

The Effectiveness of the Leadership Styles of the School Heads in Addressing the School Management Challenges in the Public Elementary Schools of the Schools Division of Iriga City

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the effectiveness of the leadership styles employed by the school heads in addressing school management challenges in the public elementary schools in the Division of City Schools, Iriga City during the School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it examined the extent to which leadership styles such as autocratic, democratic, laissez faire, transformational, transactional, and servant leadership were manifested by school heads in managing school operations. It also determined the extent to which these leadership styles were effective in addressing school management challenges in terms of teacher motivation and performance, resource management, learners' discipline and behavioral concerns, parental and community involvement, implementation of educational reforms and innovations, and communication and collaboration

within the school. Furthermore, the study determined the level of agreement among the respondents regarding the ranking of the leadership styles and their effectiveness in addressing school management challenges in the public elementary schools within the Division of City Schools, Iriga City. In this study, a total of ninety-four (94) Elementary Teachers and School Heads from the Thirty-three (33) public elementary schools in the Division of Iriga City who served as respondents who participated in the study. The statistical tools used were weighted mean, verbal interpretation, frequency count, Kendall Coefficient of Concordance W and its corresponding Chi-Square. The level of significance was set 0.05.

Keywords: *Alternative Delivery Modes, Teacher Preparedness, Learning Continuity, Education in Emergencies*

INTRODUCTION

Leadership style in the context of the Department of Education (DepEd) schools refers to the approach and behavior of school heads and administrators in guiding teachers, staff, and learners toward achieving educational goals while addressing the unique challenges of school management. It determines how school leaders set directions, make decisions, allocate resources, and foster collaboration among stakeholders. In DepEd schools, leadership style directly influences the implementation of programs, policies, and reforms such as the MATATAG Agenda, K to 12 curriculum, and various learning recovery initiatives. For instance, a transformational leadership style can inspire teachers to embrace innovation in teaching and learning, while a democratic style can strengthen shared decision-making in school improvement planning. The effectiveness of leadership styles in DepEd schools not only affects organizational culture and teacher performance but also ensures the delivery of quality, accessible, relevant, and liberating basic education to Filipino learners.

As the study seeks to provide insights on how strong school leadership can foster collaborative relationships between educators, parents, and the community, ultimately contributing to improved learner outcomes and strengthened educational practices in the Schools Division of Iriga City, it is supported by the 1987 Philippine Constitution under Article XIV, Section 1, that

*The state shall promote and protect the right
of all citizens to quality education at all levels
and shall take appropriate steps to make such
education accessible to all.*

School management in the Department of Education (DepEd) faces a variety of challenges that require effective leadership styles to be properly addressed. Among the most common problems are issues of teacher motivation and professional development, where educators often struggle with burnout and limited opportunities for growth. Inefficient communication and weak collaboration between school heads, teachers, parents, and learners also hinder smooth operations and coordination of programs. Resource constraints and budget limitations, such as inadequate instructional materials and facilities, further complicate the delivery of quality education. Additionally, student discipline and behavioral issues affect classroom management and overall learning outcomes, while resistance to change among stakeholders slows down the implementation of new reforms and innovations. Low parental and community involvement weakens the support system needed for learner development, and poor accountability and performance monitoring reduce the effectiveness of school programs. These challenges highlight the crucial role of leadership styles in creating solutions—transformational leadership can inspire innovation, democratic leadership can strengthen collaboration, servant leadership can foster community partnerships, and strategic leadership can maximize resources. Thus, the effectiveness of leadership styles becomes vital in ensuring that DepEd schools overcome management challenges and continue to provide quality, accessible, and relevant education to all learners.

Several legal and policy frameworks strengthen the institutionalization of effective school leadership and management in the Philippine education system. Republic Act 10533 (Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013) mandates a holistic and learner-centered K to 12 Curriculum, which requires strong leadership from school heads to ensure successful implementation despite management challenges. In alignment, the DepEd MATATAG Agenda and the DepEd 7-Point Agenda emphasize curriculum relevance, the promotion of learner well-being, accelerated delivery of basic education services, and strengthened support for teachers and school leaders—areas where effective leadership styles are vital. The Schools First Initiative (SFI) and the Education for All (EFA) 2015 likewise reinforce the principle that empowered school leadership is central to achieving equitable access to quality education.

Furthermore, Republic Act 9155 (Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001) provides the framework for school-based management (SBM), empowering school heads to exercise leadership that ensures transparency, accountability, and active community participation in addressing school challenges. Supporting this, the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), the School Head Development Program (SHDP), the Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA), and the National Competency-Based Teacher Standards (NCBTS) highlight the competencies of teachers and school leaders in instructional leadership, resource management, and stakeholder engagement. Likewise, initiatives such as DepEd Orders, Brigada Eskwela, and School-Based Management (SBM) further strengthen the leadership role of school heads in mobilizing stakeholders, improving facilities, and fostering community partnerships.

At the global level, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4 – Quality Education) underscore the commitment to ensure inclusive and equitable education, while SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals highlights the importance of collaboration and shared responsibility in overcoming school management challenges. These national and global frameworks collectively affirm that the effectiveness of leadership style is a crucial determinant in ensuring that schools manage challenges effectively and deliver quality, accessible, and relevant education. This is the central concern of the present study in the Schools Division of Iriga City.

The Notable Accomplishment of the locale includes Division organized specialized training: the Sustainable Intensive Instructional Program (SIIP) in Science held at Rinconada National High School, enhancing pedagogical approaches in STEM subjects; learners from Iriga Central School were recognized for their excellence in the National Science Trivia, showcasing the Division's effective support for student academic achievement; Division Expansion of Training Faculty initiative aimed at strengthening the conduct of training programs—particularly for Curriculum Implementation and pedagogical development—underscoring its commitment to bolstering teacher capacity; 8 participants successfully completed the School-Based Training of Career Advocates held from August 18 to 22, 2025, equipping educators with skills to guide students in career development; The Division launched a district-wide initiative focused on combating malnutrition and promoting student well-being, demonstrating its commitment to ensuring that “no learner is left behind due to hunger or malnutrition”; Recognition in the 6th Instabright National Awards for Educators: The Division participated in this prestigious recognition program aimed at identifying the Most Outstanding Teacher and School Leader of the Year—an accolade that showcases the Division's emphasis on instructional excellence and leadership development at the school level.

Studies on the effectiveness of the leadership styles in addressing the school management challenges conducted by Verbo, Fernando, and Cabrera (2023) studied the principals' leadership style towards the implementation of decentralized school-based management in selected secondary public schools in Mandaluyong City, Philippines. With 55 teacher-respondents across 11 schools, the study revealed that transformational ($M = 4.23$), democratic ($M = 4.11$), and strategic ($M = 4.05$) leadership styles were rated highest, and results showed a significant correlation ($r = 0.67$, $p < 0.05$) between leadership style and SBM implementation level. The study recommended capacity-building programs for principals focusing on participative and transformational practices to further strengthen teacher collaboration and school-based management.

Esogon and Gumban (2024) studied the Transformational leadership of school heads in public elementary schools in Bacolod City, Philippines. Among 175 teacher-respondents, school heads were rated “High” in transformational leadership with composite mean scores ranging from 4.18 to 4.36 across dimensions such as idealized influence and inspirational motivation. The authors recommended continuous training through Learning Action Cells (LACs) and formal leadership development programs to sustain and enhance the transformational leadership of school heads in managing school challenges.

Awyan and Quines (2025) studied the Distributed leadership of school heads, participation in decision-making and teamwork skills of the teachers: A causal model on organizational commitment in public schools. From 423 teacher-respondents in Region XI, structural equation modeling results showed that distributed leadership had a strong effect ($\beta = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$) on participation in decision-making, and teamwork skills significantly predicted organizational commitment ($\beta = 0.54$, $p < 0.01$). The study recommended institutionalizing shared decision-making mechanisms and collaborative leadership practices to further improve teacher teamwork and organizational commitment.

Olasiman and Torreón (2024) studied the Leadership styles and practices of school heads on teachers' teaching accomplishment. Surveying 98 school heads and 500 teachers in Bohol, the study found significant positive correlations (r values ranging from 0.41 to 0.58, $p < 0.05$) between leadership styles and teachers' RPMS performance ratings. Results showed that teachers under transformational and democratic leaders achieved higher accomplishment scores ($M = 4.12$) compared to those under autocratic leaders ($M = 3.74$). The study recommended strengthening instructional supervision and motivational practices to maximize teacher performance.

Javier and Delos Santos (2022) studied the Leadership styles of school administrators and their impact on school performance in Nueva Ecija, Philippines. Involving 210 teachers across 15 schools, findings showed that transformational leadership was most dominant ($M = 4.25$) and positively correlated with both teacher job satisfaction ($r = 0.61$, $p < 0.01$) and school performance ratings ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$). The study recommended that DepEd reinforce transformational and democratic leadership styles through leadership development seminars to address school management challenges and improve overall school outcomes.

As a school head and researcher, there is a pressing need to conduct a study on the effectiveness of leadership styles in addressing school management challenges because leadership directly influences the success of every educational program and initiative in DepEd schools. School leaders face recurring challenges such as limited resources, teacher motivation, learner discipline, and parental involvement, which require adaptive and effective leadership approaches. By systematically studying which leadership styles are most effective in addressing these issues, school heads can identify best practices that enhance decision-making, resource allocation, and teacher performance. This evidence-based understanding provides not only solutions to existing management challenges but also creates a framework for sustaining quality education delivery in the face of evolving demands under the DepEd MATATAG Agenda and other education reforms.

Furthermore, conducting this study allows the researcher to contribute to both practice and scholarship in educational leadership. From the perspective of a school head, the findings will serve as a guide for improving personal leadership skills, strengthening school-based management, and fostering stronger collaboration with teachers, learners, and stakeholders. From the perspective of a researcher, the study will add to the growing body of literature on leadership effectiveness in Philippine schools, especially within the local context of Iriga City Division. It will provide empirical data that policymakers, supervisors, and fellow school heads can use to craft training programs, leadership development plans, and policy directions. Ultimately, the study becomes both a professional tool for improving leadership practice and an academic contribution to better understanding how leadership styles can be leveraged to overcome school management challenges.

Literature Review

This chapter presents the review of related literatures and studies that have bearing on the present study. To gain deeper understanding of the study, the researcher made a further investigation by reading books, periodicals and educational materials both foreign and local. The researcher also looked for some related studies that served as bases for present studies. This includes studies about Leadership Styles, School Management Challenges, and Policy Recommendations. Also, some studies conducted helped the researcher acquire richer insights into a deeper undertaking of the subject matter on this study from which was drawn the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study.

Furthermore, the varied topics serve as instrumental to the researcher's formulation of the theoretical framework, questionnaires and useful reference in the analysis and interpretation section of the study.

Leadership Styles

Torres et al. (2024) studied the "Leadership Styles and Their Impact on Educational Outcomes in the Philippines" with the objective of analyzing how leadership affects teacher and learner outcomes. The review covered 62 published studies (2015–2024) and reported that 58% emphasized transformational leadership as highly effective in improving teacher motivation and student performance, while 27% highlighted distributed leadership in strengthening collaboration. It recommended developing structured leadership training that promotes transformational and distributed practices to improve equity in both urban and rural schools.

This study is similar to the present research as both emphasize the influence of leadership styles on improving teacher motivation and learner performance. However, Torres et al. used a systematic review of literature, while the present study focuses on empirical data within the local context of Iriga City Division, specifically addressing management challenges such as discipline, resource use, and reforms.

Ombao and De Jesus (2025) studied "Towards Success: The Impact of School Head Leadership Style on School Performance – A Systematic Review." The study reviewed 44 research articles and found that 70% identified transformational leadership as the most effective, followed by democratic leadership (20%) in raising teacher efficiency and school performance. The authors recommended that school heads adapt multiple leadership

styles depending on school context, but give greater emphasis on transformational and democratic approaches to sustain quality education outcomes.

This research aligns with the present study as both underscore transformational and democratic leadership as highly effective in school improvement. The difference lies in scope: Ombao and De Jesus conducted a broad review of published articles, while the present study is designed to generate primary data that specifically examines how leadership styles address concrete school management challenges in a district-level setting.

Intud and Fernal (2025) studied the “Leadership Styles and Competencies of School Heads in the Division of Cagayan de Oro City.” The objective was to determine the correlation between leadership styles and competencies. Using 429 teacher respondents, findings revealed that transformational leadership received the highest weighted mean ($M = 4.32$), while transactional leadership had a moderate but significant correlation with leadership competencies ($r = 0.45$, $p < 0.05$). The study recommended that DepEd enhance training that strengthens transformational leadership while balancing transactional practices to improve competency-based leadership.

The present study is similar to this work since both analyze the effectiveness of leadership styles and their relationship with school management functions. However, Intud and Fernal’s study focused on the competencies of school heads, while the present study addresses specific management challenges such as discipline, parental involvement, and resource allocation in the Iriga Central District.

Uy (2024) studied “School Heads' Leadership Styles and Teachers' Performance” in Alubijid East District, Misamis Oriental, with 114 junior high teachers. Results showed that the democratic style was rated highest ($M = 4.21$) and had a significant correlation with teacher performance ($r = 0.61$, $p < 0.01$). Transformational style ($M = 4.08$) also showed a strong positive relationship ($r = 0.57$, $p < 0.01$). The study recommended strengthening democratic practices such as participative decision-making and collegial supervision to sustain teacher effectiveness.

This study closely relates to the present research since both examine how leadership styles affect teachers’ motivation and performance. The difference lies in scope: Uy concentrated solely on teacher performance outcomes, while the present study encompasses a wider range of school management challenges including learner discipline, reforms, and community involvement in the Division of Iriga City.

Ramirez and Capili (2024) studied “Leadership Style of School Heads and Its Influence on Teacher Retention: Basis for a Teacher Retention Plan” with 30 school heads and 154 teachers in Tuguegarao City. Findings indicated that transactional leadership was the most frequently observed style (64%), followed by transformational leadership (22%) and democratic leadership (14%). Results also showed that teachers under transactional leaders had 20% higher retention intent scores compared to others. The authors recommended creating teacher retention programs anchored on transactional practices like recognition, rewards, and clear accountability measures.

This study and the present research are similar in that both explore the effectiveness of leadership styles in shaping teacher-related outcomes. The difference is that Ramirez and Capili focused specifically on teacher retention, while the present study takes a broader perspective by examining leadership effectiveness in addressing multiple management challenges that affect the entire school system in Iriga Central District.

Verbo, Fernando, and Cabrera (2023) studied “Principals’ Leadership Style towards the Implementation of Decentralized School-Based Management in Selected Secondary Public Schools in Mandaluyong City, Philippines.” The study involved 55 teachers from 11 schools and reported that transformational ($M = 4.23$), democratic ($M = 4.11$), and strategic ($M = 4.05$) were the most practiced leadership styles. Chi-square results showed a significant relationship ($\chi^2 = 22.00$, $df = 10$, $p < 0.05$) between leadership style and the level of SBM practice. The study recommended continuous leadership development programs emphasizing transformational and democratic practices to improve SBM outcomes.

This study connects with the present research as both evaluate leadership effectiveness in addressing school management issues. The difference lies in the focus: Verbo et al. concentrated on School-Based

Management (SBM) implementation, while the present study examines broader management challenges such as resource constraints, learner behavior, and stakeholder involvement in the Division of Iriga City.

School Management Challenges

Zabala (2024) studied “Exploring Teacher Leadership: Practices, Challenges, and Opportunities in Philippine Public Schools.” The study aimed to examine the prevalence of teacher leadership and the issues teachers face when taking on leadership roles. Using 300 public school teachers as respondents, the findings revealed that 76% actively engaged in leadership activities such as mentoring and program facilitation, while 58% participated in community engagement initiatives. However, 64% reported challenges related to role ambiguity and lack of administrative support, and 82% strongly endorsed the need for professional development opportunities to strengthen their leadership capacity. The study recommended systemic reforms that define teacher leadership roles more clearly, provide stronger administrative support, and expand collaborative networks.

In comparison, this study shares similarities with the present research in highlighting leadership as a determinant of school improvement and stakeholder participation. Both emphasize the impact of leadership on teacher motivation and school functioning. However, Zabala focused specifically on teacher leadership, while the present study investigates the leadership styles of school heads in addressing broader school management challenges such as learner discipline, reform implementation, and parental involvement.

Mendoza and De Jesus (2024) conducted the study “School Management and Leadership in the Contemporary State of Education System in the Philippines.” The objective was to determine the prevailing managerial and instructional leadership approaches that influence educational outcomes. Reviewing 35 peer-reviewed articles from 2018 to 2024, the findings showed recurring leadership practices: 43% emphasized ethical leadership as critical to equity in schools, 37% underscored strategic and instructional leadership for ensuring teacher accountability, and 20% highlighted equity-based and shared leadership for addressing inclusiveness in school management. The study recommended adopting practical and student-centered leadership approaches that are adaptable to the needs of 21st-century education.

This study and the present research are similar as both analyze leadership as a central factor in strengthening school management and educational delivery. However, Mendoza and De Jesus presented a literature review of past studies, while the current research generates empirical data from school heads and teachers in Iriga City, focusing directly on how leadership styles resolve specific challenges like resource management and school communication.

Ortiz Jr. et al. (2025) studied “School Heads’ Instructional Leadership Styles and Administrative Challenges as Perceived by School Heads and Teachers in the Philippines.” The objective was to analyze how instructional leadership styles correlate with administrative issues. With 100 school heads and 100 teachers as respondents, the results showed that distributed instructional leadership had a mean score of 3.75, interpreted as “often practiced.” Statistical analysis revealed that this style was significantly correlated ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.05$) with the ability to address resource management challenges. The study recommended enhancing distributed leadership while providing support systems to ensure equitable distribution of resources and lessen administrative burdens.

Similar to the present research, this study links leadership practices directly with school management challenges, particularly in resource management. The difference lies in focus: Ortiz Jr. et al. investigated instructional leadership styles only, whereas the present research includes a broader scope of autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire, transformational, transactional, and servant leadership, and their effectiveness in managing multiple school challenges in Iriga Central District.

Caballero and Bantulo (2025) conducted “Principals’ School Management Styles and Teachers’ Motivation Toward School Performance.” The study aimed to determine the relationship between management styles, teacher motivation, and school outcomes. Surveying 92 teachers, findings showed that democratic management was the most prevalent, with a weighted mean of 4.12, indicating it was “often practiced.” Teacher motivation was highest in existence needs ($M = 4.08$), while relatedness ($M = 3.74$) and growth ($M = 3.65$) were rated only “sometimes observed.” School performance indicators such as completion and graduation rates were

rated “good,” while retention and transition rates needed improvement. A significant correlation ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.05$) was found between democratic management and teacher motivation. The study recommended strengthening democratic management styles and designing programs to improve retention and transition outcomes.

This research is similar to the present study because both focus on teacher motivation and performance as a key school management challenge addressed through leadership. However, Caballero and Bantulo limited their scope to motivation and performance, whereas the current research expands to other pressing challenges such as learner discipline, parental involvement, and implementation of reforms in Iriga City.

Gicain (2024) studied “Leadership Styles among School Administrators Embracing Situational Leadership Model: The Case of T’Boli West District, South Cotabato.” The study’s objective was to describe the situational leadership styles employed by administrators. Using a qualitative case study, the findings revealed that administrators practiced coaching, directing, delegating, and supporting depending on the needs of their teachers. Emergent themes included empowerment, motivation, modeling, and providing emotional support, which were viewed as effective in building confidence and promoting staff independence. Respondents described situational leadership as both “fulfilling” and “flexible,” enabling leaders to bring out the best in their staff. The study recommended wider adoption of situational leadership to promote responsiveness and adaptability in schools.

This study relates to the present research by emphasizing leadership adaptability in managing school challenges. The difference is that Gicain focused exclusively on situational leadership through qualitative analysis, while the present study examines six specific leadership styles quantitatively and how each addresses multiple management challenges in the Division of Iriga City.

Aguilar (2023) studied “Influence of School Administrators’ Leadership Style on Responding to Adversity.” The objective was to explore how administrators navigate crises using their leadership approaches. Using a qualitative design with 20 administrators, the study revealed that leaders assumed roles as strategists, mentors, ambassadors, and innovators. They displayed resilience, courage, and adaptability in managing challenges during crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The results highlighted the importance of multifaceted leadership during adverse conditions. The study recommended training school leaders to enhance resilience, adaptability, and innovative responses in times of crisis.

This study is similar to the present research as both examine leadership effectiveness in addressing school challenges, though Aguilar focused on crisis management and adversity, while the present study investigates recurring and systemic school management challenges such as teacher motivation, resource allocation, learner discipline, and stakeholder involvement in Iriga City.

Policy Recommendations

Ladra & Gorospe (2025) studied the “Principal leadership, good governance, and teachers’ commitment to organizational change.” The objective was to identify leadership and governance indicators influencing teacher commitment across 10 public elementary schools in Caluya, Antique, with 100 teacher respondents. The study found a positive correlation between teachers’ perceptions of participatory decision-making and their commitment to change (though overall principal leadership did not significantly predict commitment levels). The study recommended that school heads foster shared governance and inclusive decision-making frameworks, such as ethics committees and participatory councils, to enhance teacher engagement in organizational change.

This study is similar to the present research in focusing on leadership styles and their effects on teacher-related outcomes, specifically organizational change and commitment. However, it differs by emphasizing governance and teacher commitment as outcomes, while the present study focuses on how leadership styles address specific school management challenges like resources, discipline, and stakeholder engagement.

Garcia & Ching (2024) studied the “Effect of Ethical Leadership at Work on School Head Transparency and Trust in Governance in Public Elementary Schools.” With 103 teacher respondents from public elementary schools in San Pablo City, descriptive, Pearson r , and mediation analyses revealed that ethical leadership significantly mediates the relationship between principal transparency and trust in governance (indirect effect $\approx$

0.462, $p < 0.001$). Recommendations included establishing ethics committees with stakeholder representation and promoting shared governance to strengthen trust and transparency.

This study aligns with the present research by showing how leadership practices influence the quality of school management. The difference lies in the focus: Garcia and Ching concentrated on ethical leadership and transparency, while the present research examines a broader range of six leadership styles and their effectiveness in addressing multiple management challenges in Iriga Central District.

Tubac (2025) studied “Engaging Leadership of School Heads and Teacher Commitment in Public Secondary Schools of Panabo City Division.” Among 146 secondary teachers, results showed high levels of engaging leadership behaviors (strengthening, connecting, empowering, inspiring) and high teacher commitment, with a significant positive correlation between the two variables. It recommended that DepEd officials reinforce engaging leadership practices through training and institutional support to boost teacher commitment.

This study is similar to the present research as both highlight how leadership approaches affect teacher motivation and commitment. The difference, however, is that Tubac focused only on engaging leadership and its relationship to teacher commitment, whereas the present study compares multiple leadership styles in terms of their effectiveness in addressing broader management challenges like reforms, communication, and discipline.

Guillergan (2024) studied “School Heads’ Decision-Making Styles and Educational Leadership: Their Influence on School Culture” in Iloilo City Division. Based on 350 teacher responses, the study revealed that the Planner decision-making style predominates among school heads and that these leadership styles significantly influence school culture (though variances exist by school level and teacher experience). The study recommended context-sensitive, collaborative decision-making frameworks to promote a positive, adaptive school culture.

This study connects with the present research since both analyze how leadership styles impact school-level outcomes. The difference is that Guillergan emphasized decision-making styles and school culture, while the present research specifically investigates the effectiveness of leadership styles in addressing practical management challenges faced by school heads in Iriga City.

Largo et al. (2024) studied “School Heads’ Leadership Skills and Teachers’ Work Engagement in Piñan District, Schools Division of Zamboanga del Norte.” Surveying 90 teacher respondents, findings revealed that school heads exhibited very high leadership skills across strategic planning, people development, communication, motivation, and team-building, while teachers showed very high work engagement. A moderate positive correlation was observed between leadership skills and teacher engagement. The study recommended that DepEd’s SGOD use these results to validate and enhance School-Based Management practices and support continued leadership development.

This study is similar to the present research because both recognize that school heads’ leadership directly influences teacher performance and engagement. The difference is that Largo et al. focused on specific leadership skills like planning and motivation, while the present study examines recognized leadership styles (autocratic, democratic, transformational, etc.) in addressing broader management concerns.

Pacumba (2024) studied “Instructional Leadership, Followership Styles, and Work Performance of Public Elementary Teachers in Cotabato City Division.” With 200 elementary teachers as respondents, results indicated extensive instructional leadership by school heads, extensive teacher followership styles, and moderately extensive teacher work performance, with significant positive relationships between instructional leadership and both followership and teacher performance. Recommendations included that DepEd design professional development programs to strengthen instructional leadership and align teacher followership for improved work performance.

This study is similar to the present research because both assess how leadership practices influence teacher outcomes and overall school effectiveness. The difference lies in focus: Pacumba concentrated on instructional leadership and followership, while the present study covers a broader set of leadership styles and their effectiveness in addressing systemic school management challenges.

Synthesis of the State-of-the-Art

Based on the various literatures and studies collected on the Effectiveness of the Leadership Styles of the School Heads in Addressing the School Management Challenges in the Public Elementary Schools of Division of City Schools, Iriga City, the researcher of the study realized that the factors of learning in the field of teaching and improving learner's performance were found very significant in the enhancement of education in our country.

The studies on Leadership Styles by Torres, et al. (2024) studied the Leadership Styles and Their Impact on Educational Outcomes in the Philippines; Ombao and De Jesus (2025) conducted a study about Towards Success: The Impact of School Head Leadership Style on School Performance – A Systematic Review; Intud and Fernal (2025) on Leadership Styles and Competencies of School Heads in the Division of Cagayan de Oro City; Uy (2024) about School Heads' Leadership Styles and Teachers' Performance; Ramirez and Capili (2024) on Leadership Style of School Heads and Its Influence on Teacher Retention: Basis for a Teacher Retention Plan; and Verbo, Fernando, and Cabrera (2023) studied the Principals' Leadership Style towards the Implementation of Decentralized School-Based Management in Selected Secondary Public Schools in Mandaluyong City, Philippines.

The studies on School Management Challenges by Zabala (2024) studied the Exploring Teacher Leadership: Practices, Challenges, and Opportunities in Philippine Public Schools; Mendoza and De Jesus (2024) conducted a study about School Management and Leadership in the Contemporary State of Education System in the Philippines; Ortiz Jr., et al. (2025) on School Heads' Instructional Leadership Styles and Administrative Challenges as Perceived by School Heads and Teachers in the Philippines; Caballero and Bantulo (2025) about Principals' School Management Styles and Teachers' Motivation Toward School Performance; Gicain (2024) on Leadership Styles among School Administrators Embracing Situational Leadership Model: The Case of T'Boli West District, South Cotabato; and Aguilar (2023) conducted a study about Influence of School Administrators' Leadership Style on Responding to Adversity.

The studies on Policy Recommendations by Ladra and Gorospe (2025) studied the Principal leadership, good governance, and teachers' commitment to organizational change; Garcia and Ching (2024) conducted a study about Effect of Ethical Leadership at Work on School Head Transparency and Trust in Governance in Public Elementary Schools; Tubac (2025) on Engaging Leadership of School Heads and Teacher Commitment in Public Secondary Schools of Panabo City Division; Guillergan (2024) about School Heads' Decision-Making Styles and Educational Leadership: Their Influence on School Culture; Largo, et al. (2024) on School Heads' Leadership Skills and Teachers' Work Engagement in Piñan District, Schools Division of Zamboanga del Norte; and Pacumba (2024) conducted a study about Instructional Leadership, Followership Styles, and Work Performance of Public Elementary Teachers in Cotabato City Division.

Gap Bridged by the Study

Through this study, a link was established among previous research calling for deeper and further studies on the Effectiveness of the Leadership Styles of the School Heads in Addressing the School Management Challenges in the Public Elementary Schools of Division of City Schools, Iriga City.

None of the studies that had been reviewed specifically focused on Leadership Styles, School Management Challenges, and Policy Recommendations during the school year 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023, 2024 and 2025.

From the presentation of the findings of the aforementioned studies, it was found that all of them enriched the present studies. Most of the studies focused on the Leadership Styles, School Management Challenges, and Policy Recommendations, but not exactly the same title of the present study that will lead to quality education.

From among the enumerated studies herein (local and international), it was noted that no one had exactly the same as of the present study thus, this is the gap that this study would like to bridge.

The Theoretical Framework of the Study

The Theoretical Paradigm of this study showed the relationship of the different theories: The theories that anchor the present study are the Trait Theory of Leadership (Stogdill, 1948), the Behavioral Theory of Leadership (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939), the Transformational Leadership Theory (Burns, 1978), the Transactional Leadership Theory (Bass, 1981), and the Servant Leadership Theory (Greenleaf, 1977) and its impact to the researcher in conducting the study focusing on the the Effectiveness of the Leadership Styles in Addressing the School Management Challenges in the Public Elementary Schools in Iriga Central District, Division of Iriga City.

Trait Theory of Leadership (Stogdill, 1948) – This theory argues that leaders are distinguished by certain inherent qualities such as intelligence, confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability, which influence their ability to lead effectively. It emphasizes that leadership is partly innate, with some individuals naturally possessing attributes that predispose them

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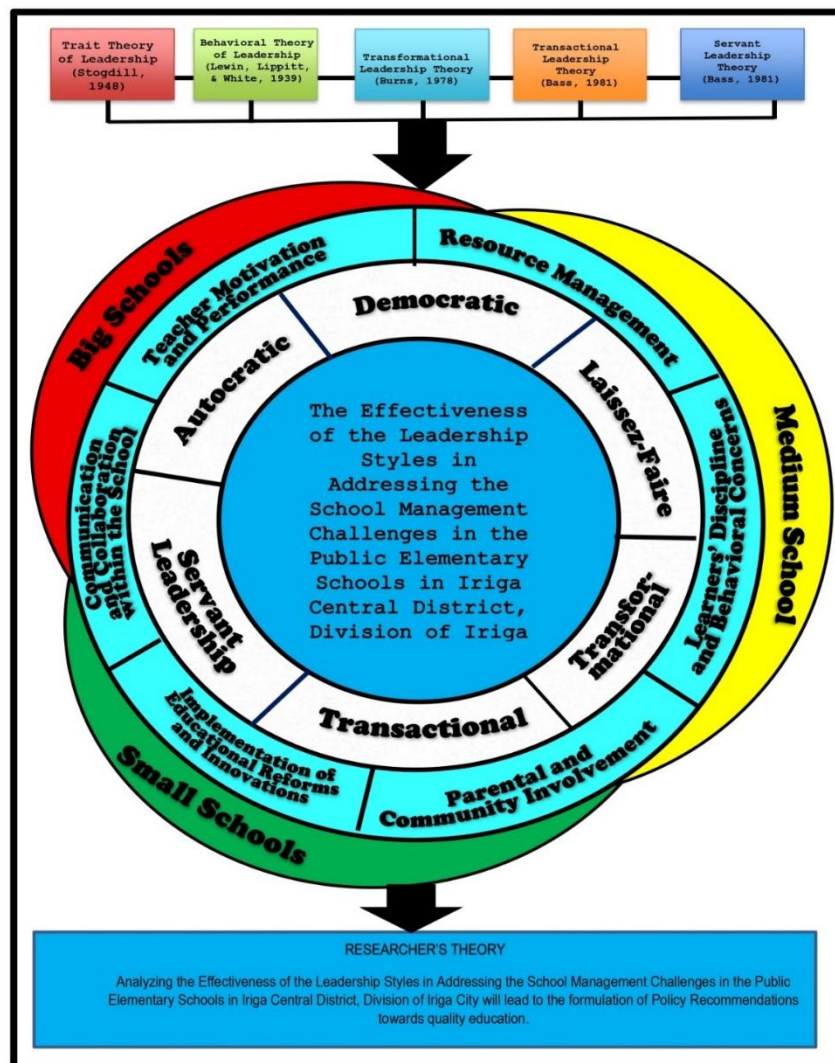


Figure 2

The Theoretical Paradigm

Trait Theory of Leadership (Stogdill, 1948)

This theory argues that leaders are distinguished by certain inherent qualities such as intelligence, confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability, which influence their ability to lead effectively. It emphasizes that leadership is partly innate, with some individuals naturally possessing attributes that predispose them to lead. In school management, this theory suggests that the personal qualities of school heads—such as decisiveness, resilience, and empathy—play a vital role in how they navigate challenges like teacher motivation, learner discipline, and community engagement. Although later scholars have shown that traits alone do not guarantee leadership success, the theory remains relevant in highlighting the importance of self-awareness, personality, and character in shaping leadership effectiveness in schools.

Behavioral Theory of Leadership (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939)

This theory shifts the focus from innate traits to the actual behaviors of leaders. It classifies leadership into three styles: autocratic (leader-centered decision-making), democratic (shared decision-making), and laissez-faire (minimal supervision and maximum autonomy). The central idea is that leadership effectiveness depends on how leaders behave toward their followers rather than who they are. In education, this means that school heads' actions in planning, decision-making, communication, and supervision significantly affect school outcomes. For example, a democratic leader may improve teacher morale and collaboration, while an autocratic leader may ensure strict adherence to rules in times of crisis. This theory is highly relevant to your study since it directly aligns with how leadership styles—observable behaviors of school heads—address the day-to-day challenges of school management.

Transformational Leadership Theory (Burns, 1978)

This theory conceptualizes leadership as a process where leaders inspire and motivate followers to exceed expectations, commit to shared goals, and embrace change. Transformational leaders are characterized by their vision, charisma, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration for followers. In schools, transformational leadership enables school heads to create a shared vision, empower teachers, and foster innovation in teaching and management practices. It also helps in addressing systemic challenges such as implementing new reforms, improving teacher motivation, and strengthening community involvement. This theory deepens the present study by showing how leadership can go beyond management and become a catalyst for long-term change in the school environment.

Transactional Leadership Theory (Bass, 1981)

Rooted in a leader-follower exchange framework, transactional leadership relies on structure, performance monitoring, rewards, and sanctions. Leaders clarify expectations, reward compliance, and correct deviations through disciplinary action. While sometimes perceived as rigid, this theory underscores the importance of accountability and order in organizational settings. In schools, transactional leadership ensures that teachers meet performance standards, resources are used efficiently, and rules are strictly followed. It becomes particularly effective in addressing management challenges such as ensuring teacher accountability, monitoring learner discipline, and implementing policies with consistency. For the present study, it highlights how transactional practices can complement transformational leadership by providing structure and control where needed.

Servant Leadership Theory (Greenleaf, 1977)

This theory proposes that effective leaders are those who begin with the desire to serve others first, then consciously choose to lead. Servant leaders prioritize the growth and well-being of individuals and communities, displaying empathy, humility, listening skills, and stewardship. In school contexts, servant leadership is highly relevant because it emphasizes the role of the school head as a steward of both human and material resources. A servant school head invests in teacher development, promotes learner welfare, and strengthens partnerships with parents and communities. This leadership style is effective in addressing challenges like parental involvement,

teacher morale, and stakeholder collaboration, aligning well with DepEd's thrust on participatory governance and child-centered education.

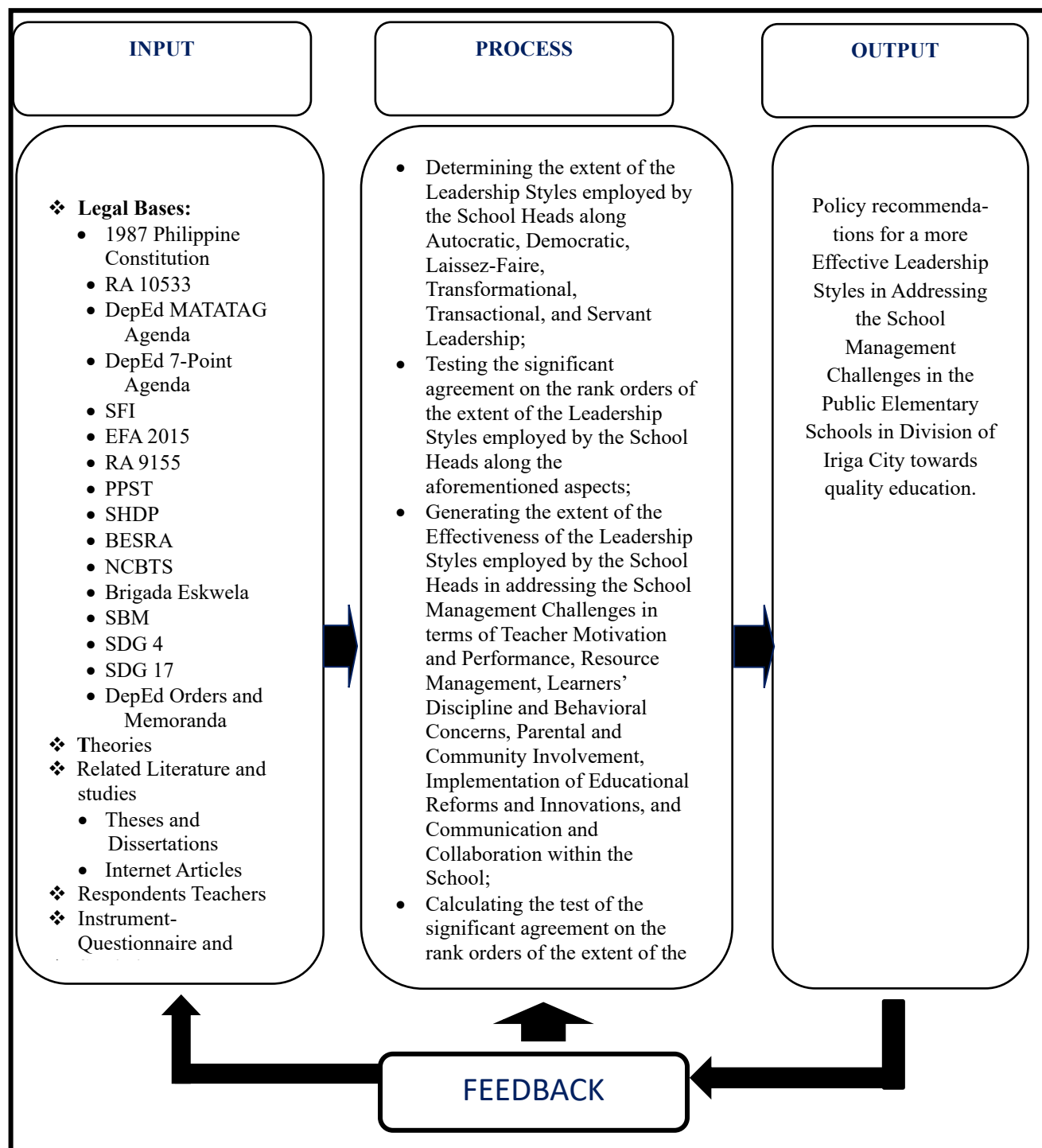
Researcher's Theory

Out of the insights gained from the five theories: Trait Theory of Leadership (Stogdill, 1948), the Behavioral Theory of Leadership (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939), the Transformational Leadership Theory (Burns, 1978), the Transactional Leadership Theory (Bass, 1981), and the Servant Leadership Theory (Greenleaf, 1977), the researcher was able to formulate the researcher's theory. This means that this theory will guide him in the conduct of the research study. On the other hand, the Researcher's Theory focuses on "Analyzing the Effectiveness of the Leadership Styles of the School Heads in Addressing the School Management Challenges in the Public Elementary Schools of Division of City Schools, Iriga City will lead to the formulation of policy recommendations towards quality education".

The Conceptual Framework of the Study

The theoretical framework guides the researcher in conceptualizing the knowledge and insights gained from the input, process, and output.

The following were taken as inputs of the study: Legal Bases such as the 1987 Philippine Constitution, RA 10533, DepEd MATATAG Agenda, DepEd 7-Point Agenda, SFI, EFA 2015, RA 9155, PPST, SHDP, BESRA, NCBTS, Brigada Eskwela, SBM, SDG 4, SDG 17, and DepEd Orders and Memoranda; Theories, Related Literature and studies; Theses and Dissertations; Internet Articles; Respondents; Instrument – Questionnaire; and Statistical Tools. The Process includes the Determining the extent of the Leadership Styles employed by the School Heads along



Autocratic, Democratic, Laissez-Faire, Transformational, Transactional, and Servant Leadership; Testing the significant agreement on the rank orders of the extent of the Leadership Styles employed by the School Heads along the aforementioned aspects; Generating the extent of the Effectiveness of the Leadership Styles employed by the School Heads in addressing the School Management Challenges in terms of Teacher Motivation and

Performance, Resource Management, Learners' Discipline and Behavioral Concerns, Parental and Community Involvement, Implementation of Educational Reforms and Innovations, and Communication and Collaboration within the School; Calculating the test of the significant agreement on the rank orders of the extent of the Effectiveness of the Leadership Styles employed by the School Heads in addressing the School Management Challenges among the group of respondents; and Developing the Policy Recommendations that can be formulated based from the findings of the study.

The output of the study focused on the Policy recommendations for a more improved Effective Leadership Styles in Addressing the School Management Challenges in the Public Elementary Schools in Division of Iriga City towards quality education.

METHODS

Research Design

The researcher employed the descriptive-evaluative-correlational method of research. This was used because it primarily aimed to solicit responses through the use of a survey questionnaire.

This thesis used descriptive type of research where it describes data and characteristics about the population or phenomenon being studied. Descriptive method gives emphasis on the information collected without changing the environment, or rather without manipulating any information gathered. Shuttleworth (2008) also affirmed that this design is a scientific method which involves observing and describing the behavior of a subject without influencing it in any way.

The researcher utilized survey form to collect the needed primary raw data. Descriptive method is an excellent design for this study since it will provide the value of the gathered information and the focus given for the important things (Calmorin & Calmorin, 2000). In this study, the researcher sought answer from the instrument through surveying the preferred teachers.

This research undertaking focused on the Effectiveness of the Leadership Styles of the School Heads in Addressing the School Management Challenges in the Public Elementary Schools of Division of City Schools, Iriga City.

Sampling Technique

This study used purposive sampling technique to search out data from the selected persons. It a form of non-probability sampling in which decisions concerning the individuals to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher based upon a variety of criteria which may include specialist knowledge of the research issue, or capacity and willingness to participate in the research (Oliver, 2006). Nonetheless, the researcher has chosen numerous respondents to secure that the results from a single test are not just a concurrence. The researcher used total enumeration in identifying the teachers and school head respondents. There were ninety-four (94) respondents for this research undertaking.

The Respondents of the Study

Table 1. *Respondents of the Study*

Schools	School Head	Teachers	Sub Total	Percentage
Big Schools				
1. Iriga CS	1	6	7	7
2. Iriga North CS	1	5	6	6
3. Iriga South CS	1	5	6	6
Subtotal	3	16	19	20
Medium Schools				
1. Francia ES	1	4	5	5
2. San Agustin ES	1	4	5	5

3. San Isidro ES	1	4	5	5
4. San Jose ES	1	4	5	5
5. San Pedro ES	1	4	5	5
6. San Nicolas ES	1	4	5	5
7. Sta. Cruz Norte ES	1	3	4	4
8. Sta. Cruz Sur ES	1	3	4	4
Subtotal	8	30	38	40
Small Schools				
1. Tubigan ES	1	2	3	3
2. Banao ES	1	2	3	3
3. San Andres ES	1	2	3	3
4. San Rafael ES	1	2	3	3
5. San Ramon ES	1	2	3	3
6. Tiriktirikan ES	1	2	3	3
7. Sta. Elena ES	1	2	3	3
8. Sta. Teresita ES	1	2	3	3
9. La Trinidad ES	1	2	3	3
10. La Purisima ES	1	2	3	3
11. La Medalla ES	1	2	3	3
Subtotal	11	22	33	35
Grand Total	22	68	94	100

The Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents from the public elementary schools in Iriga City included in the study. A total of ninety-four respondents participated, consisting of twenty-two school heads and seventy-two teachers coming from twenty-two schools. The big schools such as Iriga CS, Iriga North CS, and Iriga South CS contributed a total of nineteen respondents, representing twenty percent of the total. Meanwhile, the medium schools including Francia ES, San Agustin ES, San Isidro ES, San Jose ES, San Pedro ES, San Nicolas ES, Sta. Cruz Norte ES, and Sta. Cruz Sur ES accounted for thirty-eight respondents or forty percent of the total. On the other hand, the small schools such as Tubigan ES, Banao ES, San Andres ES, San Rafael ES, San Ramon ES, Tiriktirikan ES, Sta. Elena ES, Sta. Teresita ES, La Trinidad ES, La Purisima ES, and La Medalla ES comprised thirty-three respondents or thirty five percent. This distribution indicates that the study ensured representation from different categories of schools in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the conditions and perspectives of school heads and teachers in the public elementary schools in Iriga City.

Instrument Used

In this study, a questionnaire was administered to collect data on the Effectiveness of the Leadership Styles of the School Heads in Addressing the School Management Challenges in the Public Elementary Schools of Division of City Schools, Iriga City.

Table 2. Table of Specification

Indicators	Number of Items	Item Placement	Percentage
Part I. The Leadership Styles Employed by the School Heads			
1. Autocratic	11	1–11	9
2. Democratic	10	12–21	8
3. Laissez-Faire	9	22–30	8
4. Transformational	11	31–41	9
5. Transactional	10	42–51	8
6. Servant	9	52–60	8
Subtotal	60		50
Part II. The Effectiveness of the Leadership Styles in Addressing School Management Challenges			
1. Teacher Motivation and Performance	11	61–71	9

2. Resource Management	10	72–81	8
3. Learners' Discipline and Behavioral Concerns	9	82–90	8
4. Parental and Community Involvement	11	91–101	9
5. Implementation of Educational Reforms and Innovations	10	102–111	8
6. Communication and Collaboration within the School	9	112–120	8
Subtotal	60		50
Grand Total	120		100

The research instrument is composed of two parts. The first part was the Leadership Styles Employed by the School Heads, and the second part is on the Effectiveness of the Leadership Styles in Addressing School Management Challenges.

The researcher used the following scales in interpreting the Effectiveness of the Leadership Styles of the School Heads in Addressing the School Management Challenges in the Public Elementary Schools of Division of City Schools, Iriga City.

Scale	Weight Assigned	Interpretation
5	4.50-5.00	Very Much Evident (VME)
4	3.50-4.49	Much Evident (ME)
3	2.50-3.49	Evident (E)
2	1.50-2.49	Less Evident (LE)
1	1.00-1.49	Not At All (NAA)

Moreover, the researcher asked the professional assistance of five (5) research experts on validating the researcher made instrument. This is to ensure the objectiveness of the current undertaking as well as its reliability of the gathered data.

Reliability and Validity of the Instrument

To measure the internal consistency of the instrument, Chronbach Alpha test was used. The researcher will use Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS) to facilitate easily the computations.

Based from the computed result, the reliability coefficient r was 3.8046 with standard deviation of 13.9439 and with computed significance of the reliability coefficient $t = 9.1536$ which was higher than the tabular value of $t_{0.050} = 1.9904$. Thus, it can be concluded that the questionnaire is reliable in getting the needed information.

Study Procedure

A Study Procedure and Time Budget were constructed to guide the Process or flow of the research. This is shown in Figure 4.

It can be seen that the process includes:

1. Formulating the title
2. Preparing Chapter 1
3. Gathering Related Literature and Studies
4. Presenting Chapter 3
5. Title Proposal Defense
6. Reviewing Chapter 1-3
7. Gathering Data
8. Retrieving Data
9. Tabulating and Interpreting of Data
10. Submitting for Pre-Oral Defense
11. Pre-Oral Defense

12. Revising Manuscript
13. Submitting for Final Oral Defense

ACTIVITIES	2025						2026						
	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
1. Formulating the title													
2. Preparing Chapter 1													
3. Gathering Related Literature and Studies													
4. Presenting Chapter 3													
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7. Gathering Data													
8. Retrieving Data													
9. Tabulating and Interpreting of Data													
10. Submitting for Pre-Oral Defense													
11. Pre-Oral Defense													
12. Revising Manuscript													
13. Submitting for Final Oral Defense													
14. Final Oral Defense													
15. Reviewing Manuscript													
16. Submitting Final Draft													
17. Submitting Manuscript to CHED													
18. Disseminating Findings													
19. Publishing the research output													

Figure 4. *The Gantt Chart of the Research Procedure*

1. Final Oral Defense
2. Reviewing Manuscript
3. Submitting Final Draft

4. Submitting Manuscript to CHED
5. Disseminating Findings
6. Publishing the research output

Statistical Treatment of Data

In the analysis of the data, the researcher used the following statistical tools: Frequency count, percentage, ranking, weighted mean, Kendall Coefficient of Concordance W and its corresponding chi-square, Spearman Rank Correlation.

The frequency count and Mean were the statistical tool used in analyzing the gathered data specifically on the Leadership Styles Employed by the School Heads; and the Effectiveness of the Leadership Styles in Addressing School Management Challenges. Frequency count was used to tally raw scores.

Additionally, the Spearman Rank Order Correlation (r_s) was employed to test the relationships between variables, specifically measuring the degree of association between the leadership styles practiced by school heads and the level of effectiveness in addressing various management challenges. To determine the relative importance or priority of specific leadership behaviors to chance, thereby ensuring robust, data-driven conclusions.

Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance W was used to determine the significance of the agreement, the rank orders of the Leadership Styles Employed by the School Heads; and the Effectiveness of the Leadership Styles in Addressing School Management Challenges of the respondents.

$$W = \frac{S}{\frac{1}{12}(K^2)(N^3 - N)}$$

Where:

S = the summation of the deviation from the mean difference

K = number of group of respondents

N = number of cases

$\frac{1}{12}$ = constant

The significance of agreement was determined by the corresponding chi-square formula by Siegel (1988):

$$X^2 = k(N - 1) W$$

The significance level was set at 0.050.

Results and Discussion

Findings revealed the following:

1. The extent of the leadership styles employed by the school heads in addressing school management challenges in the public elementary schools in the Division of City Schools, Iriga City shows that Transactional Leadership, 4.54; Laissez Faire Leadership, 4.53; Servant Leadership, 3.81; Democratic Leadership, 2.35; Transformational Leadership, 1.71; and Autocratic Leadership, 1.57. The first two indicators fall under the verbal interpretation Very Much Evident, Servant Leadership is interpreted as Much Evident, while Democratic Leadership, Transformational Leadership, and Autocratic Leadership fall under Fairly Evident. The Average Mean, 3.09, or verbally interpreted as Evident.

2. On the test of significant agreement among the rank orders of the respondents who evaluated the Extent of the Leadership Styles Employed by the School Heads, the Coefficient of Concordance W and its corresponding X^2 value yielded to: Autocratic, 0.27 and 7.29 ($p > 0.05$); Democratic, 0.46 and 11.04 ($p > 0.05$); Laissez-Faire, 0.34

and 7.14 ($p>0.05$); Transformational, 0.40 and 10.80 ($p>0.05$); Transactional, 0.24 and 5.76 ($p>0.05$); and Servant, 0.44 and 9.24 ($p>0.05$) Leadership. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted in all indicators.

3. The extent of the effectiveness of the leadership styles employed by the school heads in addressing the school management challenges in the public elementary schools in the Division of Iriga City, the average data reveal that Teacher Motivation and Performance, 4.58 Very Much Evident; Parental and Community Involvement, 4.56 Very Much Evident; Communication and Collaboration within the School, 4.54 Very Much Evident; Learners' Discipline and Behavioral Concerns, 4.50 Very Much Evident; Resource Management, 4.49 Much Evident; and Implementation of Educational Reforms and Innovations, 4.42 Much Evident.

4. On the test of significant agreement among the rank orders of the respondents who evaluated the Extent of the Effectiveness of the Leadership Styles Employed by the School Heads in Addressing the School Management Challenges, the Coefficient of Concordance W and its corresponding X² value yielded to: Teacher Motivation and Performance, 0.29 and 7.83 ($p>0.05$); Resource Management, 0.11 and 2.64 ($p>0.05$); Learners' Discipline and Behavioral Concerns, 0.48 and 10.08 ($p>0.05$); Parental and Community Involvement, 0.19 and 5.13 ($p>0.05$); Implementation of Educational Reforms and Innovations, 0.38 and 9.12 ($p>0.05$); and Communication and Collaboration within the School, 0.42 and 8.82 ($p>0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted in all indicators

5. The policy recommendations formulated by the researcher based from the findings of the study were: The school heads and education supervisors in the Schools Division Office may strengthen participatory decision making practices by organizing regular consultative meetings with teachers and staff so that school concerns are addressed through shared problem solving rather than relying primarily on authority and directives; and the school heads and district supervisors may encourage collaborative task implementation by clearly explaining the purpose of school directives and inviting teachers to contribute suggestions during planning and implementation of school activities.

CONCLUSION

1. The leadership styles employed by school heads in addressing school management challenges in the public elementary schools in the Division of City Schools, Iriga City are generally Evident, with transactional and laissez-faire leadership being the most manifested.
2. There is no significant agreement among respondents in ranking the leadership styles employed by the school heads.
3. The effectiveness of the leadership styles in addressing school management challenges is Very Much Evident.
4. There is no significant agreement among respondents in ranking the effectiveness of the leadership styles employed by school heads.
5. Policy recommendations are formulated to strengthen the leadership practices of school heads in addressing school management challenges.

Recommendations

1. Encourage participatory leadership by involving teachers, parents, and stakeholders in school decision-making.
2. Strengthen monitoring and supervision of school programs and instructional practices.
3. Provide professional development programs that enhance leadership competencies of school heads.
4. Promote stronger collaboration among schools, parents, and community stakeholders to support school improvement.
5. Improve communication systems within schools to ensure transparency and coordination among stakeholders.

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