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TEACHER COLLABORATION AS INFLUENCED BY EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES OF SCHOOL HEADS IN PANABO CITY DIVISION

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between evidence-based practices of school heads and teacher collaboration among kindergarten teachers in the Division of Davao del Norte. Using a descriptive correlational research design, data were gathered from 80 participants through validated and pilot-tested instruments. Statistical tools such as weighted mean, Pearson product-moment correlation, and multiple regression analysis were used to analyze the data. Findings revealed that both the extent of evidence-based practices of school heads and teacher collaboration were rated as extensive. A significant positive relationship was established between the two variables. Furthermore, multiple regression results showed that all domains of evidence-based practices, proactive, knowledgeable, supportive, perseverant, communication, vision/mission, and availability, significantly influenced teacher collaboration, with proactive leadership showing the highest standardized coefficient. The study's findings align with Social Constructivism, Transformational Leadership Theory, and Adult Learning Theory, underscoring the importance of collaborative, supportive, and visionary school leadership in fostering professional learning communities. Based on the findings, the study recommends strengthening leadership training, sustaining collaborative structures in schools, and further research on other educational levels and contexts. These results provide practical insights for school leaders, policymakers, and educators in promoting a culture of collaboration and continuous professional growth.

KEYWORDS: *Evidence-Based Practices; Teacher Collaboration; School Leadership; Professional Learning Communities; Educational Leadership*

INTRODUCTION

This study explores the relationship between the evidence-based leadership practices of school heads and teacher collaboration in the Division of Panabo City, Philippines. Effective school leadership—characterized by being proactive, knowledgeable, supportive, perseverant, communicative, and visionary—is essential in fostering collaborative teaching environments that enhance school improvement, teacher effectiveness, and student outcomes.

Evidence-based practices are informed by research and include strategies such as clear communication, shared decision-making, support for professional growth, and alignment with school goals. These practices are critical in responding to ongoing educational reforms in the Philippines, such as the K to 12 program and the shift to blended learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite these reforms, challenges remain, including uneven resource distribution and inconsistent policy implementation. In Panabo City, school heads play a vital role in addressing these issues by promoting a culture of collaboration among teachers. This study aims to assess how leadership behaviors influence collaborative processes like dialogue, joint decision-making, collective action, and shared evaluation.

The findings will provide insights to improve leadership development and inform policies that support professional collaboration, ultimately contributing to better teaching and learning outcomes in the region.

REVIEW OF SIGNIFICANT LITERATURE

This study explored the evidence-based practices of school heads and their relationship to teacher collaboration. The independent variable, evidence-based practices of school heads, includes seven indicators: proactive, knowledgeable, supportive, perseverant, communication, vision/mission, and availability (Lyon et al., 2022). The

dependent variable, teacher collaboration, is measured through dialogue, decision-making, action, and evaluation (Woodland et al., 2019).

Evidence-based practices refer to research-supported strategies that improve educational outcomes. School leaders play a crucial role in implementing these practices by fostering collaboration, guiding instructional improvements, and aligning school processes with sound research. Effective leadership influences curriculum delivery, learning resources, and instructional quality, as shown in studies by Kompri (2019) and Salmagundi (2019). Research by Leithwood et al. (2020) and Lynch (2019) emphasizes that schools with leaders who prioritize evidence-based practices tend to achieve better outcomes through professional development and data-driven decision-making.

A proactive leader anticipates challenges and takes strategic actions to prevent problems, encouraging innovation and resilience in the school system (Lyon et al., 2022). Leaders who are knowledgeable about evidence-based practices serve as mentors, providing accurate guidance and building teacher confidence. Their expertise fosters a culture of continuous learning and research-based improvement (Hopfenbeck et al., 2021; Timperley, 2020). Supportive school heads nurture a positive climate by encouraging teacher growth, reducing stress, and building professional commitment through individualized support (Eyal & Roth, 2021; Winton et al., 2020).

Perseverant leaders demonstrate consistent commitment to long-term goals and maintain their focus despite challenges. Their ability to sustain reform efforts is essential to embedding evidence-based practices in the school's culture (Duckworth et al., 2020). Communication, as a leadership trait, facilitates clarity, trust, and alignment of vision and practice. Effective leaders create transparent systems for feedback and maintain open lines of communication with stakeholders (Barrett, 2019; Towler, 2019).

The vision and mission of a school provide the foundation for evidence-based leadership. When school heads connect evidence-based practices to the institution's goals, they give meaning to reform initiatives and motivate teachers toward a shared purpose (Hasbi, 2020; Sinek, 2019). Availability, the last indicator, reflects how accessible school heads are to their staff. When school leaders are approachable and responsive, they foster open communication and build trust, which are critical for the successful implementation of reforms (Hasbi, 2020; Kotter, 2022).

Teacher collaboration is a powerful tool for enhancing instructional quality and student achievement. When well-structured and supported, collaboration enables teachers to learn from each other, reflect on their practices, and make evidence-based decisions. Woodland et al. (2019) emphasize that effective teacher collaboration is rooted in professional dialogue, shared decision-making, taking collective action, and evaluating instructional outcomes. These elements ensure that collaboration moves beyond surface-level cooperation to focus on instructional improvement.

Studies by Darling-Hammond (2019) and Goddard et al. (2021) found that teacher collaboration significantly predicts improved student performance, especially in challenging educational contexts. Nasir and Mydin (2023) further argue that teacher collaboration enhances instructional effectiveness by fostering reflective practice and peer accountability. Dialogue, the core of collaboration, involves focused and evidence-based conversations aimed at improving student outcomes. Woodland et al. (2019) and Vangrieken et al. (2019) assert that dialogue should be supported by consistent participation, documentation, and skilled facilitation. This enables teacher teams to reflect deeply on instructional strategies, share best practices, and collectively drive school improvement.

Collaboration, when aligned with strong leadership, promotes a culture of continuous improvement. School heads who demonstrate evidence-based practices create an environment where teacher collaboration thrives, ultimately contributing to better educational outcomes.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study determined the relationship between the evidence-based practices of school heads and teacher collaboration. More specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the extent of evidence-based practices of school heads in terms of:
    - 1.1. Proactive;
    - 1.2. Knowledgeable;
    - 1.3. Supportive;
    - 1.4. Perseverant;
    - 1.5. Communication;
    - 1.6. Vision/ Mission; and

1.7. Availability?

2. What is the extent of teacher collaboration in terms of:
   - 2.1. Dialogue
   - 2.2. Decision- Making
   - 2.3. Action; and
   - 2.4. Evaluation
3. Is there a significant relationship between the evidence-based practices of school heads and teacher collaboration?
4. Which of the domains of the evidence-based practices of school heads significantly influence teacher collaboration?

METHODOLOGY

This chapter introduces the methodological aspect of the study. This covers the research design, research respondents, research instruments, data gathering procedure, and data analysis employed in this investigation.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employed a quantitative, descriptive correlational research design to examine the relationship between the evidence-based practices of school heads (independent variable) and teacher collaboration (dependent variable). Quantitative methods allowed for the collection and analysis of numerical data, while the descriptive correlational approach enabled observation of variables in their natural settings without manipulation (Apuke, 2017; Davis, 2021). The design aimed to identify the strength and direction of the relationship between leadership practices—such as proactivity, communication, and support—and collaborative behaviors among teachers, including dialogue, decision-making, action, and evaluation (Kabir, 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to strict ethical standards, prioritizing informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and respect for respondents. All participants were fully informed about the study's purpose and procedures, and assured of their right to withdraw at any time. To protect participant privacy, responses were anonymized, and data was securely stored and accessible only to the researcher.

Recognizing the potential vulnerability of teacher-respondents within hierarchical school settings, care was taken to avoid coercion and psychological discomfort. The questionnaire was designed to be neutral and non-invasive, with participants free to skip questions. Risks were minimal, while potential benefits included insights into improved leadership and collaborative practices in schools.

A diverse and representative sample was selected to ensure fairness, and transparency was maintained throughout the research process with regular updates and open communication. The researcher, trained in educational research, was guided by ethical oversight from the RMC Research Ethics Committee. No conflicts of interest were present, and adequate digital tools and secure platforms were used to facilitate the study. Community involvement was encouraged to ensure relevance, shared ownership, and practical application of the findings.

RESEARCH RESPONDENTS

This study will involve 80 research respondents selected from the total population of 100 kindergarten teachers in the Division of Panabo City. The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence level, ensuring a representative group for accurate and generalizable results. The primary inclusion criterion for selecting respondents is having more than five years of teaching experience. This criterion ensures that the respondents have adequate exposure to school leadership practices, teacher collaboration, and the implementation of evidence-based practices.

Kindergarten teachers were chosen as respondents due to their significant role in implementing leadership directives and applying evidence-based practices in early childhood education. Their experiences in collaboration, instructional planning, and classroom management are essential in understanding how school leadership influences teacher collaboration and student learning outcomes. Teachers with more than five years of experience are expected to provide richer insights, as they are more familiar with school policies and leadership practices compared to their less experienced counterparts (Supovitz et al., 2020).

The inclusion of kindergarten teachers across different schools in Panabo City Division also ensures diversity in the perspectives gathered. This will allow the study to explore how evidence-based leadership practices affect teacher collaboration across various teaching contexts. A structured survey instrument will be used to collect data

from the respondents, enhancing the reliability and validity of the findings. Participation in the study will be voluntary, ensuring that respondents are motivated to share honest and accurate insights, thereby increasing the reliability of the data collected (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

By focusing on experienced teachers, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how school heads' evidence-based practices impact teacher collaboration, particularly in the areas of dialogue, decision-making, action, and evaluation (Woodland et al., 2019). The insights gathered will contribute to leadership development programs and inform school improvement efforts in Panabo City and similar educational contexts.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed to measure both, evidence-based practices of school heads and teacher collaboration. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions with Likert- scale items to quantify perceptions and experiences.

For data collection, this study utilized an adapted survey questionnaire. The questionnaire that was employed in this undertaking was divided into two sets. The first set focused on the extent of evidence-based practices of school heads. The second set focused on the extent of teacher collaboration.

Evidence-based Practices of School Heads. The evidence-based practices of school heads questionnaire was adapted from Lyon et al. (2022). The instrument consisted of 21 items. It had seven indicators namely; proactive (1-3), knowledgeable (1-3), supportive (1-3), perseverant (1-3), communication (1-3),vision/ mission (1-3), and availability (1-3).The evidence-based practices of school heads questionnaire was subjected to pilot testing with a sample group of teachers to assess its reliability. The results indicated a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.82, suggesting that the 21 items measuring the seven indicators have high internal consistency. This implies that the items effectively capture the intended constructs and are reliable for use in the full study. The high reliability score ensures that the instrument can consistently measure perceptions of evidence-based practices of school heads, which enhances the validity of the research outcomes. Below was the grading scale of the extent of evidence-based practices of school heads.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this study are grounded in three major theoretical perspectives: Social Constructivism, Transformational Leadership Theory, and Adult Learning Theory (Andragogy).

Rooted in Vygotsky's Social Constructivism (1978), the results emphasize the role of dialogue and social interaction in professional learning. The significant influence of school heads' proactive, communicative, and supportive behaviors supports the idea that collaborative learning among teachers thrives in environments where leadership fosters shared experiences and scaffolding, as seen in professional learning communities. The high R^2 value (0.657) confirms that these leadership traits significantly support teacher collaboration, echoing Goddard et al.'s (2021) assertion on the role of leadership in facilitating reflective and collegial engagement.

The study also aligns with Transformational Leadership Theory (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985), which highlights leaders who inspire and empower followers to achieve collective goals. High Beta values for proactive and supportive leadership indicate their strong influence on collaboration. Visionary leadership, including mission alignment and shared decision-making, was shown to be a key factor in fostering a unified and collaborative school culture (Hallinger, 2020; Blase & Blase, 2020).

Lastly, the study resonates with Knowles' Adult Learning Theory (1973), which emphasizes self-directed, problem-centered learning among adults. Teachers, as adult learners, benefit most when school heads recognize their prior experience and provide relevant, sustained support. Leadership traits such as perseverance, communication, and availability were found to enhance collaboration by enabling meaningful, context-based professional development (Evertson, 2020).

Overall, the study confirms that the seven domains of evidence-based leadership practices are significant predictors of teacher collaboration. This triangulated theoretical foundation highlights the critical role of school leadership in fostering collaborative, empowered, and growth-oriented professional communities.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

The main focus of the study was to determine the significance of the relationship between evidence-based practices of school heads and teacher collaboration. The study was conducted with the selected teachers from the Division of Davao del Norte. There were eighty (80) kindergarten teachers who participated in this study. A descriptive correlational method of research was used in utilizing adopted research instruments. The said instruments were validated by the panel of experts and subjected to pilot testing before it was made ready for administration. Weighted mean, Pearson product moment correlation, and regression analysis were statistical tools used in analyzing the data. The hypotheses in this study were tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The major findings of the study were the following: the extent of the evidence- based practices of school heads of the teachers is extensive. Meanwhile, the extent of the teacher collaboration of the teachers is also extensive. It was found that there is a significant relationship between evidence-based practices of school heads and the teacher collaboration. The hypotheses of no significant relationship between evidence-based practices of school heads and teacher collaboration and none of the domains of evidence-based practices of school heads significantly influence the teacher collaboration were rejected.

Conclusions

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

The extent of evidence-based practices of school heads is extensive, which implies that it is oftentimes evident. All dimensions of evidence-based practices of school heads which include proactive, knowledgeable, supportive, perseverant, communication, vision/ mission, and availability, are at an extensive level, which means it is oftentimes evident. Meanwhile, the extent of teacher collaboration is also extensive, which means that it is oftentimes evident. All dimensions of teacher collaboration are oftentimes evident. Both variables call for all school members to work hand in hand to strengthen the existing status of the evidence-based practices of school heads and teacher collaboration.

Based on the findings, evidence-based practices of school heads, and teacher collaboration are correlated. Also, evidence-based practices of school heads significantly influences teacher collaboration. All domains of evidence-based practices of school heads, namely, proactive, knowledgeable, supportive, perseverant, communication, vision/ mission, and availability, significantly influence teacher collaboration by registering a p-value of .001 which is less than .05 in the level of significance. This leads to the rejection of the null hypotheses. Further, the result indicates that for every unit increase in the three domains of evidence-based practices of school heads, teacher collaboration also increases.

Recommendations

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

For higher officials in the Department of Education, it is recommended to institutionalize and strengthen leadership development programs that emphasize evidence-based practices among school heads. Since the study confirmed a strong and significant influence of proactive, knowledgeable, supportive, perseverant, communicative, mission-driven, and accessible leadership on teacher collaboration, the Department should integrate these dimensions into training modules for school leaders. Policies and performance evaluation frameworks should also incorporate clear expectations and indicators of evidence-based leadership. Also, the Department should consider creating incentives or recognition programs for school heads who effectively foster collaborative teaching cultures in their schools. These initiatives would help promote a culture of continuous professional development anchored in data-driven leadership and collaborative practices.

For School Principals, the findings suggest that their behaviors and practices directly influence the collaborative engagement of their teaching staff. Therefore, it is highly recommended that principals regularly model proactive leadership, promote open communication, and establish a clear and shared vision among their teams. They must also ensure their availability and provide individualized support to teachers while sustaining professional learning communities where dialogue, reflection, and shared decision-making are the norms. By doing so, they create an environment conducive to teacher collaboration, which is essential for improving instructional quality and student learning outcomes. Principals should also make it a point to stay updated on current research and apply evidence-based strategies in managing school operations and leading instructional improvement efforts.

For Teachers, the study highlights their vital role in sustaining collaboration through shared learning, co-planning, and joint reflection. Teachers are encouraged to take an active role in professional learning communities and to fully engage in the collaborative practices facilitated by school leaders. They should also embrace a growth mindset, recognizing that meaningful collaboration with peers can enhance their instructional competence and contribute to student achievement. Furthermore, teachers should provide constructive feedback to school heads regarding the leadership practices that support or hinder collaboration in their respective schools. By maintaining

open lines of communication and embracing a team-based culture, teachers help create a supportive and dynamic learning environment for both their colleagues and their students.

For Future Researchers, the findings of this study open several avenues for further investigation. Future studies may consider expanding the sample size to include other levels of education or geographic areas to verify the generalizability of the results. It is also recommended to explore the longitudinal impact of evidence- based leadership practices on teacher collaboration and student outcomes over time. Additionally, qualitative approaches such as interviews or focus group discussions may provide deeper insights into the specific experiences and perceptions of school heads and teachers regarding collaboration. Researchers may also explore how external factors such as community involvement, school culture, and resource availability mediate the relationship between leadership practices and teacher collaboration.

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