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CREATIVE LEADERSHIP AND TEACHER ENGAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE DIVISION OF PANABO CITY

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the significance of the relationship between creative leadership and teacher engagement among selected teachers in the Division of Panabo City. A total of ninety-five (95) teachers participated in the research. The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design using validated and pilot-tested research instruments. Data were analyzed using weighted mean, Pearson product moment correlation, and multiple regression analysis. Results revealed that the extent of both creative leadership and teacher engagement was extensive, indicating that these were oftentimes evident in the school setting. Findings further revealed a significant positive relationship between creative leadership and teacher engagement. All six domains of creative leadership, diagnosis and realism, understanding the feelings, motivations and contributions of others, the desire to innovate and change, accountability and capacity, independence, and efficacy, were found to significantly influence teacher engagement. The regression analysis showed that 60.90% of the variance in teacher engagement could be attributed to creative leadership practices. These findings highlight the importance of fostering creative leadership in schools to enhance teacher engagement, suggesting implications for educational leaders, teachers, and policy makers. The study provides a strong basis for further research and professional development initiatives aimed at building creative leadership capacity in education.

KEYWORDS: *Creative Leadership; Teacher Engagement; Educational Leadership; Teacher Motivation; School Leadership; Panabo City*

INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic field of education, leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping the effectiveness and success of schools. As educational institutions worldwide confront challenges such as rapid technological advancements and evolving societal expectations, the demand for innovative and adaptive leadership has intensified. Creative leadership, characterized by vision, adaptability, and a strong capacity for innovation, has emerged as a vital paradigm for school heads aiming to inspire and transform their educational environments. This study investigates the impact of creative leadership on teacher engagement in public schools within the Division of Panabo City, Philippines.

Globally, educational systems are recognizing the importance of leadership in fostering teacher engagement. Research indicates that effective leadership significantly influences teacher motivation and commitment, leading to improved educational outcomes (Aquino, 2021). In countries like Finland and Singapore, where educational leadership emphasizes innovation and teacher collaboration, high levels of teacher engagement and student performance have been observed (PIDS, 2022). These international examples highlight the critical role of leadership in shaping educational success.

Nationally, the Philippine education system faces significant challenges. The Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) has identified issues such as underperforming teacher education institutions, inadequate professional development systems, and an unclear career progression track as major obstacles to effective education (PIDS, 2023). These systemic problems contribute to low teacher morale and engagement, adversely affecting student learning outcomes.

At the local level, particularly within the Division of Panabo City, these challenges are further compounded by specific issues. Teachers often encounter overcrowded classrooms, limited access to resources, and bureaucratic constraints, which hinder their ability to effectively engage with students (Aquino, 2021). Moreover, the lack of targeted professional development opportunities and support from school leadership exacerbates feelings of frustration and disengagement among teachers.

A critical problem identified in this context is the insufficient emphasis on creative leadership among school heads in Panabo City. Traditional leadership models, which often emphasize control and hierarchical structures, prevail, limiting

opportunities for teacher collaboration and innovation. This leadership approach fails to foster an environment where teachers feel empowered and motivated to engage fully in their professional roles.

The gap in the existing literature is the lack of empirical studies examining the relationship between creative leadership and teacher engagement within the specific context of Panabo City. While international and national studies have explored this relationship, there is a scarcity of research focusing on the unique challenges and dynamics present in this locality. Addressing this gap is crucial for developing targeted strategies to enhance educational leadership and teacher engagement in the region.

This study is significant as it aims to provide insights into how creative leadership can influence teacher engagement in public schools in Panabo City. By understanding this relationship, school heads can adopt leadership practices that foster a supportive and motivating environment for teachers. This, in turn, can lead to improved teaching practices and better student outcomes.

Furthermore, the findings of this study can inform policy decisions at the local and national levels. Policymakers can develop programs and initiatives that promote creative leadership in schools, thereby enhancing teacher engagement and overall educational quality. Additionally, the study can contribute to the body of knowledge on educational leadership in the Philippine context, providing a basis for future research in this area.

In conclusion, as the educational landscape continues to evolve, the role of creative leadership in fostering teacher engagement becomes increasingly important. By exploring this relationship within the context of Panabo City, this study seeks to contribute to the development of effective leadership practices that can enhance the quality of education in the region.

REVIEW OF SIGNIFICANT LITERATURE

The related literature of this study provided inputs about school head's creative leadership and the teacher engagement. Also, it presented varied studies showcasing the association of the involved variables in this study. The independent variable focused on in this study is school head's creative leadership. It has six indicators namely; diagnosis and realism, understanding the feelings, motivations and contributions of others, the desire to innovate and change, accountability and capacity, independence, and efficacy Shirbagi, N., & Kazemi, A. (2022). Meanwhile, the dependent variable is the teacher engagement. It has four indicators namely; Cognitive engagement, Emotional engagement, Social engagement: students, Social engagement: colleagues Klassen et. al. (2013).

School Head's Creative Leadership

The role of school heads in fostering creativity and leadership within educational institutions is increasingly recognized as a critical factor in driving sustainable productivity and innovation. According to Dessler (2019), achieving sustainable outcomes in any organization depends significantly on the effectiveness, creativity, and commitment of its leadership and workforce. This notion is particularly relevant in educational settings, where the success of school's hinges on the ability of principals to introduce and implement innovative practices that enhance both teaching and learning.

In today's competitive educational environment, the ability of school heads to lead creatively is essential. As argued by Styhre and Sundgren (2019), the belief that followers place in their leaders is crucial, and this trust is often built on the leader's ability to innovate and inspire change. The principal, as the key agent of change within a school, must therefore be equipped not only with managerial skills but also with creative capabilities that enable them to motivate teachers and improve overall school performance.

Moreover, the modern educational landscape demands that school leaders adopt a multifaceted approach to leadership, incorporating aspects of transformational, instructional, and moral leadership styles. While each of these styles has its merits, researchers such as Mulford (2019) advocate for a more adaptive and flexible leadership approach that can respond to the dynamic needs of the school environment. This flexibility is especially important in light of the evolving challenges in education, such as those presented by the new normal of post-pandemic learning environments.

The emphasis on creativity in educational leadership is underscored by the establishment of global initiatives such as the Center for Creative Leadership, which operates in various countries to empower educational leaders and address the challenges they face in schools (Petrie, 2019). However, despite these efforts, there is a growing concern that existing leadership programs may not be sufficient to fully equip school heads with the skills necessary to meet the demands of their roles (Petrie, 2019).

In the context of the Philippines, the leadership practices of school heads are critical in shaping the performance of both the school and its staff. Studies have shown that effective school leadership is closely linked to the satisfaction and motivation of teachers, which in turn impacts student outcomes (Lopez & Ensari, 2019; Waheed, Hussin, & Daud, 2018).

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The challenges faced by school heads are compounded by the dual demands of administrative and instructional leadership, as mandated by Republic Act 9155, which defines the principal's role as both an administrative officer and an instructional supervisor (Castaño & Litao, 2021).

Given the complexity of these roles, it is essential for school leaders to not only manage day-to-day operations effectively but also to create an environment conducive to innovation and continuous improvement. As noted by Baesu and Bejinaru (2019), the incorporation of emotional intelligence into leadership practices can significantly enhance a leader's ability to foster a positive and innovative school climate.

The effectiveness of school heads in leading their institutions toward sustained improvement is heavily reliant on their ability to innovate and inspire. The evolving challenges in education require that principals not only manage their schools efficiently but also lead with creativity and adaptability, ensuring that they can meet the diverse needs of their students, teachers, and the broader educational community. As research continues to explore the impact of various leadership styles, it becomes increasingly clear that a flexible, innovative approach is essential for school leaders aiming to achieve lasting success in today's educational landscape.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study determined the relationship between the school head's creative leadership and teacher engagement. More specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the extent of school head's creative leadership in terms of:
    - 1.1. Diagnosis and Realism,
    - 1.2. Understanding the feelings, motivations and contributions of others,
    - 1.3. The desire to innovate and change,
    - 1.4. Accountability and Capacity,
    - 1.5. Independence, and
    - 1.6. Efficacy
2. What is the extent of teacher engagement in terms of:
    - 2.1. Cognitive engagement,
    - 2.2. Emotional engagement,
    - 2.3. Social engagement: students, and
    - 2.4. Social engagement: colleagues
3. Is there a significant relationship between the school head's creative leadership and teacher engagement?
4. Which of the domains of the school head's creative leadership significantly influences teacher engagement?

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 adopted a quantitative research design, specifically a descriptive correlational approach. Quantitative research involves the collection and analysis of numerical data, often employing statistical techniques to interpret and explain specific phenomena (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The use of a descriptive correlational method allows the researcher to observe and describe relationships between variables in their natural setting without intervention, providing a clear understanding of how different variables interact (Davis, 2021). This approach is widely used in educational research for its ability to generate meaningful insights into the nature of variables, such as school leadership and teacher engagement, as Apuke (2017) highlights.

The descriptive aspect of this design aims to characterize the features of the variables, including the school head's creative leadership and teacher engagement, without altering the existing conditions. According to Korrapati (2016), descriptive research helps in understanding the unique attributes of variables by documenting their characteristics in detail. On the other hand, the correlational component of the design explores the potential relationships between these variables. Correlational research seeks to identify associations or patterns between two or more variables, as noted by Kabir (2016), making it appropriate for examining the link between leadership styles and teacher engagement.

By employing this descriptive correlational design, the study seeks to examine the extent to which a school head's creative leadership correlates with various dimensions of teacher engagement, such as cognitive, emotional, and social engagement. This design is fitting because it allows for an investigation into the strength and direction of the relationship between leadership behaviors and teacher engagement levels, providing valuable insights for school administrators and policymakers on how leadership influences engagement in educational settings (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

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Research Respondents

The sample size determined for this study is 95 respondents, calculated using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence level. The formula used ensures an adequate representation of the target population while maintaining statistical reliability. Given that the total population consists of 180 Grade 2 teachers in Panabo City with more than three years of experience, the sample size was adjusted using the finite population correction to reflect a more precise estimate.

The inclusion criteria for the respondents focus on teachers with at least three years of experience, as they are more likely to have encountered various leadership styles, particularly creative leadership, and can provide valuable insights into its impact on teacher engagement. By targeting experienced educators, the study ensures that the collected data is reflective of well-established professional experiences rather than transient perceptions from newly hired teachers.

To maintain representativeness, stratified random sampling was employed. This method ensures that different subgroups, particularly teachers from various schools, are proportionally included in the study, thereby improving the generalizability of the findings (Taherdoost, 2016). By stratifying based on school assignments, the study can examine variances in leadership perception and engagement experiences among teachers working under different school heads.

The justification for the sample size of 95 respondents is grounded in the need to balance practicality and accuracy in educational research. While larger sample sizes may yield more precise results, constraints related to time and resources make a refined and well-stratified sample an efficient alternative (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Additionally, the inclusion of teachers with substantial classroom experience ensures the reliability of responses regarding the effects of creative leadership on engagement.

Research Instruments

The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed to measure both teacher school head's creative leadership and teacher engagement. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions with Likertscale 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 school structure mechanisms. The second set focused on effective teacher leadership.

Data Analysis

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

Weighted Mean

Weighted Mean was used to determine the extent of school head's creative leadership and teacher engagement. specifically, the responses for the subdomains of school head's creative leadership (diagnosis and realism, understanding the feelings, motivations and contributions of others, the desire to innovate and change, accountability and capacity, independence, and efficacy) and teacher engagement (cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, social engagement: students, and social engagement: colleagues) was summarized and interpreted using these measures. descriptive statistics will provide a clear picture of the general trends and central tendencies in the data.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient

To determine the relationship between school head's creative leadership and teacher engagement, the Pearson correlation was utilized. This test is appropriate for measuring the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two continuous variables. Pearson correlation was applied to test the first hypothesis (Ho1) that there is no significant relationship between school head's creative leadership and teacher engagement.

Multiple Regression Analysis

To determine which specific domains of school head's creative leadership significantly influence teacher engagement, a multiple regression analysis was conducted. This tool will help identify which the six domains of creative leadership have the most significant impact on the teacher engagement. This will address the second hypothesis (ho2) that none of the domains significantly influence teacher engagement. multiple regression is an effective tool for predicting the contribution of each independent variable in the presence of others.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the results of the study. These are the findings of the problems in the previous chapter. These are presented both in textual and tabular form.

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The Extent of Creative Leadership in terms of Diagnosis and Realism

Table 1 reflects the extent of creative leadership in terms of diagnosis and realism. It shows that the overall mean is 4.03, at an extensive level. This means that the creative leadership in terms of diagnosis and realism is oftentimes evident. It can be gleaned from the data that all statements reveal an extensive result. Of these, the three items that have the highest mean score are as follows: the extent to which the school head has the skill to do the right things at the right time (4.09), recognizes the structure of organizational power quickly (4.08), and can predict the best way to obtain results before others (4.06). These items prove that the creative leadership in terms of diagnosis and realism is oftentimes evident.

The findings of this study imply that school heads are able to exercise foresight, adaptability, and strategic awareness in managing their institutions. Their ability to assess organizational dynamics, time their actions effectively, and anticipate optimal outcomes shows a level of leadership that supports sound decision-making and problem-solving. This suggests a strong presence of creative thinking paired with a realistic understanding of workplace demands, enhancing.

The findings of this study align with the notion of Goleman (2020), who emphasized that effective leaders are those who are attuned to the realities of their environment, enabling them to make informed and strategic decisions. The results showing that school heads often demonstrate timely actions, anticipate outcomes, and understand organizational structures reflect their high level of awareness and diagnostic capability. Such qualities enable them to navigate the complexities of their school environments and design solutions that are grounded in actual conditions. This practical understanding of their institution allows them to effectively assess internal capacities and areas needing development, leading to targeted interventions that support both teacher and student success.

Also, the study supports the perspective of Mabey (2021), who posited that diagnostic leadership includes a forward-thinking approach, where leaders actively anticipate emerging challenges. The demonstrated behaviors of school heads, such as thinking through multiple solutions and predicting outcomes ahead of others, showcase this future-oriented mindset. These school leaders do not only respond reactively but instead exhibit the ability to foresee and prepare for potential issues. This strategic anticipation is crucial in the education sector, where constant policy changes, technological shifts, and evolving learner needs require school heads to remain agile and innovative in their approach.

The study also echoes Christensen's (2022) view on the importance of realism in leadership, particularly in maintaining trust and credibility. The findings suggest that school heads show a strong inclination toward realistic thinking by considering available resources and recognizing situational demands. This realistic perspective ensures that the strategies they implement are not only visionary but also achievable. By demonstrating such pragmatism, school leaders build confidence among staff and foster a collaborative environment where change initiatives are more readily accepted and successfully executed.

The study is also in line with the argument of Avolio and Yammarino (2019), who emphasized the role of accountability in realistic and diagnostic leadership. The ability of school heads to quickly recognize institutional norms and respond effectively to stressful or changing conditions suggests a deep sense of responsibility and grounded leadership. Their capability to adapt and provide viable solutions reinforces a culture of accountability among their teams. When school leaders model such behavior, it inspires teachers to also adopt a responsible and proactive stance, contributing to a more motivated and engaged school community.

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 creative leadership and teacher engagement. The study was conducted with the selected teachers from the Division of Panabo City. There were ninety-five (95) 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 creative leadership of the teachers is extensive. Meanwhile, the extent of the teacher engagement of the teachers is also extensive. It was found that there is a significant relationship between creative leadership and the teacher engagement. The hypotheses of no significant relationship between creative leadership and teacher engagement and none of the domains of creative leadership significantly influence the teacher engagement were rejected.

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Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were offered: The extent of creative leadership is extensive, which implies that it is oftentimes evident. All dimensions of creative leadership which include diagnosis and realism, understanding the feelings, motivations and contributions of others, the desire to innovate and change, accountability and capacity, independence, and efficacy, are at an extensive level, which means it is oftentimes evident. Meanwhile, the extent of teacher engagement is also extensive, which means that it is oftentimes evident. All dimensions of teacher engagement are oftentimes evident. Both variables call for all school members to work hand in hand to strengthen the existing status of the creative leadership and teacher engagement. Based on the findings, creative leadership, and teacher engagement are correlated. Also, creative leadership significantly influences teacher engagement. All domains of creative leadership, namely, diagnosis and realism, understanding the feelings, motivations and contributions of others, the desire to innovate and change, accountability and capacity, independence, and efficacy significantly influence teacher engagement 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 six domains of creative leadership, teacher engagement 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 highly recommended to institutionalize leadership development programs that emphasize creative leadership attributes. Since the study confirms that creative leadership significantly influences teacher engagement, policies must be put in place to include training modules that develop school heads' competencies in diagnosis and realism, empathy, innovation, accountability, independence, and efficacy. These attributes have shown to be directly linked with higher levels of teacher engagement, which in turn can improve teacher performance and student outcomes. Thus, integrating creative leadership in the National Educators Academy of the Philippines programs and leadership benchmarks could help shape more responsive and engaged schools.

For school principals, it is imperative to embrace and model creative leadership practices in day-to-day school operations. The study highlights that principals who exhibit a high degree of creative leadership, particularly in understanding the emotions and motivations of teachers, and in encouraging innovation and autonomy, are likely to cultivate an environment that fosters deeper teacher engagement. Principals are encouraged to create a supportive school culture where collaboration, risk-taking, and reflective practices are not only accepted but celebrated. By doing so, they can stimulate intrinsic motivation among teachers, leading to sustained professional commitment and educational innovation.

For teachers, the findings of this study serve as a reminder of the vital role they play in cultivating and responding to creative leadership. Teachers should actively participate in professional learning communities, engage in reflective practices, and be open to innovation and collaboration. By recognizing their own influence on school culture and being receptive to leadership that promotes growth, teachers can further enhance their own engagement and positively impact their students. Moreover, teacher engagement is not solely dependent on external leadership but also on internal motivation, and thus, personal leadership development should also be pursued.

For future researchers, this study opens several pathways for extended inquiry. Future studies may explore the long-term effects of creative leadership on other variables such as student performance, teacher retention, and school climate. Additionally, similar studies can be replicated in different divisions, regions, or educational levels to verify the generalizability of the findings. Mixedmethods research may also be beneficial to gain deeper insights into how creative leadership manifests in real school settings and how it is perceived by various educational stakeholders.

This study underscores the transformative potential of creative leadership in driving teacher engagement. It calls on every level of the education system to prioritize leadership practices that are empathetic, innovative, and empowering, thereby fostering a more dynamic and motivated teaching force.

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