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ENGAGING LEADERSHIP OF SCHOOL HEADS AND TEACHER COMMITMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF PANABO CITY DIVISION

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ABSTRACT
The study explored the relationship between engaging leadership of school heads and teacher commitment in public secondary schools of Panabo City Division. Also, it investigated the association of the involved variables and the domains of engaging leadership of school heads that significantly influence teacher commitment. With the use of probability sampling, 146 public secondary teachers were selected as the respondents. Utilizing the descriptive-correlational survey method, the data collated were analyzed through the use of Mean, Product-Moment correlation and Regression Analysis. Results revealed that there was a high engaging leadership of school heads and a high teacher commitment among the respondents. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between the two variables. Moreover, all domains of engaging leadership of school heads were found to have significantly influence the teacher commitment. Based on the findings, it was further suggested that higher officials in the Department of Education may identify means on how to strengthen the engaging leadership of school heads which would boost teacher commitment. More so, future researchers may further explore the involved variables considering other factors and research methods.
KEYWORDS: *Engaging Leadership; Teacher Commitment; Descriptive Correlation; Panabo City Division, Philippines*

INTRODUCTION
Committed teachers are motivated to go beyond the basic requirements of their role, investing time and energy into lesson planning, student engagement, and creating a positive learning environment. This commitment also extends to professional development, collaboration with colleagues, and a strong sense of responsibility for the academic and personal growth of their students. However, problems with teacher engagement often stem from a lack of support, insufficient resources, and overwhelming workloads, which can lead to burnout and decreased motivation. In many cases employees fail to have a sense of belongingness with the institution and do the work assigned to them just for the sake of it. They lack commitment as a result of which there is no job satisfaction as well as personal satisfaction. So, when teachers do not work/perform as per the expectation of the management the result impacts negatively on students (Velma et al., 2018).

In the global scenario, specifically in Turkey, Akdemir (2019) identified burnout as a significant factor leading to decreased organizational commitment among teachers. This poor commitment leads to decreased productivity, increased absenteeism, and higher turnover rates, as well as its impact on physical and mental health. All over the world, especially in America, 50% of secondary school teachers were not satisfied with their job, with 25% intending to quit within a year due to poor working conditions. Schools with dissatisfied teachers experienced more absenteeism, lower work productivity, and lower turnover. These factors may be caused by poor school leadership practices like insulting, harassing, and embezzlement of teachers, which lead to a lack of teachers' commitment to their work (Musabwayire, 2024). In Tanzania, teachers' teaching commitment were limited by several challenges such as; poor training and frequency of seminars, workshops and professional development, ineffective involvement in school decision making, ineffective communication, incompetent head of schools, low salaries, lack of motivations, lack of security and compensation, poor working environment and government interference in the teaching profession (Mwesiga & Okendo, 2018).

In the national context, like teachers from different parts of the world, Filipino teachers report lower commitment and eagerness to teach (Pambuena, 2022). This can mean the prevalence of uncommitted teachers who can resonate with their lack of enthusiasm and hostile behavior toward their students. From inadequate salaries to a lack of resources, these dedicated teachers struggle that affect not just their teaching methods but also the quality of education for countless students (Chi, 2023). In Metro Manila, elementary and high school teachers identify work-related, personal, and financial stressors impacting their commitment. The most significant stressor teachers report is excessive paperwork, accounting for 52% of their stressors (Mingoa, 2017).

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In the local setting, specifically in Davao de Oro, one of the secondary schools has a concerning pattern. Many teachers leave their positions at the Department of Education (DepEd) due to excessive tasks. This issue is not unique; there has been a steady increase in teacher resignations across the Davao Region. From 2020 to 2022, 964 teachers left their roles, primarily due to burdensome administrative tasks and non-teaching duties. Davao de Oro Division contributed significantly, with 119 resignations (Maquidato & Bayani, 2024).Teaching is undoubtedly one of the most stressful occupations and the most common problem is the commitment of teachers. Several studies explored about teacher commitment but limited studies investigated about teacher commitment considering the engaging leadership of school heads specifically in Panabo City Division. This sparked the interest of the researcher to explore the about the status of engaging leadership of school heads and teacher commitment.

This initiative would offer crucial insights to decision-makers, enabling them to design strategies, initiatives, measures, plans, and actions focused on enhancing both the professional skills and innovative capacities of teachers. Furthermore, this scholarly endeavor aimed to positively impact the wider educational community. The researcher also intended to share the study's outcomes at global conferences and publish it in a Scopus-indexed journal for wider academic dissemination.

REVIEW OF SIGNIFICANT LITERATURE

The related literature and studies of this study provide inputs about the engaging leadership of school heads and teacher engagement. Also, it presents varied studies showcasing the association of the involved variables in this study. The independent variable is engaging leadership of school heads. It has four indicators namely: strengthening, connecting, empowering, and inspiring (Schaufeli, 2021). Meanwhile, the dependent variable is teacher commitment. It has three indicators namely: affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment (Bading, 2022).

Engaging Leadership of School Heads

Engaging leadership from school heads plays a pivotal role in fostering teacher engagement, which is essential for creating an effective educational environment. The relationship between leadership styles and teacher engagement has been extensively studied, revealing that transformational leadership significantly enhances teachers' work engagement (Culduz, 2023). Principals' leadership styles, particularly transformational and transactional leadership, directly influence teachers' motivation and engagement levels. Leadership behaviors significantly impact teachers' work engagement and motivation (Begum & Thomas, 2020).

Moreover, the relationship between leadership styles and teacher engagement is well-documented. Studies have found a significant positive correlation between the leadership styles of school heads and the work engagement levels of teachers, suggesting that effective leadership can enhance teachers' enthusiasm and commitment to their roles. Similarly, discuss how distributed leadership practices empower teachers by involving them in decision-making processes, which not only fosters a sense of ownership but also enhances their engagement and leadership skills (Nawab & Asad, 2020).

Principals must actively work to build leadership capacity among their staff, thereby promoting a collaborative school culture that values shared leadership. The role of principals in fostering teacher leadership is critical. emphasize that principals can facilitate teacher leadership by framing it in a way that empowers teachers to engage in high-leverage activities for school improvement (Weiner & Woulfin, 2018).

This empowerment is particularly vital in diverse educational settings, recognizing and utilizing teacher leadership can significantly contribute to school improvement efforts (Wronowski et al., 2023). Furthermore, the importance of authentic leadership is associated with positive teacher attitudes and behaviors, which are essential for effective educational reform. In addition to leadership styles, the emotional and psychological aspects of leadership play a significant role in teacher engagement. Research by indicates that principals' job resources positively influence their creativity and charismatic leadership, which in turn enhances teachers' work engagement. This aligns with findings from, who suggest that empowering leadership behaviors foster trust and psychological empowerment among teachers, leading to higher job satisfaction and engagement (Atik & Çelik, 2020).

Engaging leadership of school heads is characterized by a blend of adaptive leadership styles, a focus on distributed leadership, and an emphasis on fostering a supportive and empowering environment for teachers. This multifaceted approach not only enhances teacher engagement and well-being but also contributes to improved student outcomes, highlighting the critical role of effective school leadership in the educational landscape (Ling et al., 2023).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

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

1.What is the level of engaging leadership of school heads as perceived by public secondary teachers in terms of:
    1.1 Strengthening;
    1.2 Connecting;

1.3 Empowering; and
1.4Inspiring?
2. What is the level of commitment of public secondary teachers in terms of:
2.1 Affective Commitment;
2.2 Continuance Commitment; and
2.3 Normative Commitment?
3. Is there a significant relationship between engaging leadership of school heads and teacher commitment?
4. Which domains of engaging leadership of school heads significantly influence teacher commitment?

METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology for this study, encompassing the research design, research participants, research tools, data collection procedure, and data analysis to be utilized in this investigation.

Research Design

This research adopted a quantitative methodology, using the descriptive correlational technique. Quantitative research involves gathering and analyzing numerical data to identify patterns, calculate averages, make forecasts, test causal links, and apply findings to larger populations. This approach contrasts with qualitative research, which focuses on collecting and interpreting non-numerical data (Bhandari, 2023).

Descriptive correlational research is typically employed when a researcher aims to identify the traits of specific groups or explore relationships between various variables. In this design, the study involves examining a single group to understand the connection between two variables. The use of descriptive correlational design is emphasized for its role in analyzing how different variables relate to each other (Brodowicz, 2024).

This research was classified as quantitative because it used numerical data for analysis and interpretation. It adopted a descriptive approach with the primary aim of evaluating the extent of engaging leadership among school heads and teacher commitment. Additionally, it was correlational as it examined the relationship between the engaging leadership of school heads and teacher commitment in public secondary schools within the Panabo City Division.

Research Respondents

This research focused on 146 public secondary teachers from the Panabo City Division. Using the Slovin Formula with a margin error of .05, the 230 total population of Grade 10 teachers with 5 years teaching experience in Panabo City Division is reduced to 166. Hair et al. (2018) indicated that while the minimum sample size for a Pearson analysis is 50, a sample of 100 is commonly preferred in research. Consequently, the 146 respondents were more than enough considering the intention of the study.

The researcher used a probability sampling method known as cluster random sampling in selecting the samples. This technique entails dividing a large population into smaller subgroups, or clusters, and then randomly choosing clusters to form the sample. Cluster random sampling is especially effective for managing large populations and achieving desired sample sizes, as it simplifies the study by reducing the number of participants required when the overall population is too extensive to examine in full (Simkus, 2023). In the context of this study, the researcher ensured that the identified schools are well represented by their samples.

The researcher established specific criteria for respondent selection, including both inclusion and exclusion parameters. In this study, only Grade 10 teachers with five years of teaching experience were included in this study. This requirement was based on the assumption that a five-year tenure in the public school system allows teachers to accurately assess the engaging leadership of school heads and teacher commitment. As a result, Grade 10 teachers with fewer than five years of experience were not included in the study. Additionally, participants had the option to withdraw from the study at any time if they felt uncomfortable or unwilling to complete the survey, ensuring that their welfare and comfort were prioritized throughout the research process.

Research Instruments

To collect data, this study utilized an adapted survey questionnaire designed specifically for this research. The questionnaire was organized into two separate sections to thoroughly address the research aims. The first section focused on evaluating the engaging leadership of school heads, while the second section assessed teacher engagement.

Data Analysis

For more comprehensive interpretation and analysis of the data, the following statistical tools were utilized.

Mean

This was used to measure the level of engaging leadership of school heads and teacher commitment.

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Pearson r
This was utilized to determine the relationship between engaging leadership of school heads and teacher commitment.

Regression Analysis
This determines the significant influence of engaging leadership of school heads on teacher commitment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS
This chapter presents the results of the study. These are the findings of the problems raised in the previous chapter. They are presented both in the textual and tabular forms.

Level of Engaging Leadership of School Heads in terms of Strengthening
Table 1 reflects the level of engaging leadership of school heads in terms of strengthening. It shows that the overall mean is 3.49, in a high level. This means that the level of engaging leadership of school heads in terms of strengthening is oftentimes evident.

It can be gleaned from the data that all 3 statements reveal a high result. When arranged chronologically according to mean scores, the items are as follows: delegating tasks and responsibilities to team members (3.50), encouraging team members to use their own strengths (3.49), and encouraging team members to develop their talents as much as possible (3.48). These items prove that the engaging leadership of school heads in terms of strengthening are oftentimes evident.

The data reveal that the level of engaging leadership of school heads in terms of strengthening is at a high level. This indicates that school heads often demonstrate behaviors associated with strengthening their teams, such as empowering and supporting teachers in their roles. Such leadership practices are vital in creating an environment where teachers feel encouraged to grow professionally and utilize their strengths to contribute to the school's g2oals.

The consistency in high ratings across the three specific indicators further supports this observation. Delegating tasks and responsibilities to team members scored the highest, suggesting that school heads trust their staff with important responsibilities. Additionally, the encouragement of team members to use their strengths and develop their talents reflects a leadership style that values capacity building and professional development. These findings emphasize the positive influence of engaging leadership practices in promoting a motivated and empowered teaching workforce.

The findings of the study are consistent with the assertion of Palah et al., (2022) claiming that strengthening school quality is part of the principal's leadership strategy. Quality schools are closely related to the principal's leadership. Improving the quality of schools is a process towards the realization of quality schools. This process is inseparable from the organization's vision, mission, goals, and objectives. Besides, this process is related to school work programs and national education standards. This research has shown that the principal's leadership has a role in strengthening school quality.

Va Tuin et al. (2020) has extensively researched Engaging Leadership (EL). Their work often highlights how engaging leaders foster employee work engagement through practices that satisfy basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness). The behaviors you describe – encouraging talent development, delegating, and promoting strengths – directly contribute to these needs, leading to increased competence and autonomy among team members.

Aligned with the findings of the study, Karacabey (2020) substantiated that the principal supports the teaching methods of teachers and modification of their approaches and teaching materials. The principal allocates resources and materials. The principal often visits classrooms for teaching purposes. The first requests and provides feedback about teaching methods and techniques. The principal uses data to focus attention on improving the curriculum or teaching approach to maximizing student achievement. School principals use faculty data and input to determine staff development activities that strengthen teacher teaching skills.

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

The main focus of the study was to determine the significance of the relationship between engaging leadership of school heads and teacher commitment in public secondary schools. The study was conducted in the selected public schools of Panabo City Division. There were one hundred forty-six (146) teachers who participated in this study. Descriptive correlational method of research was used in this study utilizing adapted research instruments. The said instruments were validated by the panel of experts and subjected to pilot testing before it was made ready for administration. Mean, Pearson Product Correlation of Coefficient, and Regression Analysis were the statistical tools used in analyzing the data. The hypotheses raised in this study were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

The level of engaging leadership of school heads is high. This indicates that such leadership behaviors are frequently demonstrated. Among the four domains, empowering leadership was rated the highest, suggesting school heads often provide autonomy and recognize contributions. This overall high level implies that school heads are effectively fostering collaboration, motivation, and team development.

Meanwhile, the level of teacher commitment is high indicating that teachers often demonstrate strong dedication to their roles and institutions. Among the commitment types, normative commitment received the highest rating, reflecting a strong sense of moral obligation to stay with the school. This suggests that teachers feel responsible and loyal toward their institution and its goals.

It was found out that there is a significant relationship between engaging leadership of school heads and teacher commitment. Moreover, all domains of engaging leadership significantly influence teacher commitment. This means that when school heads exhibit engaging leadership behaviors, teacher commitment tends to increase. Additionally, all domains of engaging leadership, strengthening, connecting, empowering, and inspiring, were found to have a meaningful influence on the commitment levels of teachers.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were offered: The level of engaging leadership of school heads means that it is oftentimes evident. Notably, strengthening, connecting, empowering, and inspiring are oftentimes evident.

Meanwhile, the level of teacher commitment is high. Apparently, affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment are oftentimes evident.

Based on the findings, engaging leadership of school heads and teacher commitment are related. All domains of engaging leadership of school heads are linked and significantly influence the teacher commitment. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

The significant and positive correlation between the engaging leadership of school heads and teacher commitment supports the principles established in Transformational Leadership theory by Burns (1977). Transformational leaders also influence their followers to become “emotionally engaged” in their jobs and workplaces. The cognitive aspect of engagement has been explained using terms such as enthusiasm, satisfaction, absorption, affect, emotion, and positive state of mind. Many researchers have shown that some behaviors of transformational leaders help their followers feel positive emotions, satisfaction, and a positive mindset, so that they can become engaged in their jobs and their organizations.

In the context of this study, transformational leadership theory is vital to engaging leadership in school heads and fostering teacher commitment, as it emphasizes inspiring and motivating individuals to achieve beyond their expectations. Transformational leaders focus on creating a shared vision, encouraging innovation, and addressing the personal and professional growth of their team members. In the school setting, this leadership style enhances teacher commitment by fostering trust, empowerment, and a sense of purpose. When school heads use transformational leadership, they not only engage teachers by aligning their individual goals with the school’s mission but also encourage teachers to take initiative, be creative in their teaching practices, and remain committed to the overall success of students and the institution. This results in a more motivated and cohesive educational community.

Recommendations

The following suggestions were offered based on the conclusions of the study: Based on the findings, DepEd officials are encouraged to prioritize leadership training programs that emphasize the development of engaging leadership qualities such as strengthening, connecting, empowering, and inspiring. Additionally, DepEd officials may consider implementing policies that promote consistent leadership practices that foster stronger connections between school heads and teachers, which could result in more engaged and committed educators. It is also recommended to regularly assess the impact of school leadership on teacher commitment, ensuring that leadership strategies are continuously aligned with the needs and motivations of the teaching workforce.

Moreover, school heads are encouraged to focus on enhancing their engaging leadership skills, particularly in the areas of strengthening relationships, connecting with teachers, empowering them, and inspiring a shared vision. By actively engaging with their teachers through clear communication and support, school heads may further foster a sense of commitment among teachers in all domains—affective, continuance, and normative. School heads may also create opportunities for professional development that align with these leadership qualities, as this will contribute to a more motivated and dedicated teaching staff. Additionally, school heads may regularly assess the effectiveness of their leadership strategies and make adjustments as needed to maintain and enhance teacher commitment.

Furthermore, teachers may actively engage with the leadership initiatives of their school heads, particularly in areas where school heads focus on strengthening relationships, connecting with the staff, empowering teachers, and inspiring a shared vision. They may enhance their own commitment—both affective, continuance, and normative—by taking proactive steps to participate in school activities and decisions, ensuring they align with the leadership goals set by the school head. Additionally, teachers may seek opportunities for professional growth and development, as this not only strengthens their individual commitment to the school but also contributes to the overall positive culture fostered by the school leadership. By actively engaging with leadership efforts, teachers may further enhance their sense of belonging and responsibility within the school community.

Lastly, future researchers are encouraged to explore the dynamic relationship between engaging leadership and teacher commitment in more diverse educational settings, considering variables such as school type, region, and socio-economic factors, which may influence the extent of engagement and commitment. Additionally, longitudinal studies may offer valuable insights into the long-term effects of different dimensions of engaging leadership on teacher commitment, examining how sustained leadership behaviors impact teachers' commitment over time. Researchers might also investigate the specific mechanisms through which leadership behaviors, like empowerment and inspiration, affect various types of teacher commitment (e.g., affective, continuance, and normative), as well as the potential mediators or moderators that influence this relationship. Expanding the scope to include the voices and perspectives of both teachers and school heads could also deepen the understanding of how these leadership practices are perceived and their real-world impact.

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