

School Heads' Leadership Styles and Management Practices in Public Secondary Schools

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the leadership styles and management practices of public secondary school heads in Mercedes District, Camarines Norte, and their relationship to school management effectiveness. Using a descriptive-correlational design, data were gathered from 253 teachers across eight schools through a validated questionnaire. Results showed that transformational leadership was the most consistently practiced style (mean = 3.60, always practiced), followed by democratic (3.20), servant (3.10), instructional (3.00), and authoritarian (3.00), all interpreted as practiced. In terms of effectiveness, transformational (3.34), democratic (3.25), and

servant leadership (3.28) were rated highly effective, while instructional (3.23) and authoritarian (3.15) were moderately effective. Correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships between leadership styles and management effectiveness, with servant leadership showing the strongest association ($r = 0.649$), followed by democratic ($r = 0.634$), instructional ($r = 0.625$), and transformational ($r = 0.601$). Authoritarian leadership, though significant, had a weaker correlation ($r = 0.356$). Based on these findings, the intervention program Project LEAD to SERVE (Leadership Enhancement and Development through Support, Empowering, and Respect and Value Education) was proposed to strengthen leadership awareness, self-assessment, and practical application of effective styles. The study concludes that transformational, democratic, and servant leadership are most effective in enhancing school management, emphasizing collaboration, empowerment, and support. Recommendations include sustaining transformational practices, adopting servant and democratic approaches to improve motivation and collaboration, implementing Project LEAD to SERVE for leadership training, and conducting future research on long-term impacts of leadership styles and intervention programs.

Keywords: *Leadership styles, school management, public secondary schools, transformational leadership, servant leadership*

INTRODUCTION

Effective leadership benefits both teachers and society, especially in the twenty-first century, where challenges like global teacher networks require strong leadership in educational institutions. A school heads' role in addressing educational and cultural reforms can be broken down into three main areas: enhancing engagement, communicating a clear vision, and driving change. The success of educational leaders is judged by their ability to improve the quality of education, particularly in an era of technological advancements (Abbas et al., 2020).

Bennett and Leithwood (2020) stated that the different leadership styles impact school management in secondary schools. It shows that transformational leadership, focuses on vision, collaboration, and motivation and positively influences management and school outcomes. In contrast, transactional leadership, relies on rewards and punishments and tends to result in less participative management with more centralized decision-making. This highlights the importance of leadership styles that foster engagement and shared decision-making for effective management.

In the same way, the different leadership styles such as autocratic, democratic, and transformational on the management of secondary schools in developing countries is also a challenge among school heads. It highlights that autocratic leadership, which typically centralizes decision-making, can limit teacher involvement and stifle innovation within schools. In contrast, democratic and transformational leadership styles promote a more collaborative approach, encouraging greater teachers' participation and fostering more effective governance practices. Through a comparative analysis of leadership approaches in secondary schools across Africa and Asia, the study illustrates how different leadership styles can either enhance or hinder the overall management and educational outcomes in these regions (Moyo and Ncube, 2021).

Moreover, Mullen and Johnson (2021) emphasized that leadership styles and decision-making in secondary schools, focusing on how the leadership style of the school head influences the way decisions are made, communicated, and put into practice. It shows that democratic and transformational leadership styles, which encourage collaboration and shared decision-making, lead to greater teacher involvement in management. These styles promote a more inclusive and effective decision-making process. In contrast, autocratic leadership, which relies on top-down decision-making with little input from teachers, tends to centralize authority and can result in less effective outcomes. It focuses the value of leadership styles that foster teacher engagement and collective decision-making to improve school management and performance.

Furthermore, the connection between leadership styles and teachers' job satisfaction, exploring their impact on school management. It shows that leadership approaches like transformational and servant leadership, which prioritize teacher well-being and involvement, are linked to higher job satisfaction and stronger management. In contrast, authoritarian leadership, which limits teacher input, tends to reduce satisfaction and hinder effective management. This highlights the importance of supportive leadership in fostering both teacher engagement and effective school management (Kim and Park, 2020).

Additionally, Dela Cruz and Ramos (2021) investigated how leadership styles, particularly transformational and instructional leadership, influence teacher motivation and school management in Philippine secondary schools. School heads who prioritize teachers' professional growth and well-being foster higher engagement and collaboration. By setting clear goals, providing guidance, and maintaining open communication, these leaders improve teacher morale and enhance management structures. Ultimately, the study concludes that effective leadership, characterized by support and active teacher involvement, leads to stronger school performance and better management.

Considering the insights from colleagues, identifies several critical challenges in school leadership that hinder effective management. These include inadequate support for teachers' professional development, ineffective communication between school leaders and staff, favoritism in the distribution of responsibilities, and an unwillingness to adopt new teaching methods. These ongoing issues have motivated the researcher to investigate the impact of different leadership styles on school management.

This made the researcher decide to determine the leadership style that suit to public secondary schools. For five years public secondary schools experienced diverse leadership style of school heads. Each school head has shown that leadership styles can significantly impact how schools' functions and how teachers engaged with their work. A school head with a laissez-faire leadership style, is where teachers are given the freedom to make decisions and complete tasks independently. While the one with the autonomy fostered trust and allowed teachers to work to the best of their abilities, it often resulted in a lack of direction and reduced productivity.

On the other hand, a school head with a servant leadership style prioritized the needs of teachers and focused on empowering them to achieve their goals. This approach fostered strong relationships and a supportive environment, though decision-making processes tended to be more deliberate. Finally, a school head who practiced transactional leadership emphasized structure, organization, and goal-oriented planning.

This style provided clarity and accountability, while offering a clear framework for achieving objectives. Through these diverse experiences, the researcher recognized that each leadership style presents unique strengths and considerations. Therefore, this study sought to determine the leadership styles practiced by secondary school heads and their level of its effectiveness in school management.

This study examined the leadership styles of school heads and their level of effectiveness in managing public secondary schools. It identified commonly practiced leadership styles, including transformational, democratic, instructional, authoritarian, and servant leadership, and assessed their effectiveness in school management. The study also determined the relationship between leadership styles and their level of effectiveness, and based on the findings, proposed interventions to improve the leadership practices of school heads.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Globally, the leadership style adopted by school heads is influenced by the political, cultural, and social contexts of each country. For example, in Scandinavian countries such as Finland, school leaders are encouraged to adopt a transformational and democratic approach to governance, which aligns with the country's strong emphasis on educational equality and teacher autonomy (Sahlberg, 2021).

Likewise, countries with more hierarchical educational systems, such as China and India, often see a greater prevalence of transactional and autocratic leadership styles. This connection might arise from the strong focus on discipline, deference to authority, and uniform academic performance that characterizes these educational systems. Individuals raised in such environments often develop leadership tendencies that align with these rigid structures, leading them to adopt more controlling or directive leadership styles (Wei and Xie, 2022).

Similarly, the impact of school leaders' leadership styles on school performance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, finding that democratic, transformational, transactional, and charismatic styles positively influence performance, while autocratic and laissez-faire styles have a negative effect. It recommends regular training for school heads, with departments organizing seminars to enhance their skills, and strengthening Parent-Teacher Councils to boost parental involvement in school activities (Khan and Niazi, 2023).

In addition, the heads of schools must maintain a balance between the school's exterior and internal activities, both inside and outside the building, be look upon because they are responsible for every aspect of the school. To fulfill this complex role, school heads must adopt a multifaceted leadership approach that blends administrative efficiency with strategic outreach. Internally, they are expected to cultivate a positive school culture, ensure effective teaching and learning practices, and manage staff dynamics. Externally, they must engage with parents, collaborate with community stakeholders, and align the school's mission with broader educational policies and societal expectations. The ability to seamlessly navigate these dual responsibilities is essential for fostering school improvement and sustaining long-term success (Brauckmann-Sajkiewicz et al., 2021).

Moreover, Ansari and Asad (2023) stated that the lack of emotional intelligence among school leaders. Authoritarian and transactional leadership styles are typically preferred, indicating a significant lack of emotional intelligence integration in leadership practices. However, the attitudes of school heads and teachers differed since the former saw leadership as their right to control the team, whilst the latter saw a disconnect between school heads and teachers, as well as a concern for teacher well-being. It suggests that there is an urgent need to develop school leaders to ensure teacher well-being.

Furthermore, school heads' leadership styles public secondary school in Sindh, India. Transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles have a negative impact on the commitment of public sector secondary school teachers, whereas transformational, autocratic, and democratic leadership styles have a positive impact. As a result, it was suggested that school principals use democratic leadership techniques (Shah

Jilani et al., 2024).

In the same way, Anastasiou and Garametsi (2021) reported the felt about their leadership style and level of job satisfaction in the public and private schools in the capital city of the Epirus region of northwest Greece. The Warr-Cook-Wall job satisfaction scale was used to gauge employee satisfaction. The leadership style perception of teachers was evaluated using the MLQ 5X-Short. Teachers in private schools were reported feeling more satisfied with their jobs than those in public schools. A transformational leadership model predominated in both public and private schools, followed by a transactional model, with the transformational leadership model scoring significantly higher in private schools. Along with this, effective school leadership is essential for school improvement but not sufficient on its own. Leadership impacts school organization, culture, and educators, with indirect effects on student outcomes through its influence on teaching and learning environments. Three key leadership aspects transformational, pedagogical, and distributed are emphasized.

Additionally, leadership strategies that are flexible, values-driven, and context-sensitive are more effective than single approaches disconnected from educational goals. School leaders, whether overseeing multi-academy trusts or individual schools, shape direction, foster positive school culture, and motivate staff and students. Their role is crucial in promoting improvement and success in diverse educational settings (Day et al., 2020). Although, Leithwood and Sun (2020) stated that certain leadership styles offer significant benefits, school leaders worldwide encounter various challenges. These challenges include limited resources, political influence, and growing expectations for accountability from both national governments and local.

Likewise, many school heads lack access to professional development opportunities, which hampers their ability to implement more effective leadership strategies. Providing training programs focused on emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, and instructional leadership is essential for enhancing school governance and improving performance (Berson et al., 2021).

Moreover, the impact of instructional leadership on school management in secondary schools, particularly during educational reforms. It highlights that leaders who prioritize curriculum development, teaching quality, and student outcomes improve governance by fostering collaboration, enhancing teacher performance, and boosting overall school effectiveness. It draws on examples from diverse regions, including the U.S., U.K., and Africa, showing how instructional leadership can create more effective and inclusive school management structures (Akinbode and Okeke, 2021).

Meanwhile, the major purpose of every school is to increase learners' academic performance, which leads to higher performance for both school, children and the school itself. It shown that school leaders can improve school and student performance. Thus, school leaders' leadership styles and roles are critical in guiding their schools to improved performance. Central Colleges in Sri Lanka, as secondary and college levels of education, have historically performed well, however there is evidence that their performance is deteriorating now (Fernando et al., 2024).

Finally, leaders that value achievement communicate their expectations to their followers. They regularly create clear goals with potential high-performance standards, they believe in their subordinates' ability, and they urge them subordinates to continue improving their performance. The leadership styles of private secondary school principals affected teachers' job performance. The current study chose four leadership styles indicated in the path-goal theory, as well as five key performance indicators (KPIs) of teacher job success. This topic has been extensively researched in the past. They did, however, report on teachers' work performance as a whole. As a result, a concentrated effort was necessary to investigate the effects of implemented principal leadership styles on each of the five main performance indicators of teacher job performance (Kalkan et al, 2020).

This section reviews relevant literature from local sources, focusing on studies, theories, and findings that are specific to the context of the region. This aims to provide insights into the unique factors and challenges that influence the topic within the local setting. This analysis serves to ground the current research in the local context, while highlighting key trends and gaps in the existing body of knowledge.

Republic Act No. 9155 as cited by Santos and Cruz (2020) states that the school management in the Philippines is decentralize, empowering school heads with greater autonomy. It is highlighting the positive impact of instructional leadership under this law.

In the same way, the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH), as mandated by DepEd Order No. 24, s. 2020, underscores the vital role of both leadership and management in ensuring effective school leadership. The PPSSH presents a set of domains that encompass key competencies required of school heads, particularly emphasizing strategic direction and the effective handling of school operations. Leadership aspects within the standards highlight the importance of creating a shared vision, cultivating a supportive school culture, and actively involving stakeholders in the achievement of common goals traits commonly associated with transformational and instructional leadership. On the other hand, the management components focus on efficient use of resources, enforcement of school policies, and maintaining a safe, well-organized learning environment. The framework encourages school heads to balance forward-thinking leadership with strong management practices to foster continuous school improvement and enhanced learner outcomes. In this context, school heads are seen not just as administrators, but as instructional leaders and catalysts for educational change.

Meanwhile, instructional leadership focuses on enhancing teaching and learning, with school leaders in the Philippines playing a vital role in improving school performance. This leadership style is key to setting clear academic goals, offering professional development for teachers, and maintaining high teaching standards. The limited involvement of parents and the community in management is also emphasized. Despite improvements in school leadership, challenges remain, especially in professional development and resource allocation, to fully harness the potential of the Act in enhancing school performance (Tantiado, 2020).

Similarly, Santos and Alvarez (2023) emphasize the impact of participative and transformational leadership on school governance and student outcomes in Philippine secondary schools. Participative

leadership, characterized by collaborative decision-making, helped create a positive school culture, boost teacher motivation, and improve student performance, particularly in disadvantaged communities. Transformational leadership enhanced teacher morale and academic success by fostering a shared vision. This emphasized the importance of a collaborative, inclusive approach to leadership that engages teachers, students, and the community, especially in resource-constrained, multicultural contexts like the Philippines. Additionally, these leaders are seen as catalysts for change, fostering innovation and professional growth.

Further, transformational leadership is recognized as a powerful tool for improving schools in the Philippines. Leadership style, motivates teachers through a shared vision, positively influences school culture and academic performance. By empowering teachers, transformational leaders enhance teaching quality and student outcomes. They create collaborative, trusting environments, important in resource-poor schools. However, challenges of applying transformational leadership in schools with limited resources and overcrowded classrooms (Aquino and De Leon, 2020).

Furthermore, democratic leadership, which involves shared decision-making and collaboration, has gained attention in Philippine education enhance school governance and improve educational outcomes. This leadership style enables school heads to create an inclusive school culture, where teachers, students, and parents have a voice in decision-making (Ramos and Gonzales, 2022).

More so, authoritarian leadership, which follows a top-down, directive approach, is still used in certain schools in the Philippines to maintain order and discipline. This style is particularly common in schools with large student populations or in regions where societal norms favor hierarchical authority (Dela Cruz and Castillo, 2020).

Likewise, Mandap (2023) noted that servant leaders in Philippine schools foster environments of trust, empathy, and mutual respect, leading to improved teacher morale and better student outcomes. By focusing on the personal and professional development of staff, these leaders ensure that teachers feel appreciated and supported. This nurturing school culture, cultivated through servant leadership, helps teachers become more engaged in their work, which positively influences student achievement.

Relative to this, Barong and Musico (2024) highlighted that the leadership styles of school principals such as supportive, participative, achievement- oriented, and directive had a considerable influence on the classroom practices of public secondary school teachers. School leaders manage change and create a mechanism to improve the school system by creatively utilizing the manpower of teachers, staff, students, and the community. Education can be effective even in an environment that is not conducive to teaching and learning. School leaders hold seminars and workshops on various leadership styles to maintain high performance in managing and leading the school.

Thus, leadership styles have a major influence on risk-taking in decision making. Leadership styles had a considerable degree of influence on compliance mechanisms and stakeholder traits such as risk-taking in school leaders' decision- making. It can assist school leaders in assessing their level of leadership and risk- taking in decision-making practices. Risk-taking decisions are encouraged among school leaders and

teachers to encourage growth (Alfonso et. al, 2023).

Consequently, Mandap (2023) school leaders from the younger generation are swiftly replacing the more senior ones as they prepare for leaders use authoritative leadership, servant leadership, transformative leadership, and instructional leadership. Millennial school leaders purposefully embraced these leadership philosophies to address the difficulties they face when managing educational establishments.

In the Philippines, management in public secondary schools is largely influenced by a combination of centralized and decentralized models, with growing attention on participatory, collaborative, and democratic management approaches. Traditionally, centralized management has been the dominant model, with the Department of Education (DepEd) controlling policies, curriculum, and school management decisions at the national level. Centralized systems typically maintain strict hierarchical control, which can limit innovation at the local level. However, recent educational reforms have moved towards decentralization, allowing local government units (LGUs) and school heads more authority in managing school resources, operations, and decisions (Lapsley and Reid, 2021).

Moreover, Lam and Law (2020) explained that decentralization has provided schools with the flexibility to address local challenges, although it has also led to issues with resource distribution and equity. Increased autonomy allows schools to make decisions that reflect the unique needs of their communities. This can result in more responsive and innovative educational practices, as schools are free to implement programs and strategies that directly benefit their student populations. For instance, schools may adapt teaching methods or introduce support services tailored to cultural or socioeconomic factors present in their area. However, how effectively a school uses this autonomy often depends on the resources and expertise already available to them.

Meanwhile, in leadership perspective from the Philippines Cimene et al. (2022), cited that Filipino leadership literature often focuses on anticipating, categorizing, and managing variables within an organization. Leadership is commonly defined as behavior, relationships, or activities, with its qualities and styles playing a key role in shaping leadership views. The concept of leadership has evolved over time, sparking interest among educators, students, and professionals. As a result, leadership education and research have grown significantly, with a focus on developing strong leadership skills to address organizational challenges.

Further, Bersola and Bautista (2021) highlighted the influence of various leadership styles transformational, transactional, and instructional on school governance in public secondary schools in the Philippines. It emphasizes that instructional leadership, with its focus on enhancing curriculum design and teaching quality, plays a vital role in strengthening management by promoting teacher collaboration and improving student outcomes. School heads who embrace transformational leadership practices create a positive school climate, inspiring and motivating both teachers and students, which leads to more effective governance structures. They underscore the importance of both instructional and transformational leadership in driving school improvement, fostering better decision-making, and enhancing overall school performance.

Lastly, Santos and Cruz (2020) emphasize that school heads who engage teachers in decision-making, set clear academic goals, and foster a culture of accountability significantly improve management and create a positive school environment. The study also underscores the importance of ongoing professional development for school leaders, enabling them to refine their instructional leadership skills and, in turn, enhance academic outcomes and management.

Zaib (2020) explored the impact of school leaders' demographic characteristics on their leadership styles. The study surveyed 66 randomly selected secondary school principals in Faisalabad using the Leadership Styles Survey (LSS). The results showed no significant differences between male and female leaders in autocratic, democratic, Islamic, or laissez-faire styles. However, age influenced democratic, Islamic, and laissez-faire leadership styles, while experience had a notable impact on democratic and laissez-faire approaches. The study recommends that school leaders enhance their leadership styles through ongoing training and the use of modern technologies.

Further, Yaqoob, et. al (2022) assessed the effectiveness of female school heads' leadership styles in enhancing secondary school performance. The objectives included evaluating the leadership styles of female head teachers, examining how these styles contributed to school improvement, and comparing perceptions based on demographic factors such as qualifications and location. Using a descriptive survey method, the study employed a census approach to select participants from different areas (Okara, Depalpur, and Renala Khurd). A self-structured questionnaire with 60 items was used to assess the impact of female heads' leadership styles on school improvement. The findings revealed that female head teachers excelled in all six administrative areas, with their performance rated above average in all tasks.

Accordingly, Gill et al. (2023) explored the impact of school heads' leadership styles and work engagement on employee performance in educational institutions. The study, which surveyed 271 public secondary school teachers, found a moderate relationship between leadership styles and job performance. It also revealed that both leadership styles and work engagement had a moderate influence on teachers' performance. The research suggests that adapting effective leadership styles and strategies can enhance job performance in schools.

Moreover, Rehman (2020), showed that school leaders used a variety of leadership styles. The three primary leadership styles were transformative, moral, and instructional. These many leadership styles were chosen with the demands of the various contexts in which leaders found themselves employed in mind. The study has significant ramifications for educators, researchers, policy makers, and administrators of educational institutions.

Additionally, Jacob et al. (2023) emphasized that leadership is crucial for motivating subordinates to achieve organizational goals, and that effective leadership styles are key to institutional success. The study reviewed various leadership approaches and their impact on teachers' performance and student achievement. It was revealed that leadership styles such as visionary, strategic, coaching, situational, and charismatic significantly influence school management, teacher effectiveness, and student academic

outcomes.

Furthermore, Cansoy (2020) explored the relationship between school heads leadership behaviors and teachers' job satisfaction. The review analyzed 27 studies from various databases (ERIC, WOS, SCOPUS, ULAKBIM), primarily focusing on transformational and interactional leadership styles. The findings revealed that transformational leadership behaviors had a stronger positive relationship with teachers' job satisfaction than interactional leadership. Additionally, servant and ethical leadership were identified as key factors in improving job satisfaction, while laissez-faire leadership had a negative impact. Furthermore, principals' administrative behaviors, such as promoting participation, flexibility, and supportive leadership, were found to enhance teachers' job satisfaction.

Likewise, Makgato and Mudzanani (2020) examined the relationship between school principals' leadership styles and students' educational performance in high and low-performing schools in Vhembe District, Limpopo, South Africa. The study found that both democratic and transformational leadership styles contributed to higher academic performance in schools. While principals in both high- and low-performing schools employed democratic leadership, those in low-performing schools were more lenient towards students' behavior, which affected the learning environment. The study recommends that principals in low-performing schools strengthen their democratic leadership by addressing disciplinary issues more effectively, involving teachers in the process, and ensuring that students' conduct aligns with the goals of successful teaching and learning.

Moreover, Aruzie and Adjei (2020) explored the relationship between leadership styles of school heads and students' academic performance in the Nkoranza-North district. The study identified the causes and impacts of different leadership styles on teaching and learning outcomes. A sample of 60 participants, including headmasters, teachers, and students, was selected. The researchers used a descriptive approach and collected data through interviews and questionnaires. The study examined various leadership styles, such as autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire, and discussed the findings, concluding with recommendations for improving leadership practices in schools.

Finally, Ali et al. (2024) examined the impact of head teachers' democratic leadership styles on teachers' performance in public secondary schools in Pakistan. The study, using a descriptive survey and a quantitative approach, found a positive relationship between democratic leadership and improved teacher performance. The results highlighted a strong correlation between head teachers' leadership styles and teachers' effectiveness in the classroom.

Boniao et al. (2020) examined the profile of school leaders and the relationship between their self-assessed and teacher-assessed leadership styles. It involved 35 principals and 315 public school teachers from various districts. The results showed that most principals were aged 41 to 60, predominantly female, married, with master's units, and had been in service for 11 to 15 years. Both principals and teachers reported that school leaders were transitioning between leadership styles, with few using delegative or authoritarian approaches, and none employing a participative style. The study found significant associations between self-assessed leadership styles and age and civil status, but no significant relationships with sex, education, position, or years of service. There was also no correlation between self-assessed and teacher-

assessed leadership styles.

Likewise, Rivera (2022) highlighted that school heads are dynamic leaders who constantly develop new ideas and strategies to drive a school's goals. The study, examined the relationship between leadership styles and teacher efficiency. The findings revealed that democratic and authoritarian leadership styles were effective when used interchangeably, fostering cooperation, understanding, and teamwork among teachers. However, autocratic and laissez-faire styles were seen as detrimental, creating a disconnect between leaders and teachers, which led to delays in task completion. It was recommended that school leaders primarily use democratic leadership but occasionally integrate authoritative or autocratic styles to achieve school objectives more efficiently.

Further, Garcia (2023) explored the relationship between school heads' leadership styles and teachers' classroom practices in selected secondary schools in Pasig. The findings showed that most principals were aged 35-41, female, married, with a master's degree and doctorate units, and had up to 36 years of service. School heads were found to adopt an achievement-oriented leadership style, focusing on teachers' welfare and motivating them through material and non-material support. Teachers, aged 28-34, were generally satisfied with the leadership styles, particularly directive, supportive, and participative approaches. The study concluded that school heads' leadership styles, influenced by factors such as gender, education, role, and tenure, were significantly linked to teachers' classroom practices.

Moreover, Estacio and Estacio (2022) examined the leadership style and best practices of school principals in Bulacan's Department of Education. The study highlighted that effective school leadership, including educational, people, and strategic leadership, significantly contributes to improved academic achievement. Strong leadership, with a clear vision and goals, was identified as a key factor in creating a better learning environment and fostering better student outcomes.

Similarly, Vasquez et al. (2020) studied the role of school heads in implementing school reforms as mandated by Republic Act No. 9155. The study highlighted the importance of enhancing school heads' skills in instructional supervision to improve teaching quality and educational efficiency. The findings showed that both teachers and school administration valued the leadership, interpersonal, and supervisory skills of school heads. It also revealed weak correlations between the school head's profile and their leadership or supervisory abilities. The study recommends further strengthening these skills to improve school management.

Meanwhile, Aquino et. al (2021) investigated the link between school heads' leadership practices and teachers' performance. Using a correlation design, they surveyed teachers through random sampling and school heads through total enumeration. The study found that leadership practices significantly influenced teacher performance, with more experienced teachers performing better. Additionally, school heads with doctoral degrees demonstrated stronger leadership practices than those with master's degrees. Despite variations in leadership, teacher performance remained consistent overall.

Likewise, Catanus (2024) examined the impact of school heads' leadership styles on teachers' performance in a medium-sized division in the central Philippines. The study found that participative leadership was the most common style among school heads, and teachers' performance during the 2021-2022 academic year was very satisfactory. Authoritarian and delegative leadership styles showed no significant effect on teachers' performance. The study concluded that there is a significant relationship between school heads' leadership styles and teachers' performance and recommended further training and seminars to help school heads expand their leadership approaches and enhance school management.

Further, Moquia and Melchor (2024), examined the relationship between strategic leadership of school heads and organizational learning in public secondary schools in Panabo City. The results showed a significant relationship between strategic leadership and organizational learning, with all domains of strategic leadership influencing organizational learning. The study recommended that Department of Education officials help school heads strengthen their strategic leadership to foster better organizational learning. It also suggested further research to explore other factors affecting these variables.

Furthermore, Guillergan (2024) examined the impact of school heads' decision-making styles and educational leadership on school culture. The study found that the "Planner" decision-making style was most common among school heads, and the educational leadership was generally rated as very satisfactory. Variations in perceptions were noted based on school level and teacher experience. Both decision-making styles and leadership were found to significantly influence school culture, emphasizing the role of school heads in fostering a positive and effective learning environment. The study highlights the importance of leadership approaches tailored to specific school contexts.

Lastly, Torres (2024) investigated the impact of school heads' leadership styles transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire on the performance of beginning teachers in the Schools Division of San Jose del Monte. The study, which involved 53 beginning teachers, found a low positive correlation between leadership styles and teacher performance. Among the three leadership styles, only transactional leadership showed a significant effect on teacher performance. This could be due to the short tenure of beginning teachers, who may rely more on rewards and punishments (transactional) than on relational influence (transformational) from their leaders.

Correspondingly, Zaib (2020), Yaqoob, et. al (2022), Gill et al. (2023), Makgato and Mudzanani (2020), Aruzie and Adjie (2020), Ali et al (2024), Boniao et al. (2020), Rivera (2022), Cansoy(2020), Garcia (2023), Catanus (2024), Vasquez (2020), Guillergan (2024) and Torres(2024) focus on the understanding of leadership styles which includes to Top 5 Effective leadership styles in the Philippines. These studies are similar to the present study since they all focused on the school heads' leadership styles and how it affects the school performance. However, they differ in some ways because the current study additionally looked at the need of relationship between leadership styles and the level of effectiveness.

Furthermore, Jacob (2023), Estacio and Estacio (2022), and Moquia and Melchor (2020) collectively contribute understanding leadership styles which includes visionary, strategic, coaching, situational, charismatic. These studies are similar to the present study since they all explore the leadership

styles of the respondents but they differ in terms of leadership styles in the current study it focuses to the Top 5 leadership styles in the Philippines.

Moreover, Rehman (2020) and Aquino et al. (2021) emphasized variety of leadership styles for school heads. These studies are similar to the current study because school heads' leadership practices and teacher performance, with more experienced school heads showing stronger leadership and better teacher performance. However, they differ in their specific research focus. The current study determines the relationship between leadership styles and its level of effectiveness.

In conclusion, existing research has determined different leadership styles and their impact on school performance, it often overlooks the direct relationship between these styles and their effectiveness in school management. Many studies focused on demographic factors or individual leadership styles, but few examined how these styles influence school outcomes or offer a variety of strategies to improve leadership. This study addresses these gaps by looking into the leadership styles of public secondary school heads, assessing their effectiveness, and proposing a range of interventions to strengthen leadership skills and management in these schools.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Path-Goal Theory of Leadership, that leaders must be adaptable in their approach and leadership style to meet the needs of their followers and the context in which they operate. The purpose is to assist followers in achieving their personal and organizational goals by removing barriers and giving the necessary support to clear the route to success. To enhance motivation, contentment, and performance, leaders can use a variety of leadership styles (directive, supporting, participative, achievement-oriented) based on the job and follower qualities (House, 1971).

The study is anchored on House's Path-Goal Theory of Leadership (1971), which emphasizes that a leader's role is to clarify the path to goals, remove obstacles, and provide support to subordinates in achieving organizational objectives. According to this theory, a leader's behavior is contingent upon the subordinates' needs and the task environment, and effective leadership occurs when leaders align their style to enhance employee motivation, satisfaction, and performance. House (1971) identified several leadership behaviors directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented that can be adapted depending on the situation to achieve desired outcomes.

In the context of public secondary schools, school heads are responsible for guiding teachers, managing resources, and fostering a conducive learning environment. The theory suggests that the effectiveness of school management depends on how well the school head's leadership style aligns with the needs of teachers and the demands of the school environment.

For instance, Transformational leadership aligns with the achievement-oriented aspect of the theory, inspiring teachers to exceed expectations and pursue professional growth. Democratic or participative leadership mirrors the participative behavior, where teachers are involved in decision-making,

promoting ownership and collaboration. Instructional leadership can be linked to directive behavior, guiding teachers toward clear academic goals and standards. Authoritarian leadership reflects a strict directive approach, where tasks and rules are clearly defined, but flexibility and motivation may be limited. Servant leadership reflects supportive behavior, focusing on the welfare and development of teachers and creating a positive school climate.

By applying the Path-Goal Theory, this study seeks to determine: The leadership styles commonly practiced by school heads in public secondary schools. The level of effectiveness of these leadership styles in school management. The relationship between leadership styles and effectiveness, suggesting that certain leadership behaviors, when properly aligned with teacher needs and school conditions, will result in higher management effectiveness. The interventions that can enhance leadership practices, consistent with the theory’s emphasis on adapting leadership to support and motivate subordinates.

Thus, House’s Path-Goal Theory provides the theoretical lens to understand how different leadership styles influence school management effectiveness, guiding both the analysis of existing practices and the development of proposed interventions to improve leadership among public secondary school heads. This perspective allows for a more nuanced understanding of how leadership flexibility contributes to improved organizational performance and teacher engagement. In doing so, the theory strengthens the foundation for crafting context-specific strategies that improve leadership style has capacity and promote sustainable school improvement.

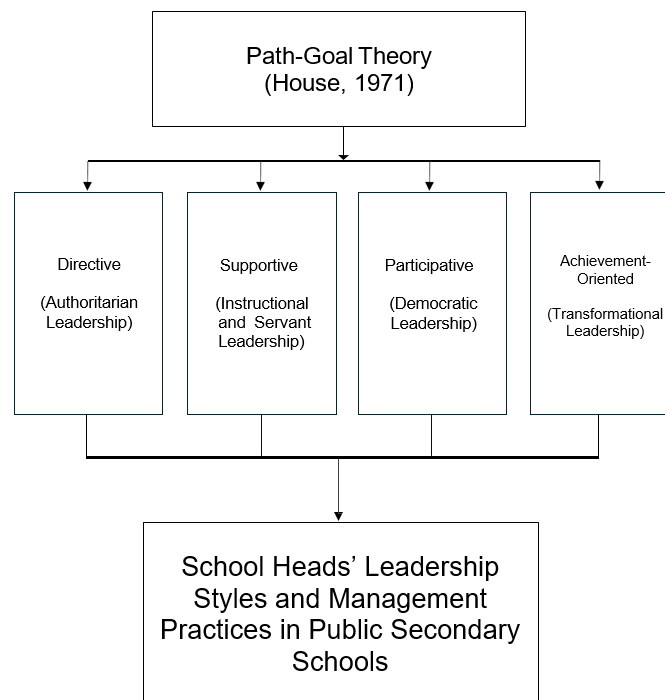


Figure 1. Theoretical Paradigm of the Study

Conceptual Framework

This study determined the influence of various leadership styles on the effectiveness of school management in the Mercedes District. The leadership styles examined include transformational leadership, democratic leadership, instructional leadership, authoritarian leadership, and servant leadership. Each of these leadership style has significant relationship to school management in unique ways, from decision-making processes to teacher and student engagement. To assess significant relationship between the leadership styles and its level of effectiveness in school management, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was employed, allowing the study to measure the strength and direction of the relationship between leadership styles and its level of effectiveness to school management.

Based on the diagram, the study determined the relationship between the independent variable (IV) leadership styles and the dependent variable (DV) the level of effectiveness of school management among public secondary school heads. The independent variable consists of five leadership styles: transformational, democratic, instructional, authoritarian, and servant leadership. These represent the different approaches that school heads use in guiding teachers, making decisions, and managing school operations. Each style reflects distinct behaviors, such as inspiring and motivating teachers (transformational), encouraging participation (democratic), focusing on teaching and learning processes (instructional), enforcing strict control (authoritarian), or prioritizing the needs and development of others (servant leadership).

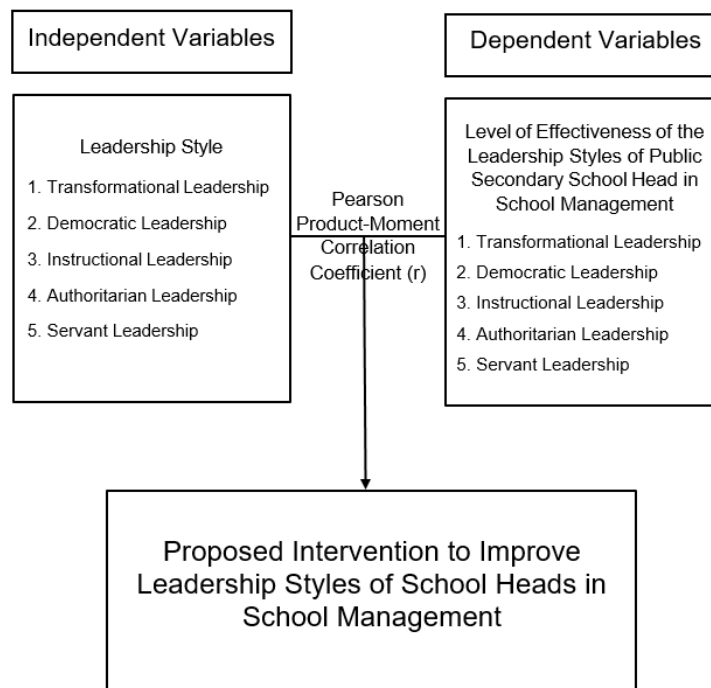


Figure 2. **Conceptual Paradigm of the study**

The dependent variable, on the other hand, is the level of effectiveness of leadership style in managing the school. This refers to how well school heads perform in terms of achieving organizational goals, maintaining teacher productivity, fostering a positive school climate, and ensuring overall school success.

It also indicates that the relationship between the IV and DV will be measured using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient, which determines the strength and direction of the association between each leadership style and its level of effectiveness in school management. This means the study sought to determine which leadership styles significantly relationship to its level of effectiveness in school management.

In addition, the framework suggests that variations in leadership style (IV) are expected to produce corresponding differences in school management effectiveness (DV), providing a basis for proposing targeted interventions to improve leadership style and school management among school heads.

METHODOLOGY

Methods of Research

This study employed a quantitative approach using a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the leadership styles of school heads and their effectiveness in managing public secondary schools in Mercedes District. Data were collected through structured survey questionnaires assessing commonly practiced leadership styles—transformational, democratic, instructional, authoritarian, and servant leadership—and their level of effectiveness in school management. The descriptive design enabled a systematic assessment of existing leadership practices, while the correlational design determined the strength and direction of the relationship between leadership styles and management effectiveness without manipulating variables. The findings provided a basis for identifying patterns and proposing interventions to improve leadership practices and school management.

Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Techniques

The respondents of this study are the public secondary school teachers from the Mercedes District, who assess the leadership styles commonly practice by school heads. These teachers served as the main source of information regarding their views on the effectiveness of leadership and management practices within their schools. Their insights provide a valuable perspective on how different leadership styles and its level of effectiveness on school management. Moreover, their feedback helps identify areas where school heads can improve their leadership style for effective school management. Since the population size is small, the study utilized a total enumeration which includes all the teachers in Mercedes District in Public Secondary Schools. This technique eliminates the need for sampling as it involves the entire population, ensuring a complete and accurate representation of leadership styles and its level of effectiveness on school management.

Description of the Respondents

The respondents in this study are public secondary school teachers from the Mercedes District, who provided insights into the leadership styles of their school heads. These teachers were key in assessing the effectiveness on school management. The study used total enumeration to include all schools from the public secondary schools in Mercedes District, Camarines Norte. This approach ensures comprehensive data collection from every teacher, providing an accurate understanding of leadership styles and governance across the district.

Table 1. **Number of Respondents of the Study**

Secondary School	No. of Teachers
A	55
B	38
C	30
D	9
E	45
F	38
G	26
H	12
Total	253

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher sought approval to carry out the study from the Schools Division Superintendent, as well as the Public Schools District Supervisor and the respective school heads of the participating public secondary schools in the Mercedes District. Upon approval, the researcher coordinated with the school heads to inform the teachers about the purpose and scope of the study, ensuring their voluntary participation and confidentiality. The research instruments, including questionnaires on leadership styles and its effectiveness in school management, were distributed to the respondents. The completed questionnaires were then collected systematically, checked for completeness, and organized for analysis. All procedures were conducted in accordance with ethical standards to ensure accuracy, reliability, and the protection of respondent's rights throughout the data gathering process.

The researcher ensured that all questionnaires were properly completed and that the necessary information was accurately collected. Responses were carefully tabulated and tallied, and appropriate statistical methods were applied to process the data. This systematic procedure allowed the researcher to

extract relevant information for detailed analysis. The data were then analyzed to derive meaningful insights that support the objectives of the study. Throughout the process, the study was conducted with integrity, maintaining honest reporting and upholding respect, fairness, and confidentiality for all participants, while avoiding any form of bias or discrimination.

Research Instrument

A researcher-made questionnaire was used as the primary data-gathering instrument to assess the leadership styles of school heads and their effectiveness in school management. The instrument consisted of 25 items measuring five leadership styles: transformational, democratic, instructional, authoritarian, and servant leadership, based on Northouse (2021). It was divided into two parts: Part I measured leadership styles across five sections, while Part II assessed the level of effectiveness using a Likert scale. The instrument underwent content validation by five experts and was pilot tested among 20 non-respondents. Reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha yielded coefficients of 0.926 and 0.973, indicating excellent internal consistency. These results confirmed that the instrument was valid and reliable for the study.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The weighted mean was used to determine the leadership style commonly practiced by school heads. Additionally, it was used to determine the level of effectiveness of leadership style on school management. Weighted mean is a type of average that accounts for the relative importance, or weight, of each data point in a dataset. The weighted mean assigns different levels of importance to each value based on its corresponding weight. This is especially useful in cases where certain values or observations should have more influence on the overall result than others (Gravetter and Wallnau, 2020). The instrument validated the indicators of SOP 1 and SOP 2 using a four-point Likert Scale. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was used to determine the relationship between the leadership style and its level of effectiveness to school management practices of the school heads. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) a statistical measure that evaluates the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables. (Field, 2021).

The formula for the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) is:

$$r = \frac{N \sum XY - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{[N \sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][N \sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}}$$

The statistical tools mentioned were used to analyze the data collected from the respondents. All the data were carefully organized and processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. This software made it easier to manage the information, perform accurate calculations, and apply the necessary statistical tests.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Leadership Style Commonly Practiced by Public Secondary School Heads

The leadership style of school heads is a critical factor in effective school management and the promotion of a positive learning environment. This study aims to determine the leadership styles practiced by school heads. The results presented in this section are based on the responses gathered from the respondents and provide a clear analysis of the findings.

Transformational Leadership. Transformational leadership is widely recognized as a leadership approach that motivates teachers, fosters innovation, and strengthens collaboration within schools. School heads who practice this leadership style inspire teachers to work toward a shared vision while encouraging professional growth and creativity in teaching and learning.

As shown in Table 2, transformational leadership obtained an overall weighted mean of 3.60, interpreted as Always Practiced. The highest weighted mean was recorded for empowering teachers to take initiative in school projects with a weighted mean of 4.00, interpreted as Always Practiced indicating that school heads strongly encourage teacher leadership and innovation. Meanwhile, the lowest weighted mean was 3.50, interpreted as Always Practiced shared by several indicators including inspiring teachers toward a common vision, encouraging innovative teaching approaches, promoting continuous improvement, and recognizing achievements of staff and students. Despite being the lowest among the indicators, these values are still interpreted as Always Practiced.

Table 2. Commonly Practiced by the School Head along Transformational Leadership

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Inspires teachers and staff to work toward a common vision.	3.50	Always Practiced
2. Encourages innovative approaches to teaching and learning.	3.50	Always Practiced
3. Promotes a culture of continuous improvement.	3.50	Always Practiced
4. Empowers teachers to take initiative in school projects.	4.00	Always Practiced
5. Recognizes and celebrates achievements of staff and students.	3.5	Always Practiced
Overall Weighted Mean	3.60	Always Practiced
<i>Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation</i>		
3.25-4.00	-	<i>Always Practiced</i>
2.50-3.24	-	<i>Practiced</i>
1.75-2.49	-	<i>Rarely Practiced</i>
1.00-1.74	-	<i>Never Practiced</i>

The findings suggest that school heads frequently demonstrate transformational leadership behaviors that inspire teachers and promote shared responsibility. In a typical school setting, a transformational school head encourages teachers to lead school programs such as Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions, research initiatives, or school-based training activities. School Head assign teachers to lead committees for school improvement programs or curriculum innovation projects. This empowerment not only enhances teacher confidence but also encourages them to contribute actively to school development. The consistent practice of transformational leadership implies that school heads prioritize teacher motivation, innovation, and collaboration in managing schools. By empowering teachers and recognizing their achievements, school leaders foster a positive school culture that promotes professional growth and improved student learning outcomes.

Likewise, transformational leadership is consistently practiced by school heads, resulting in empowered teachers who actively participate in school initiatives. This strengthens the implementation of Department of Education programs such as School-Based Management (SBM), where teachers lead projects like Learning Action Cells (LAC) and school improvement planning.

Moreover, teacher empowerment shows that school heads effectively promote teacher leadership and innovation, leading to the development of contextualized teaching strategies and learner support programs. This supports DepEd initiatives such as the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP), where teachers design localized interventions like reading programs and remediation classes.

Further, vision-building, innovation, continuous improvement, and recognition indicate that structured mechanisms for alignment and motivation need to be strengthened. This reinforces the importance of programs under DepEd like the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS) and PRAISE, which ensure regular feedback, recognition, and alignment with school goals.

The findings were corroborated by Cansoy(2020), which primarily focusing on transformational leadership which had a stronger positive relationship and promoting participation, flexibility, and supportive leadership were enhance the teachers job satisfaction. Likewise, Makgato and Mudzanani (2023) emphasized transformational leadership style contributed to higher academic performance in schools.

Democratic Leadership. Democratic leadership promotes participation, collaboration, and shared decision-making among members of the school community. In educational settings, this leadership style encourages teachers, students, and stakeholders to contribute ideas and participate in decision-making processes, thereby fostering transparency and accountability.

As shown in Table 3, democratic leadership obtained an overall weighted mean of 3.20, interpreted as Practiced. The highest weighted mean was 3.50, interpreted as Always Practiced recorded for involving teachers and staff in decision-making processes and encouraging open communication among stakeholders. Meanwhile, the lowest weighted mean was 3.00, interpreted as Practiced these includes valuing input from students and the community, promoting teamwork in school activities, and resolving conflicts through consensus.

The results indicate that school heads generally practice participative leadership by involving teachers in decision-making and maintaining open communication. In actual school scenarios, school head conducted consultative meetings with teachers before implementing policies or school programs, ensuring that teachers' ideas are considered in planning activities such as academic competitions, school improvement plans, and co-curricular programs. However, the relatively lower ratings for community participation suggest that involvement of parents and external stakeholders limited.

Table 3. Commonly Practiced by the School Head along Democratic Leadership

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Involves teachers and staff in decision-making processes.	3.50	Always Practiced
2. Values input from students and the community.	3.00	Practiced
3. Encourages open communication among all stakeholders.	3.50	Always Practiced
4. Promotes teamwork and collaboration in school activities.	3.00	Practiced
5. Resolves conflicts by seeking consensus and compromise.	3.00	Practiced
Overall Weighted Mean	3.20	Practiced
<i>Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation</i>		
<i>3.25-4.00</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>Always Practiced</i>
<i>2.50-3.24</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>Practiced</i>
<i>1.75-2.49</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>Rarely Practiced</i>
<i>1.00-1.74</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>Never Practiced</i>

The findings imply that while democratic leadership needed to involve a broader range of stakeholders, including parents and community members. Strengthening democratic leadership styles improved transparency, collaboration, and shared responsibility in achieving school goals.

Moreover, democratic leadership indicates that democratic management is evident but not consistently integrated across all school processes. This suggests that while school heads involve stakeholders, the practice is not maximized, affecting the full implementation of shared management encouraged by the Department of Education through the School-Based Management (SBM) framework.

In addition, the involving teachers and encouraging open communication reflect strong internal collaboration and transparency within the school. This demonstrates that school heads effectively create avenues for teacher participation, supporting programs such as Learning Action Cells (LAC), where teachers collaboratively address instructional concerns and share best practices.

Finally, the student and community involvement, teamwork, and consensus-building highlight limitations in inclusive participation and collective decision-making. This indicates the need to strengthen engagement through initiatives like the School Governing Council (SGC) and Gulayan sa Paaralan Program

(GPP), ensuring that students, parents, and community members actively contribute to school development and conflict resolution processes.

The findings were confirmed by Ali et. al (2024), who emphasized democratic leadership improved teacher performance. Locally, Rivera (2022) highlight that democratic style was effective when used interchangeably, fostering cooperation, understanding, and teamwork among teachers.

Instructional Leadership. Instructional leadership focuses on improving teaching quality and student learning outcomes by guiding teachers in curriculum implementation, instructional strategies, and assessment practices. School heads who practice instructional leadership play an active role in monitoring classroom instruction and supporting teacher development.

As presented in Table 4, instructional leadership obtained an overall weighted mean of 3.00, interpreted as Practiced. All indicators received the same weighted mean of 3.00, interpreted as Practiced indicating that no indicator was rated higher or lower than the others.

Table 4. Commonly Practiced by the School Head along Instructional Leadership

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Actively monitors teaching practices in classrooms.	3.00	Practiced
2. Provides resources and opportunities for professional development	3.00	Practiced
3. Focuses on improving student learning outcomes.	3.00	Practiced
4. Uses data to guide instructional decisions.	3.00	Practiced
5. Encourages the use of evidence-based teaching methods.	3.00	Practiced
Overall Weighted Mean	3.00	Practiced

<i>Rating Scale:</i>	<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>
3.25-4.00 -	<i>Always Practiced</i>
2.50-3.24 -	<i>Practiced</i>
1.75-2.49 -	<i>Rarely Practiced</i>
1.00-1.74 -	<i>Never Practiced</i>

The findings suggest that instructional leadership practices are consistently implemented but not fully maximized. In actual school situations, school heads regularly conduct classroom observations, review lesson plans, and provide feedback to teachers. However, administrative workload, reporting requirements, and limited resources restrict the time available for instructional supervision and professional development activities.

The results imply that while instructional leadership is practiced, strengthening this leadership style could further improve teaching quality and student learning outcomes. Providing school heads with leadership training, instructional support, and adequate resources enhanced their ability to guide teachers effectively.

Meanwhile, instructional leadership is consistently practiced at a moderate level but lacks areas of strong distinction or excellence. This suggests that school heads perform instructional leadership tasks in a routine manner, but there is limited evidence of intensified focus on specific practices that could significantly improve teaching and learning, as expected in programs of the Department of Education.

Furthermore, instructional leadership functions such as classroom supervision, curriculum monitoring, and teacher support are implemented evenly but without strong emphasis or innovation. This affects the effectiveness of initiatives like Learning Action Cells (LAC) and the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS), where stronger instructional guidance and feedback mechanisms are necessary to enhance teacher performance.

Likewise, all areas highlight the need for school heads to strengthen and prioritize instructional leadership as a core function. This calls for more focused implementation of programs such as the National Educators Academy of the Philippines (NEAP) training and instructional coaching strategies to ensure continuous improvement in quality education.

The results were supported by Rehman (2020) emphasizing that instructional guidance improves teacher performance. Local studies such as Vasquez et al. (2020) show that instructional leadership enhances classroom practices, learner outcomes, and overall school management.

Authoritarian Leadership. Authoritarian leadership is characterized by centralized decision-making, strict rules, and strong control over school operations. While this leadership style ensures discipline and compliance, it limit teacher participation and autonomy.

Table 5 shows that authoritarian leadership obtained an overall weighted mean of 3.00, interpreted as Practiced. All indicators receiving a weighted mean of 3.00 interpreted as Practiced show that the school heads regularly demonstrate authoritarian leadership styles. They make decisions without consulting staff, expect adherence to rules, maintain a clear hierarchical structure, use rewards and punishments, and limit staff participation consistently, reflecting a leadership style that values control and order. However, balance may help maintain discipline and structure while avoiding complete staff disengagement.

Table 5. Commonly Practiced by the School Heads along Authoritarian Leadership

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Make decisions without consulting staff.	3.00	Practiced
2. Expects strict adherence to rules and regulations.	3.00	Practiced
3. Has a clear, top-down approach to leadership.	3.00	Practiced
4. Uses rewards and punishments to manage staff.	3.00	Practiced
5. Limits staff participation in decision-making.	3.00	Practiced
Overall Weighted Mean	3.00	Practiced
<i>Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation</i>		
3.25-4.00	-	<i>Always Practiced</i>
2.50-3.24	-	<i>Practiced</i>
1.75-2.49	-	<i>Rarely Practiced</i>
1.00-1.74	-	<i>Never Practiced</i>

The findings suggest that school heads rely on authoritative leadership practices to maintain order and discipline within the school environment. A school head enforces strict policies on teacher attendance, classroom management, and compliance with school rules to ensure efficient operations. Such practices are often necessary in large schools where maintaining order and coordination among teachers and students is essential. Although authoritarian leadership helps maintain discipline and organizational structure, excessive reliance on this leadership style reduces teacher motivation and limit opportunities for collaboration. School heads benefit from balancing directive leadership with more participatory approaches.

At the same time, authoritarian leadership is applied in a controlled and balanced manner rather than excessively, allowing school heads to maintain discipline without completely disregarding professional relationships. In Department of Education schools, this is evident in the strict enforcement of Child Protection Policy, attendance monitoring, and compliance with DepEd Orders, ensuring that standards are consistently followed across all personnel.

In particular, the expectation for strict adherence to rules reflects the need for accountability in administrative and instructional tasks. This is commonly observed in timely submission of School Forms (SF 1–10), liquidation of funds, and adherence to curriculum guides, where school heads exercise authority to avoid delays and discrepancies during audits and evaluations.

Consequently, the limitation of staff participation in decision-making reduces opportunities for teacher engagement and shared ownership of school programs. This becomes evident in the implementation of initiatives like Brigada Eskwela and Oplan Balik Eskwela, where stronger collaboration with teachers

and stakeholders enhance outcomes, indicating the need to integrate more democratic leadership style alongside authoritarian leadership style.

The findings are conformed by Rivera (2022) who highlighted that school heads who used democratic and authoritarian leadership style were effective its interchangeably, fostering cooperation, understanding and teamwork. Similarly, Zaib (2020) found that leadership styles often vary depending on contextual demands and institutional needs.

Servant Leadership. Servant leadership emphasizes prioritizing the needs of teachers, students, and the school community. School heads practicing servant leadership focus on building relationships, supporting teacher development, and fostering a caring and inclusive school culture.

As reflected in Table 6, servant leadership obtained an overall weighted mean of 3.10, interpreted as Practiced. The highest weighted mean was putting the needs of students and teachers first with a weighted mean of 3.50, interpreted as Always Practiced. Meanwhile, the lowest weighted mean was 3.00, interpreted as Practiced shared by indicators related to supporting staff growth, building relationships with the school community, and promoting a caring and empathetic culture. This suggests that the school head consistently engages in these behaviors, but there is still room for further improvement to reach the Always Practiced level. These areas reflect steady commitment to staff development, community connection, and fostering a supportive school environment.

The findings indicate that school heads demonstrate concern for the welfare and development of teachers and students. In real school situations, a servant leader regularly listens to teachers' concerns, support their professional needs, and assist them in addressing classroom challenges. The school head encourage peer mentoring among teachers or provide emotional support during challenging academic periods. The results suggest that servant leadership contributes to a supportive school environment where teachers feel valued and motivated. Strengthening mentoring programs and relationship-building activities further enhance the application of servant leadership in schools.

Table 6. Commonly Practiced by the School Head along Servant Leadership

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Puts the needs of students and teachers first.	3.50	Always Practiced
2. Supports the professional and personal growth of staff.	3.00	Practiced
3. Builds strong relationships with the school community.	3.00	Practiced
4. Builds strong relationships with the school community.	3.00	Practiced
5. Promotes a caring and empathetic school culture.	3.00	Practiced

Overall Weighted Mean	3.10	Practiced
<i>Rating Scale:</i>		<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>
3.25-4.00	-	<i>Always Practiced</i>
2.50-3.24	-	<i>Practiced</i>
1.75-2.49	-	<i>Rarely Practiced</i>
1.00-1.74	-	<i>Never Practiced</i>

Likewise, servant leadership demonstrates that school heads generally focus on serving others but still have room to enhance certain leadership behaviors. In schools, this is reflected in teachers' professional needs being addressed through mentoring, coaching, and the provision of teaching resources, yet these efforts are systematic or consistently applied across all staff. In addition, it illustrates prioritization of learners' health and safety during school activities, such as the implementation of school clinics, psychological support services, and the Learner Support Program (LSP), ensuring that educational and personal needs are met before administrative priorities.

Furthermore, in promoting staff growth, building relationships, and fostering empathy that school heads strengthen a culture of continuous professional development and community engagement. Programs like the National Educators Academy of the Philippines (NEAP) training modules, teacher coaching, and partnerships with Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) and Local Government Units (LGUs) to improve staff competence, collaborative relationships, and a more nurturing school climate.

The findings were affirmed by Cansoy (2020), who emphasized that servant leadership as a key factor in improving job satisfaction. Similarly, Garcia (2023) school heads were adopting a servant leadership style focusing on teacher's welfare and motivating them.

Level of Effectiveness of the Leadership Styles of Public Secondary School Heads in the School Management

The effectiveness of school leadership plays a pivotal role in ensuring quality education and promoting a positive learning environment. Public secondary school heads are tasked with guiding teachers, managing resources, and fostering student development, making their leadership practices critical to school success. This section determines the level of effectiveness of various leadership styles transformational, democratic, instructional, authoritarian, and servant which demonstrated by school heads in managing their schools. By describing how these leadership styles influence overall school performance, the study highlights the extent to which school heads contribute to creating an environment conducive to learning and continuous improvement.

Transformational Leadership. Transformational leadership is considered an important leadership style in schools because it motivates teachers, promotes innovation, and aligns the efforts of the school community toward achieving institutional goals. School heads who practice transformational leadership encourage professional development, collaboration, and a shared vision for improving teaching and learning.

As shown in Table 7, transformational leadership obtained an overall weighted mean of 3.34, interpreted as Highly Effective. The indicator with the highest weighted mean is Inspires teachers to align with the school’s vision and mission with a weighted mean of 3.42, indicating that school heads effectively motivate teachers to work toward common school goals. On the other hand, the indicator with the lowest weighted mean is Recognizes and rewards staff achievements with a weighted mean of 3.26, although it is still interpreted as Highly Effective.

The results indicate that school heads effectively inspire teachers and promote a shared vision within the school community. In a typical public secondary school setting, a transformational leader organized regular meetings where teachers discuss school improvement plans and align their classroom goals with the school’s mission. A school head encouraged teachers to integrate innovative teaching strategies and collaborate through Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions to improve student engagement and academic performance.

Table 7. Level of Effectiveness of the Leadership Style of Public Secondary School Heads Along Transformational Leadership

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Inspires teachers to align with the school’s vision and mission.	3.42	Highly Effective
2. Encourages innovative teaching practices.	3.35	Highly Effective
3. Recognizes and rewards staff achievements.	3.26	Highly Effective
4. Promotes collaboration among teachers.	3.31	Highly Effective
5. Advocates continuous professional development.	3.36	Highly Effective
Overall Weighted Mean	3.34	Highly Effective
<i>Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation</i>		
<i>3.25-4.00</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>Highly Effective</i>
<i>2.50-3.24</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>Moderately Effective</i>
<i>1.75-2.49</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>Slightly Effective</i>
<i>1.00-1.74</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>Not Effective</i>

These findings suggest that transformational leadership contributes significantly to effective school management. When school heads inspire teachers and support their professional growth, teachers become more motivated and committed to achieving school goals. Strengthening transformational leadership skills among school heads therefore enhance teacher performance and overall school effectiveness.

Firstly, inspiring teachers to align with the school’s vision and mission implies that school heads are effective in leading initiatives such as the implementation of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and ensuring that classroom practices are aligned with DepEd goals. As a result, teachers become more focused and unified in working toward improved learner outcomes and school performance.

Moreover, recognizing and rewarding staff achievements that teachers’ accomplishments such as innovations in teaching, improved learner performance, or active participation in INSET and LAC sessions may not always be consistently acknowledged. Consequently, teacher motivation and reduce opportunities to reinforce positive performance and professional growth.

Finally, school heads are capable of driving positive change, particularly in encouraging the adoption of new teaching strategies aligned with the MATATAG agenda. However, strengthening recognition systems and providing continuous support enhance teacher engagement, sustain high performance, and promote a more motivated school environment.

The findings were supported by Rehman (2020), who identified transformational leadership as one of the most commonly used leadership styles among school leaders. Similarly, Cansoy (2020), who reported that transformational leadership has a strong positive relationship with teachers’ job satisfaction.

Democratic Leadership. Democratic leadership promotes collaboration, shared decision-making, and open communication among members of the school community. In educational settings, this leadership style encourages participation from teachers, parents, and students in decision-making processes, fostering a sense of ownership and accountability.

As presented in Table 8, democratic leadership achieved an overall weighted mean of 3.25, interpreted as Highly Effective. The indicator with the highest weighted mean is Promotes inclusivity in school governance with a weighted mean of 3.31. Meanwhile, the indicator with the lowest weighted mean is Engages staff and students in decision-making with a weighted mean of 3.17, interpreted as Moderately Effective.

Table 8. Level of Effectiveness of the Leadership Style of Public Secondary School Heads Along Democratic Leadership

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Engages staff and students in decision-making.	3.17	Moderately Effective
2. Values input from parents and the community.	3.26	Highly Effective
3. Encourages open communication channels.	3.27	Highly Effective
4. Promotes inclusivity in school governance.	3.31	Highly Effective

5. Resolves conflicts through dialogue and consensus.	3.24	Moderately Effective
Overall Weighted Mean	3.25	Highly Effective
<i>Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation</i>		
3.25-4.00 -		<i>Highly Effective</i>
2.50-3.24 -		<i>Moderately Effective</i>
1.75-2.49 -		<i>Slightly Effective</i>
1.00-1.74 -		<i>Not Effective</i>

The findings imply that democratic leadership is essential in creating a collaborative school environment. Encouraging teacher participation and open communication to improve trust, strengthen teamwork, and enhance school management effectiveness. Firstly, democratic leadership style implies that school heads in DepEd schools are generally successful in fostering democratic approach, particularly through practices such as consulting stakeholders during School Improvement Plan (SIP) formulation and involving parents through School Governing Councils (SGC). As a result, decisions made at the school level are more responsive to the needs of learners, teachers, and the community.

Moreover, valuing community input and promoting open communication suggest that school heads effectively implement mechanisms such as Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings, feedback systems, and regular consultations. Consequently, this strengthens school-community partnerships, enhances transparency, and builds trust, which are essential in supporting programs like Brigada Eskwela and other collaborative initiatives.

Finally, engaging staff and students in decision-making and resolving conflicts through dialogue. Therefore, school heads need to create more structured opportunities for teacher and student voice such as through LAC sessions, student councils, and conflict resolution committees to ensure more inclusive decision-making and a more collaborative school environment.

The results were corroborated by Makgato and Mudzanani (2020), who found that democratic leadership improves academic performance through collaboration among teachers. Similarly, Aruzie and Adjei (2020) emphasized that democratic leadership contributes to positive teaching and learning outcomes. Instructional Leadership. Instructional leadership focuses on improving teaching quality and student learning by guiding teachers in curriculum implementation, instructional strategies, and assessment practices.

Table 9 shows that instructional leadership obtained an overall weighted mean of 3.23, interpreted as Moderately Effective. The highest weighted mean was recorded for Observes and evaluates classroom instruction with a weighted mean of 3.32, interpreted as Highly Effective. Meanwhile, the lowest weighted mean was Provides resources for improved teaching with a weighted mean of 3.13, interpreted as Moderately Effective.

Table 9. Level of Effectiveness of the Leadership Style of Public Secondary School Heads Along Instructional Leadership

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Observes and evaluates classroom instruction.	3.32	Highly Effective
2. Provides resources for improved teaching.	3.13	Moderately Effective
3. Uses data to guide instructional strategies.	3.24	Moderately Effective
4. Focuses on enhancing student learning outcomes.	3.23	Moderately Effective
5. Facilitates workshops for teacher growth.	3.22	Moderately Effective
Overall Weighted Mean	3.23	Moderately Effective
<i>Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation</i>		
3.25-4.00	-	<i>Highly Effective</i>
2.50-3.24	-	<i>Moderately Effective</i>
1.75-2.49	-	<i>Slightly Effective</i>
1.00-1.74	-	<i>Not Effective</i>

The findings indicate that school heads are actively involved in supervising classroom instruction but encountered challenges in providing adequate resources and professional development opportunities. In practice, a school head regularly observed classroom teaching and provide feedback to teachers. However, limitations in resources and administrative workload affect the consistent implementation of other instructional leadership practices. These findings highlight the need to strengthen instructional leadership among school heads by providing training, resources, and administrative support. Strengthening this leadership style can enhance teaching effectiveness and improve student learning outcomes.

Similarly, school heads carry out essential instructional functions, but there is still a need for strengthening their impact on teaching and learning. Classroom observations are conducted through tools like RPMS and classroom observation; the results may not always be maximized to provide targeted coaching and follow-up support for teachers.

In addition, observing and evaluating classroom instruction that school heads are actively monitoring teaching practices, ensuring compliance with curriculum standards and teaching guidelines. However, providing resources indicates schools faced limitations such as insufficient instructional materials, lack of ICT tools, or delays in the provision of learning resources, which affects the quality of instruction.

Lastly, using data, enhancing student outcomes, and facilitating workshops imply that while practices such as analyzing results from quarterly assessments, NAT, or other diagnostic tests are present,

they consistently translated into effective interventions. Hence, strengthening data-driven decision-making, increasing access to relevant training through INSET and LAC sessions, and ensuring adequate teaching resources can further improve instructional leadership and learner achievement.

The findings were confirmed by Zaib (2020), who found that leadership styles influence teaching practices and educational outcomes. Similarly, Vasquez et al. (2020) emphasized the importance of strengthening instructional supervision skills among school heads to improve teaching quality. Moquia and Melchor (2024) also found that strategic leadership significantly contributes to organizational learning in schools.

Authoritarian Leadership. Authoritarian leadership is characterized by strict rules, centralized decision-making, and strong control over school operations. While it ensures discipline and compliance, it limit teacher participation and autonomy.

As shown in Table 10, authoritarian leadership obtained an overall weighted mean of 3.15, interpreted as Moderately Effective. The highest weighted mean is Sets clear and strict rules for staff and students with a weighted mean of 3.29, interpreted as Highly Effective. The lowest weighted mean is Addresses non-compliance with disciplinary actions with a weighted mean of 3.00, interpreted as Moderately Effective.

Table 10. Level of Effectiveness of the Leadership Style of Public Secondary School Heads Along Authoritarian Leadership

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Sets clear and strict rules for staff and students.	3.29	Highly Effective
2. Exercises direct control over school activities.	3.22	Moderately Effective
3. Prioritizes short-term, goal-oriented plans.	3.10	Moderately Effective
4. Addresses non-compliance with disciplinary actions	3.00	Moderately Effective
5. Enforces uniform teaching practices.	3.12	Moderately Effective
Overall Weighted Mean	3.15	Moderately Effective
<i>Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation</i>		
3.25-4.00	-	<i>Highly Effective</i>
2.50-3.24	-	<i>Moderately Effective</i>
1.75-2.49	-	<i>Slightly Effective</i>
1.00-1.74	-	<i>Not Effective</i>

The findings indicate that authoritarian leadership helps maintain discipline and structure within schools. A school head enforced strict policies regarding attendance, classroom management, and school regulations to ensure order and compliance among teachers and students.

While authoritarian leadership style maintains discipline and organizational structure, excessive reliance on this style reduced teacher participation and creativity. Therefore, school heads balance this leadership style with more democratic approaches.

Moreover, school heads are able to maintain order and structure, but not fully maximize its effectiveness in improving overall school performance. It reflects the implementation of clear policies such as adherence to school rules, attendance monitoring, and compliance with DepEd guidelines, which help ensure discipline among both teachers and students.

Furthermore, setting clear and strict rules indicates that school heads are effective in establishing structure, such as enforcing classroom management standards, uniform policies, and punctuality requirements. However, exercising control and enforcing uniform teaching practices implies that while standardization exists (e.g., following MELCs and lesson plan formats), there may still be variations in how consistently these are applied across teachers.

Consequently, addressing non-compliance through disciplinary actions. School heads inconsistent in implementing sanctions due to considerations such as maintaining professional relationships or adhering to due process. This implies a need to strengthen fair and consistent disciplinary systems, ensuring that accountability measures are applied while still promoting a supportive and professional school environment.

The findings were affirmed by Aruzie and Adjei (2020), who found that authoritarian leadership used to maintain discipline and efficiency in schools. Zaib (2020) also noted that leadership styles often vary depending on situational needs.

Servant Leadership. Servant leadership focuses on prioritizing the needs and well-being of teachers, students, and the school community. School heads practicing servant leadership emphasize empathy, trust, and service to others.

Table 11 shows that servant leadership achieved an overall weighted mean of 3.28, interpreted as Highly Effective. The indicator with the highest weighted mean is Creates a supportive and inclusive environment with a weighted mean of 3.31. Meanwhile, the lowest weighted mean is Provides mentorship to aspiring leaders with a weighted mean of 3.21, interpreted as Moderately Effective.

The findings indicate that school heads prioritize building positive relationships and supporting the welfare of teachers and students. In real school settings, a servant leader regularly communicated with teachers to understand their needs, encourage teamwork, and provide support in addressing classroom challenges.

The results suggest that servant leadership plays a crucial role in fostering a positive school climate. By prioritizing the welfare of teachers and students, school heads build trust, strengthen collaboration, and improve school performance.

Table 11. Level of Effectiveness of the Leadership Style of Public Secondary School Heads Along Servant Leadership

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Ensures the welfare and growth of students and staff.	3.29	Highly Effective
2. Leads by example with humility and empathy.	3.30	Highly Effective
3. Builds trust within the school community.	3.30	Highly Effective
4. Creates a supportive and inclusive environment.	3.31	Highly Effective
5. Provides mentorship to aspiring leaders.	3.21	Moderately Effective
Overall Weighted Mean	3.28	Highly Effective
<i>Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation</i>		
3.25-4.00	-	<i>Highly Effective</i>
2.50-3.24	-	<i>Moderately Effective</i>
1.75-2.49	-	<i>Slightly Effective</i>
1.00-1.74	-	<i>Not Effective</i>

Likewise, School heads are successful in prioritizing the welfare of both teachers and learners. This is evident in initiatives such as providing emotional support to teachers, addressing student needs through guidance programs, and ensuring a positive school climate that promotes well-being and inclusivity.

In the same way, leading with empathy, building trust, and creating a supportive environment suggest that school heads effectively foster strong relationships within the school community. Through open communication during meetings, collaborative activities like Brigada Eskwela, and maintaining a culture where teachers feel valued and supported in their professional roles.

Further, providing mentorship to aspiring leaders implies that leadership development opportunities not be consistently emphasized. This mean limited coaching for master teachers, coordinators, or potential future school heads, indicating a need to strengthen mentoring programs, succession planning, and leadership training to sustain effective school management.

The findings were supported by Gill et al. (2023), who emphasized that leadership styles that promote engagement and support improve teacher performance. Similarly, Catanus (2024) and Estacio and Estacio (2022) also confirmed that servant leadership style significantly contribute to improved school performance and a positive learning environment.

Relationship between the Leadership Styles and the Level of Effectiveness of Public Secondary School Heads in School Management

Prior to determining the relationship between the leadership styles of school heads and their level of effectiveness in school management, a test of normality was conducted. The results indicated that the data satisfied the assumption of normal distribution; hence, the use of the Pearson Product–Moment Correlation (r) was deemed appropriate to determine the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables.

As shown in Table 12, all leadership styles exhibited a significant positive relationship with the level of effectiveness of public secondary school heads in school management, as evidenced by p -values of .000, which are lower than the 0.01 level of significance. This led to the rejection of the null hypothesis for all leadership styles considered in the study.

Specifically, transformational leadership showed a strong positive correlation with effectiveness in school management ($r = .601, p = .000$). This indicates that school heads who demonstrate transformational leadership behaviors, such as inspiring a shared vision, motivating teachers, and fostering innovation, tend to be more effective in managing their schools. Similarly, democratic leadership revealed a strong and significant relationship with school management effectiveness ($r = .634, p = .000$). This means that participative decision-making, collaboration, and shared responsibility significantly contribute to effective school management practices.

Moreover, the instructional leadership style also demonstrated a strong positive correlation ($r = .625, p = .000$), implying that school heads who focus on curriculum implementation, teaching supervision, and instructional improvement are more likely to achieve higher levels of effectiveness in school management. In contrast, authoritarian leadership showed a moderate yet significant positive relationship with effectiveness in school management ($r = .356, p = .000$). While still statistically significant, the lower correlation coefficient suggests that a more directive and controlling leadership approach may contribute to effectiveness to a lesser extent compared to other leadership styles.

Table 12. Relationship between the Leadership Styles and Level of Effectiveness of Public Secondary School Heads in School Management

Leadership Styles	Effectiveness in School Management		Interpretation	Decision
	<i>r</i>	<i>p-value</i>		
Transformational	.601**	.000	Significant	Reject H_0
Democratic	.634**	.000	Significant	
Instructional	.625**	.000	Significant	
Authoritarian	.356**	.000	Significant	
Servant	.649**	.000	Significant	

***Correlation is significant @ 0.01 level.*

Notably, servant leadership revealed the strongest positive correlation among the leadership styles ($r = .649$, $p = .000$). This finding indicates that school heads who prioritize service, empowerment, and the well-being of teachers and stakeholders tend to exhibit the highest level of effectiveness in school management. With these, results the null hypothesis is rejected.

The results of this study indicate that all five leadership styles transformational, democratic, instructional, authoritarian, and servant are significantly positively related to the level of effectiveness of public secondary school heads in Mercedes District. Notably, servant leadership showed the strongest positive correlation, followed closely by democratic, instructional, and transformational leadership, while authoritarian leadership, though significant, exhibited a weaker association. These findings have several meaningful implications for school leadership practices in the local context.

Leadership plays a vital role in determining how effectively a school is managed and how educational goals are achieved. In public secondary schools, the leadership style adopted by school heads influences decision-making processes, teacher motivation, instructional quality, and overall school performance. Understanding the relationship between leadership styles and management effectiveness is therefore essential in determining how school heads can best respond to the demands of educational leadership. This section presents the statistical relationship between the leadership styles of school heads and their level of effectiveness in school management.

The results suggest that school heads who apply leadership styles that emphasize collaboration, service, and instructional support tend to demonstrate higher levels of effectiveness in managing their schools. The school head who practices servant leadership prioritized the welfare of teachers by providing emotional support, recognizing their contributions, and ensuring that they have the resources needed to teach effectively. In an actual school setting, this involved a school head regularly consulting teachers about their classroom needs, assisting them in addressing student learning difficulties, and encouraging professional development. Such actions build trust and strengthen teamwork among teachers, which ultimately improves the overall management of the school.

The findings imply that effective school management requires a balanced leadership style that integrates multiple leadership styles. School heads who combine servant, democratic, instructional, and transformational leadership are more likely to create a supportive, collaborative, and productive school environment. Furthermore, the moderate correlation of authoritarian leadership suggests that while directive leadership is necessary in certain situations, it should be applied carefully to avoid reducing teacher autonomy and motivation.

The strong relationship between leadership styles and school management effectiveness the findings was supported by Gill et al. (2023), who reported that leadership styles significantly influence employee performance in educational institutions. Their study emphasized that effective leadership style enhances teachers' work engagement and job performance, which contributes to improved school management.

The strong relationship between leadership styles and school performance also supported by Makgato and Mudzanani (2020), who found that democratic and transformational leadership styles contributed to improved academic performance in schools. Their study emphasized that collaborative leadership style helps create a supportive learning environment that enhances both teaching and learning. In addition, the results corroborated by Cansoy (2020), who found that transformational leadership behaviors have a strong positive relationship with teachers' job satisfaction. When teachers feel supported and valued by their school leaders, they are more likely to perform effectively and contribute to the overall success of the school.

Likewise, it was also corroborated by Aquino et al. (2021) found that leadership style of school heads significantly influences teachers' performance, suggesting that effective leadership contributes to improved school management. Similarly, Catanus (2024) reported that democratic leadership styles were strongly associated with teachers' performance in public schools. Also, Rivera (2022), who highlighted that democratic leadership promotes teamwork, cooperation, and mutual understanding among teachers, which enhances school productivity and effectiveness.

Proposed Intervention to Improve the Leadership Effectiveness of Public Secondary School Heads in School Management

The study revealed that public secondary school heads in Mercedes District employed multiple leadership styles, including transformational, democratic, instructional, authoritarian, and servant leadership. Among these, transformational and servant leadership were the most consistently practiced and effective, while democratic and instructional leadership also contributed positively. Authoritarian leadership, although useful for maintaining order, showed a weaker relationship with overall school management effectiveness.

To address these findings, Project LEAD to SERVE: Leadership Enhancement and Development through Support, Empowering, and Respect and Value Education is proposed. The detailed framework and components of Project LEAD to SERVE can be seen in Appendix I. This two-day leadership training program will focus on: Day 1, Leadership Awareness and Self-Development helping school heads identify their leadership style, reflect on strengths and areas for improvement, and learn effective leadership practices. Day 2: Leadership Application and Strategic Planning applying leadership skills in school management, fostering participatory decision-making, collaboration, and developing actionable school improvement plans.

The PSDS of Mercedes District will lead the intervention, providing expert guidance, mentoring, and monitoring, ensuring that training aligns with district goals and addresses the leadership gaps identified in the study. The study's results indicated that servant and transformational leadership styles had the strongest positive impact on school management effectiveness. The involvement of the PSDS ensures that school heads receive professional guidance and support to strengthen these servant and transformational leadership style that improve the school management of the school heads.

By focusing on servant, transformational, democratic, and instructional leadership, the proposed intervention directly targets the areas where school heads need the most support. The program encourages reflection, professional growth, and practical application of leadership style, which can lead to improved teacher motivation, collaboration, and overall school management effectiveness. The PSDS's active role guarantees accountability, mentorship, and sustainability of the intervention.

Project LEAD to SERVE aligns directly with the findings of the study indicate that transformational leadership is the most consistently practiced and effective leadership style among public secondary school heads are servant, democratic, and instructional leadership styles are perceived to be moderately to highly effective. Authoritarian leadership shows a weaker association with overall leadership effectiveness. By implementing this program, to enhance the leadership style of public secondary school heads through leadership awareness, self-reflection, and the practical application of effective leadership strategies in school management. The district may improve the capacity of its school heads to manage schools effectively, promote collaborative work environments, and improve student outcomes, ensuring that the leadership styles highlighted as most effective in the study are consistently applied.

Summary

This study determined the leadership styles practiced by school heads and their level of effectiveness in managing public secondary schools in Mercedes District, Camarines Norte.

Specifically, it answered the following questions:

- 1) what are the leadership styles commonly practiced by the school heads in public secondary schools such as transformational, democratic, instructional, authoritarian, and servant leadership?
- 2) What is the level of effectiveness of the leadership styles of Public Secondary School Heads in the school management?
- 3) Is there significant relationship between the leadership style commonly practiced by school head and its level of effectiveness on school management?
- 4) What intervention may be proposed to improve the leadership styles of school heads in managing school?

The research involved 253 respondents which comprise of 8 Schools from Junior and Senior High School teachers within Mercedes District, Division of Camarines Norte, employing total enumeration to minimize errors and ensure the reliability of data. It focused on leadership styles practiced by school heads and their level of effectiveness in managing public secondary schools. The study also tested the relationship between the leadership style and level of effectiveness of Public Secondary School Heads in school management. A quantitative research method using descriptive-correlational design was employed, and data were collected through a researcher-made questionnaire during the academic year 2025-2026, in public schools in Mercedes District.

Findings

1) The findings revealed that the leadership style commonly practiced by the school heads is transformational leadership, with an overall weighted mean of 3.60, interpreted as Always Practiced, indicating that school leaders frequently demonstrate behaviors that inspire and motivate teachers. Democratic leadership obtained an overall weighted mean of 3.20, interpreted as Practiced, suggesting that participative leadership and shared decision-making are generally applied in school management. Meanwhile, instructional leadership recorded an overall weighted mean of 3.00, interpreted as Practiced, indicating that school heads provide guidance in improving teaching and learning processes. Similarly, authoritarian leadership also obtained an overall weighted mean of 3.00, interpreted as Practiced, which implies that directive leadership approaches are sometimes used to maintain order and discipline in schools. Lastly, servant leadership obtained an overall weighted mean of 3.10, interpreted as Practiced, reflecting that school heads demonstrate supportive leadership that prioritizes the welfare of teachers and students.

2) In the level of effectiveness of the leadership style of public secondary school heads obtained an overall weighted mean of 3.34, interpreted as highly effective is Transformational leadership, indicating that school heads consistently inspire teachers, promote collaboration, and support professional growth. Democratic leadership recorded an overall weighted mean of 3.25, also interpreted as highly effective, reflecting its role in encouraging participation, inclusivity, and transparency in school decision-making. Instructional leadership obtained an overall weighted mean of 3.23, interpreted as moderately effective, suggesting that school heads guide teaching and learning processes but still have room for improvement in areas such as resource provision and teacher development. Authoritarian leadership had an overall weighted mean of 3.15, interpreted as moderately effective, indicating that directive approaches help maintain discipline but are less effective in promoting empowerment and collaboration. Finally, servant leadership obtained an overall weighted mean of 3.28, interpreted as highly effective, demonstrating that school heads prioritize the welfare of staff and students, contributing to a supportive school environment.

3) The relationship between leadership style and its effectiveness in school management showed a significant positive relationship servant leadership demonstrated the strongest correlation ($r = 0.649$, $p = 0.000$), followed by democratic ($r = 0.634$, $p = 0.000$), instructional ($r = 0.625$, $p = 0.000$), and transformational leadership ($r = 0.601$, $p = 0.000$). Authoritarian leadership, though significant, showed a weaker correlation ($r = 0.356$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that directive approaches are less strongly associated with overall effectiveness compared to the other styles.

4). Based on the findings, transformational leadership was identified as the most commonly practiced leadership style among school heads, with a weighted mean of 3.60, and was also found to be highly effective in school management. Further analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between leadership style and its level of effectiveness, with servant leadership demonstrating the strongest correlation ($r = 0.649$, $p = 0.000$). This indicates that school heads who consistently practice servant, transformational, democratic, and instructional leadership style tend to be more effective in managing their schools. The Project LEAD to SERVE: LEAD to SERVE: Leadership Enhancement and Development through Support, Empowering, and Respect and Value Education, a two-day intervention designed to

improve leadership style and effectiveness in school management by focusing on self-assessment, leadership awareness, and practical application of these key leadership styles. The program, led by the Public Schools District Supervisor (PSDS), emphasizes participatory decision-making, instructional supervision, mentoring, and strategic school planning, addressing identified gaps such as balancing administrative and instructional responsibilities. By promoting reflection, professional growth, and collaborative leadership, the project aims to strengthen school heads' capacity, improve teacher motivation, and ensure consistent, effective school management across the district.

CONCLUSIONS

1) Transformational leadership is the most consistently practiced style among school heads, highlighting a strong emphasis on motivation, innovation, and teacher empowerment. Democratic and servant leadership are moderately practiced, indicating efforts to involve teachers and address stakeholder needs, while instructional and authoritarian leadership show moderate application with room for strengthening in areas such as collaboration, mentoring, and broader engagement. School heads employ a mix of leadership styles, with transformational practices being most dominant.

2) Transformational, democratic, and servant leadership styles are highly effective in enhancing school management, teacher motivation, and a supportive school climate. Instructional and authoritarian leadership, while moderately effective, show effectiveness in specific practices such as classroom observation and rule-setting but are less consistently impactful across all areas. This suggests that leadership approaches emphasizing empowerment, collaboration, and support yield greater effectiveness in school operations.

3) All five leadership styles have a significant positive relationship with the effectiveness of school heads, with servant leadership demonstrating the strongest association. Democratic, instructional, and transformational leadership also strongly correlate with effectiveness, while authoritarian leadership, though significant, has a comparatively weaker impact. This indicates that leadership styles centered on collaboration, support, and empowerment are more closely linked to successful school management than directive approaches. Thus, to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

4) Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the leadership style most commonly practiced by school heads is transformational leadership, which is also highly effective in improving school management outcomes. The significant positive relationship between leadership style and effectiveness confirms that adopting servant, democratic, instructional, and transformational leadership style contribute to better school performance. In response to these identified gaps, Project LEAD to SERVE: Leadership Enhancement and Development through Support, Empowering, and Respect and Value Education is proposed as a two-day intervention program designed to strengthen the leadership effectiveness of school heads. The program focuses on leadership awareness, self-assessment, and the practical application of effective leadership practices in school management. The Public Schools District Supervisor (PSDS), may implement this intervention to improve leadership and school management of public-school heads.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) School head may adopt transformational leadership to encouraged to sustain and further enhance practices that empower teachers, promote innovation, and recognize achievements.

2) School heads may consider these leadership style transformational, democratic, and servant leadership styles were found to be highly effective, these approaches to improve teacher motivation, collaboration, and positive climate.

3) School heads may employ leadership styles that has significant positive relationship between leadership styles and school effectiveness, particularly the strong influence of servant, democratic, and transformational leadership, that emphasize collaboration, support, and shared responsibility.

4) The Public Schools District Supervisor (PSDS) may consider to implement Project LEAD to SERVE: Leadership Excellence and Development to Support, Empower, Respect, and Value Education. This two-day leadership training program aims to strengthen servant, transformational, democratic, and instructional leadership practices while promoting the balanced use of authority. To maximize participation and convenience, the program may be conducted during District In-Service Training (INSET) sessions, allowing school heads to attend without disrupting regular school operations, while fostering consistent and effective school management across the district.

5) Future researchers may consider examining the long-term effects of leadership styles on school management, teacher satisfaction, and student outcomes. Further studies may also evaluate the effectiveness of intervention programs such as Project LEAD to SERVE in different districts or educational levels. Expanding the scope of research may provide deeper insights into leadership practices that contribute to sustainable school improvement.

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