, the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory focuses on the quality of relationships between leaders (school heads) and their subordinates (teachers), emphasizing that trust is built through high-quality interactions. Leaders who engage in open communication, provide support, and involve teachers in decision-making processes foster higher levels of trust and commitment. This theory highlights how leadership practices that promote fairness, respect, and collaboration can strengthen the trust teachers have in their school heads.

### Recommendations

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

Based on the findings, DepEd officials are recommended to provide professional development programs that further enhance school heads' leadership practices, particularly in areas like leading strategically, managing school operations, and developing self and others. While school heads are already effective in focusing on teaching and learning, strengthening their ability to build connections and lead strategically can foster even greater trust among teachers. It is also important to prioritize trust-building initiatives that emphasize the development of management competencies, integrity, and positive work relationships. By focusing on these key areas, DepEd officials may support school heads in creating a work environment where trust is consistently high, ultimately leading to improved teacher satisfaction, engagement, and performance. Additionally, promoting collaborative leadership practices that involve teachers in decision-making processes may further solidify the trust in management and strengthen school-community relationships.

Moreover, school heads are encouraged to continue prioritizing teaching and learning as a focal point of their leadership, as it is already a strength. However, to further enhance trust in management, school heads may focus on strengthening areas where leadership practices are less consistent, such as leading strategically, managing school operations and resources, developing self and others, and building connections. Building a more strategic approach to leadership, such as involving teachers in decision-making processes and fostering transparent communication, will help deepen trust in management. Additionally, developing leadership skills in areas like emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, and relationship building will improve work relationships and solidify teachers' trust in the integrity and competencies of school management. Finally, engaging in professional development opportunities and fostering a growth mindset within the school leadership may lead to more effective management practices and a stronger sense of trust among teachers.



Furthermore, teachers may continue fostering trust in school management by maintaining positive work relationships and actively participating in school activities that promote transparency and collaboration. Teachers may also support school heads in their leadership practices, particularly in areas like teaching and learning, which are already strong. While leadership practices in areas such as strategic planning, resource management, and professional development are less consistent, teachers can contribute by offering constructive feedback, participating in decision-making processes, and being open to leadership initiatives that focus on improving these areas. By engaging with school heads in a collaborative and supportive manner, teachers may help build a more cohesive and trusting school environment, ultimately benefiting the overall school community.

Lastly, future researchers may expand on this study by exploring the underlying factors that contribute to the variability in leadership practices, particularly in areas such as strategic leadership, resource management, and professional development. It may be beneficial to examine how specific leadership styles (e.g., transformational or transactional leadership) influence teacher trust in management. Researchers may also explore the impact of contextual factors, such as school size, location, and socio-economic conditions, on the relationship between leadership practices and teacher trust. Additionally, longitudinal studies may provide insights into how these dynamics evolve over time and influence teacher satisfaction and performance. Finally, a comparative study across different school systems or regions may help to identify best practices for fostering trust and improving leadership effectiveness in education.

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