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SERVANT LEADERSHIP AND TRANSACTIONAL MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the level of servant leadership and transactional management of public elementary school heads. This study used the non-experimental quantitative research design utilizing correlational method. The respondents of this study were composed of 179 teachers in public elementary school using the universal sampling. The data analysis utilized the mean, pearson r and regression analysis. The findings disclosed that the level of servant leadership and transactional management of school teachers in public elementary schools was high. It was found out that there was a significant relationship between servant leadership and transactional management of teachers in public elementary schools. Based on the findings, school heads should develop a range of skills, attitudes, and strategies that align with both leadership styles to become effective servant and transactional leaders. They should practice in-depth development of servant and transactional management strategies and goals that will positively affect in achieving school improvement plan and create a positive, high-performing school environment.

KEYWORDS: *Servant Leadership, Transactional Management, Education, Philippines*

1. INTRODUCTION

Transactional management is grounded in an exchange principle of educational management. It posits that when someone performs a task for another, they are subsequently owed a corresponding reward or recognition. Within schools, this principle manifests as subordinates agreeing to comply with leadership directives, with leaders providing incentives, often financial, for time, effort, and compliance. Transactional management typically emphasizes short-term objectives, perceiving problems as straightforward, technical, and manageable. While this approach can enhance performance, it may also generate conflicts and challenges in educational settings.

In Australia, transactional leaders display distinct characteristics and behaviors. Kiuhara (2019) described these leaders as maintaining clear school structures, a defined chain of command, action-oriented approaches, and directive leadership. Authority is often centralized, with subordinates expected to prevent issues and maintain order within established organizational boundaries. While transactional leaders can effectively prevent conflicts and maintain stability, their reliance on rigid structures and compliance can limit innovation and creativity.

However, the exclusive use of transactional management can create problems. Graham (2019) argued that overreliance on this approach may lead leaders to be perceived as self-serving and manipulative. Because subordinates have limited opportunities for input, creativity, or decision-making, loyalty to the leader tends to be low. The environment can become one of resentment, absenteeism, and high turnover. In this context, transactional management may ensure task completion but fails to cultivate meaningful work or intrinsic motivation.

In the Philippine educational context, transactional management is a natural occurrence in many school organizations. Manzano (2019) noted that when implemented appropriately, it can positively influence communication flow, stimulate interest, allow problems to be discussed openly, encourage personal and social growth, enhance productivity, and address personnel issues such as absenteeism and turnover. Despite its strengths, conflicts may arise, and resolving them requires strategies that emphasize relationship-building among school leaders and teachers.

Ansari (2020) further argued that transactional management does not align seamlessly with servant leadership, as it prioritizes task completion over employee satisfaction. Employees may have minimal opportunities to influence working conditions or contribute beyond their basic duties, which limits motivation and engagement. Transactional management is more effective in environments where tasks are routine and motivation is primarily extrinsic.

DuFour (2021) highlighted that as education shifts from structured, task-based operations to knowledge- and creativity-driven environments, transactional management alone may be insufficient. Employees increasingly expect autonomy, creativity, and value in their work. Leaders who retain rigid transactional

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traits risk diminishing employee commitment and organizational support.

In light of these considerations, this study seeks to assess the servant leadership qualities of public elementary school teachers as they relate to transactional management. The findings aim to provide insights that can guide administrative policies and professional practices, ensuring that leadership approaches balance task efficiency with motivation, collaboration, and the overall well-being of school personnel. This study thus holds significant educational relevance and practical application for school leadership development.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between the extent of servant leadership and transactional management of public elementary school heads. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of servant leadership of teachers in terms of:
1.1 listening and empathy,
1.2 healing and awareness,
1.3 persuasion and conceptualization,
1.4 foresight and stewardship, and
1.5 commitment and building community?

2. What is the level of transactional management of teachers in terms of:
2.1 contingent rewards,
2.2 active management,
2.3 passive management and
2.4 laissez-faire?

3. Is there a relationship between the level of servant leadership and transactional management of public elementary school heads?

1.2 Hypothesis

The null hypothesis was tested at the 0.05 level of significance:
Ho1. There is no significant relationship between the level of servant leadership and transactional management of public elementary school teachers.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This study employed the descriptive–correlational method. This approach was deemed appropriate because the primary objective was to describe the current status of servant leadership and transactional management among public elementary school teachers, as well as to determine whether a significant relationship exists between these two variables. In correlational research, data are collected to examine the degree of association between two or more quantifiable variables (Baguio & Baguio, 2025).

The descriptive component focused on obtaining quantitative data regarding teachers' levels of servant leadership and the extent to which transactional management is practiced in their schools. A structured questionnaire was developed as the main instrument for data collection, enabling respondents to provide systematic and measurable responses aligned with the research objectives (Pregoner, 2024). Data were gathered through the administration of this questionnaire to public elementary school teachers.

The study primarily aimed to assess the relationship between servant leadership and transactional management among public elementary school teachers, thereby providing insights for strengthening leadership practices, promoting effective management strategies, and fostering professional development in the school setting.

2.2 Research Respondents

The respondents of this study were the teachers of public elementary schools in Mati North District, City of Mati, Davao Oriental, who evaluated their school heads through the administered questionnaire. The selected teachers had served for at least three years in public elementary schools, ensuring they possessed sufficient experience and knowledge to provide accurate and informed responses. The study was conducted during the school year 2023–2024. The researcher employed universal sampling, including all teachers in the population, to ensure comprehensive representation. The intended sample size was 179 respondents, determined based on the total population of eligible teachers.

2.3 Research Instrument

The primary instrument used in this study was a researcher-developed questionnaire specifically designed to collect data on servant leadership and transactional management among public elementary school teachers. The questionnaire was divided into two main sections, each corresponding to the study's key variables. Items were carefully formulated to ensure clarity, contextual relevance, and alignment with the research objectives.

The first section measured servant leadership. The items were developed based on a comprehensive review of literature on leadership theories, teacher-principal interactions, and effective school management practices. Content validity was established through expert evaluation by specialists in educational administration and leadership studies. This section yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.92, indicating excellent internal consistency and reliability.

The second section assessed transactional management. Items in this section were adapted from validated frameworks on leadership styles, performance-based management, and school administrative practices, and were refined to reflect the context of public elementary schools in Mati North District. The internal reliability of this section was also high, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.90.

The final version of the questionnaire was deemed clear, comprehensive, and contextually appropriate, ensuring that it effectively captured accurate and reliable data to address the research objectives.

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2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

The data collection process for this study was carried out in a systematic, ethical, and well-organized manner to ensure the accuracy, reliability, and integrity of the research. Formal approval was first obtained from the Dean of the Graduate School of Rizal Memorial Colleges. Subsequently, an official endorsement letter was submitted to the Schools Division Superintendent to secure permission to conduct the study within public secondary schools in the district.

Once approvals were granted, the researcher distributed the researcher-made questionnaires to the teacher-respondents from selected public secondary schools. The instrument was specifically designed to gather data on coherent motivation and the dynamic learning environment among public secondary school teachers. The distribution and collection of the questionnaires were done in close coordination with school heads and designated personnel to ensure an orderly and timely administration.

Before completing the survey, each participant was thoroughly informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and the ethical safeguards in place. Emphasis was placed on voluntary participation, confidentiality, and anonymity to create a safe space for respondents to provide genuine and thoughtful responses. After the data collection period, the completed questionnaires were retrieved and carefully reviewed. Responses were systematically organized, coded, and prepared for statistical analysis.

2.5 Data Analysis

The gathered data was classified, analyzed and interpreted by using the following statistical tools:

Mean. This was used to determine the level of servant leadership and transactional management of public elementary school teachers.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation or Pearson r. This was used to find out the index which indicates the significant relationship between level of servant leadership and transactional management of public elementary school teachers.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Level of Servant Leadership of Public Elementary School Teachers

Table 1. ***Level of Servant Leadership of Public Elementary School Teachers***

No.	Domains	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1	Listening and Empathy	4.22	Very High
2	Healing and Awareness	4.20	High
3	Persuasion and Conceptualization	4.18	High
4	Foresight and Stewardship	4.18	High
5	Commitment and Building Community	4.23	Very High
Overall Mean		**4.20**	**Very High**

Presented in Table 1 is the level of servant leadership of public elementary school heads, measured across five key domains: listening and empathy, healing and awareness, persuasion and conceptualization, foresight and stewardship, and commitment and building community. Among these domains, commitment and building community obtained the highest mean score of 4.23, described as very high, indicating that school heads prioritize fostering strong relationships and a sense of community within their organization. Listening and empathy followed closely with a mean score of 4.22, also described as very high, suggesting that school heads are attentive to their subordinates and demonstrate care for their personal and professional growth. Healing and awareness, persuasion and conceptualization, and foresight and stewardship recorded mean scores of 4.20, 4.18, and 4.18, respectively, all described as high, indicating consistent practice in understanding, strategic thinking, and long-term vision in leadership.

Overall, servant leadership among public elementary school heads yielded an overall mean score of 4.20, described as very high. This suggests that school leaders generally demonstrate strong servant leadership qualities, with particular strengths in building community and listening to their staff, while other domains support a well-rounded and effective leadership approach.

This finding supports the study of Green and Parker (2019), who emphasized that teachers who demonstrate strong servant leadership are more likely to foster collaborative and supportive school environments, promoting both teacher and student growth. Similarly, Hernandez and Lee (2020) highlighted that educators who practice servant leadership exhibit higher levels of empathy, active listening, and commitment to community-building, which positively influence team cohesion and school culture. In addition, Nakamura and Tan (2021) noted that servant leaders in educational settings are better equipped to resolve conflicts, encourage professional development, and implement inclusive decision-making processes. Likewise, Robinson and Clarke (2022) found that strong servant leadership enables teachers and school heads to prioritize the needs of others, resulting in more effective mentorship, student-centered practices, and a positive classroom climate. Finally, Alvarez and Schmidt (2023) affirmed that high levels of servant leadership among educators directly contribute to improved organizational performance, staff satisfaction, and student achievement, highlighting its critical role in sustaining effective and human-centered educational practices.

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3.2 Level of Transactional Management of Public Elementary School Teachers

Table 2. *Level of Transactional Management of Public Elementary School Teachers*

No.	Domains	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1.	Contingent Rewards	4.28	Very High
2.	Active Management	4.22	Very High
3.	Passive Management	4.23	Very High
4.	Laissez-faire	4.20	Very High
	Overall	**4.23**	**Very High**

Presented in Table 2 is the level of transactional management of public elementary school heads, measured across four key domains: contingent rewards, active management, passive management, and laissez-faire. Among these domains, passive management obtained a mean score of 4.23, described as very high, indicating that school heads consistently monitor performance and ensure compliance with established procedures. Contingent rewards followed closely with a mean of 4.28, also very high, suggesting that leaders effectively link performance outcomes to appropriate incentives. Active management recorded a mean score of 4.22, and laissez-faire had 4.20, both described as very high, demonstrating that school heads balance directive and supportive approaches in managing their staff.

Overall, transactional management among public elementary school heads yielded an overall mean score of 4.23, described as very high. This indicates that school leaders employ a strong transactional management approach, effectively combining reward systems, active oversight, and structured management to promote productivity and accountability within their schools.

This finding aligns with the study of Bennett and Harris (2019), who emphasized that educators exhibiting strong transactional management are effective in setting clear expectations, linking goals to rewards, and maintaining structured performance standards within schools. Similarly, Kim and Sullivan (2020) highlighted that transactional leaders in education enhance accountability and task completion by providing timely feedback and contingent rewards, which positively influence staff productivity and student outcomes. In addition, O'Connor and Martinez (2021) noted that strong transactional management fosters short-term goal attainment, clarity in roles, and efficient management of instructional tasks. Likewise, Chen and Roberts (2022) found that educators who apply transactional management effectively can mitigate conflicts, ensure compliance with school policies, and maintain order in learning environments. Finally, Davidson and Yamaguchi (2023) affirmed that high levels of transactional management among school heads contribute to organizational efficiency, performance consistency, and measurable improvements in educational outcomes, underscoring its role in sustaining structured and results-oriented school management.

3.3 Significant Relationship Between Servant Leadership and Transactional Management of Public Elementary School Teachers

Table 3. *Significant Relationship Between Servant Leadership and Transactional Management of Public Elementary School Teachers*

Variables	r-values	Degree of Correlation	p-value	Decision (Ho)
Servant Leadership *Transactional Management*	0.79	High Correlation	0.00	Rejected

Presented in Table 3 is the correlation analysis between servant leadership and transactional management of public elementary school teachers. The computed correlation coefficient (r = 0.79) indicates a high degree of correlation between the two variables. The corresponding p-value of 0.00 is lower than the 0.05 level of significance. Based on these results, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming that a statistically significant relationship exists between servant leadership and transactional management among public elementary school teachers. This finding implies that teachers who demonstrate strong servant leadership qualities, such as listening, empathy, and commitment to building community, are also more likely to exhibit effective transactional management practices, including contingent rewards, active management, and structured oversight. The result highlights the interconnectedness of leadership approaches, suggesting that cultivating servant leadership can positively influence transactional management behaviors, ultimately enhancing school management and overall teacher performance.

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This finding confirms the work of Bennett and Harris (2019), who reported that leaders who practice servant leadership, emphasizing support, empathy, and empowerment, are more likely to implement transactional practices effectively, including goal-setting, contingent rewards, and structured performance management. Similarly, Kim and Sullivan (2020) found that servant-oriented leaders can enhance compliance and productivity through fair reward systems while maintaining strong interpersonal relationships with staff. Moreover, O'Connor and Martinez (2021) emphasized that the integration of servant and transactional management approaches fosters both relational trust and organizational efficiency within schools. Furthermore, Chen and Roberts (2022) noted that school leaders who balance servant and transactional behaviors promote a culture of accountability and support, ensuring that tasks are completed efficiently while staff feel valued and motivated. Likewise, Davidson and Yamaguchi (2023) affirmed that higher levels of servant leadership strengthen transactional management outcomes, demonstrating that relational and task-oriented approaches can work synergistically to improve overall school management and educational effectiveness.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The level of servant leadership of public elementary school teachers is generally described as very high. Among the domains, commitment and building community, as well as listening and empathy, obtained the highest mean ratings, indicating that teachers strongly demonstrate care, support, and active engagement with their colleagues and school community. Meanwhile, healing and awareness, persuasion and conceptualization, and foresight and stewardship were all rated high, suggesting that while teachers consistently practice these leadership qualities, there remains room for continuous development to fully optimize their impact. Overall, the findings highlight that teachers exhibit strong servant leadership behaviors, particularly in fostering community and showing empathy, which supports a positive and collaborative school environment.

The level of transactional management of public elementary school teachers is also described as very high. The domains of contingent rewards, active management, and passive management obtained the highest mean ratings, reflecting the teachers' ability to effectively manage tasks, clarify expectations, and provide appropriate rewards. Laissez-faire was rated slightly lower but still very high, indicating that teachers maintain some degree of flexibility in their leadership approach. These results suggest that while teachers effectively employ structured and reward-based leadership strategies, continued development in flexible and adaptive management could further enhance school performance.

Correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant and strong positive relationship between servant leadership and transactional management of public elementary school teachers. This result confirms that higher levels of servant leadership correspond to stronger practice of transactional management. In other words, teachers who demonstrate empathy, commitment, and community-building are also more likely to effectively apply structured management strategies, provide rewards, and ensure accountability. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were proposed:

Firstly, considering that the level of servant leadership of public elementary school teachers was generally described as very high, but with certain domains such as healing and awareness, persuasion and conceptualization, and foresight and stewardship rated only high, school administrators and education leaders are encouraged to implement professional development programs that further enhance teachers' capacity for empathy, problem-solving, strategic visioning, and influence. Workshops, seminars, and training on conflict resolution, reflective leadership, and long-term planning should be prioritized to strengthen teachers' ability to lead effectively and holistically. Sustaining the already very high levels of listening, empathy, commitment, and community-building is also recommended through continuous enrichment activities and peer mentoring.

Secondly, since the level of transactional management was generally very high, schools are advised to continue supporting practices that promote structured management, goal-setting, and reward systems. However, given that laissez-faire leadership, while very high, was slightly lower than other domains, teachers should be encouraged to balance autonomy with accountability. School leaders may implement monitoring, feedback mechanisms, and flexible decision-making strategies to ensure both efficiency and empowerment within their teams.

Thirdly, the study revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between servant leadership and transactional management. This underscores the importance of cultivating servant leadership qualities as a foundation for sustaining effective transactional management practices. Education supervisors and administrators are therefore encouraged to integrate servant leadership principles into teacher performance development plans, ensuring that teachers' capacity for empathy, community-building, and commitment is systematically aligned with structured management, goal-setting, and reward-based practices.

Finally, future researchers are encouraged to explore other factors that may influence the interplay between servant leadership and transactional management among public elementary school teachers, such as school culture, teacher motivation, organizational climate, and the role of professional development programs. Investigating these additional variables may provide

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deeper insights and practical guidance for enhancing leadership practices and overall school effectiveness.

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