



CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AND LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF SCHOOL HEADS AS PERCEIVED BY PUBLIC ELEMENTARY TEACHERS OF PANABO CITY DIVISION

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ABSTRACT

The study explored the relationship between cultural intelligence and leadership practices of school heads in public elementary schools of Panabo City Division. Also, it investigated the association of the involved variables and the domains of cultural intelligence of school heads that significantly influence their leadership practices. With the use of probability sampling, 200 public elementary 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 cultural intelligence and a high leadership practices among the school heads. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between the cultural intelligence and leadership practices among the school heads. Moreover, all domains of cultural intelligence, namely, metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral cultural intelligence, were found to have significantly influence the leadership practices. Based on the findings, it was further suggested that higher officials in the Department of Education may identify means on how to strengthen the cultural intelligence of school heads which would boost their leadership practices. More so, future researchers may further explore the involved variables considering other factors and research methods specifically the qualitative research or the mixed-methods research.

KEYWORDS- Cultural Intelligence, leadership practice, Panabo City Division, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

The leadership practices of school heads are crucial for the success and development of both the institution and its students. Effective leadership ensures that schools are not only well-managed but also thrive as vibrant learning communities. School heads play a pivotal role in setting the vision and direction of the school, fostering a culture of collaboration among staff, and creating an environment where students can excel. Their ability to engage parents, support teachers, and build trust within the community directly impacts the quality of education delivered. However, school heads are put into situation wherein their capacity to lead is being tested.

In the global arena, improving school leadership is a problem around the world, not just in the United States. Because of the presence of various problems, provisions of competent leadership on part of instructional leaders have been challenged. Even the Ministry of Education Ethiopia argued that principals need to have theoretical knowledge, skill, and adequate experiences in school leadership but research findings show that the majority of school principals in Ethiopia were trained in a subject area; they have not been trained in professional disciplines that make principals in schools face many challenges in performing instructional leadership activities as expected of them. Also, administrative tasks took much of the principals' time rather than instructional activities (Feyesa & Edosa, 2023).

In the Philippines, a study conducted by Aureada (2021) in the City Schools Division of Tayabas City revealed that school heads have no proper monitoring and evaluation. The teachers' competencies, or the lack of it, have not been closely monitored and evaluated. It was concluded that school heads had more difficulties fulfilling duties related to teaching and learning than managerial functions. In 2015, the result of the National Qualifying Examination for School Heads (NQESH) obtained only 2,195 out of the total 18,574 test takers who passed the exam or have met the cut-off score of Percentile 90 based on the total standard score obtained by the examinees in all performance domains covered by the examination. In Caraga Region alone, only 90 of the 882 examinees passed the said qualifying exam (DepEd Memorandum No. 11, s. 2016). This implies that some in-service and aspiring school administrators do not have enough skills and competencies which can be attained through attending trainings, actual experience, capacity buildings and other exposures.

In one of the Municipality of Mindanao specifically in Kadingilan I, Castañeros et al. (2023) found out that newly promoted school heads encounter challenges as they begin their duties and responsibilities, specifically in dealing with school leadership. Furthermore, the main challenges faced by newly promoted school heads in school leadership include staff supervision, work-life balance, school management, and dealing with the legacy of the predecessors. Apparently, the leadership practices of school heads are put into test considering that they are dealing with people who have diverse cultural background. Widodo et al. (2024) highlighted that school principals



with cultural intelligence can promote good institutional governance, emphasizing accountability, responsibility, and fairness. However, the researcher observed that there was no study conducted about leadership practices of school heads considering their cultural intelligence in the local context specifically in Panabo City Division.

Given these situations, the researcher aimed to investigate the level of cultural intelligence and level of leadership practices of school heads. Also, it intended to uncover the correlation between these two variables. The researcher hoped to provide insights study on how the school heads could manage and embrace cultural diversity within their schools. More so, the researcher was determined to present this study in a fora or be able to publish this study in a Scopus-indexed journal.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultural intelligence pertains to the cognitive and behavioral capability of an individual to adjust in a cross-cultural interaction. Stemming from the general notion of multiple intelligences, the premise behind the acquisition and formation of an individual's cultural intelligence lies in the natural notion that individuals develop their awareness of others' cultures through interactions in their society. The potential of studying cultural intelligence as a causal factor in effective leadership has been well-established in the field of business and management, as culturally intelligent leaders have been noted to be highly transformational yet sensitively managerial. In the field of educational leadership, discovering the full potentials of cultural intelligence is still at a limited stage (Ott & Michailova, 2018). Therefore, understanding the role of cultural intelligence in school leadership begins with identifying the level of cultural intelligence of school leaders in order to present a generalizable claim in establishing the application of cultural intelligence in leading in multicultural organizations.

As culture influences leadership styles (Attar, Jami, & Kalfaoglu, 2019), it is reasonable to expect that culturally intelligent leaders will display the style(s) of leadership most compatible with the cultures of their subordinates. Central to cultural quotient is a leader's ability to adapt. With this in mind, adapting leadership style is one of the key reasons leaders cite as to why cultural quotient is required if they are to be successful in leading culturally diverse followers.

Cultural intelligence is an important building block for principals to act effectively in situations characterized by cultural diversity, adapt to new cultural environments, communicate with people from different cultures, and create cultural synergies. It is, therefore, of vital importance for organizations that managers have cultural intelligence. Having a high level of cultural intelligence enables managers to adapt easily to working conditions abroad, to carry out successful projects with foreign organizations and employees from different cultures, to ensure that customers from different cultures are more satisfied with the service provided, and employees from different cultures are satisfied with their jobs. Consequently, a culturally intelligent organization that can overcome cultural differences, turn them into opportunities, keep its employees in the organization, maintain its existence effectively, adapt quickly to changing situations, and carry out successful projects is formed (Gokalp, 2021).

The necessity for school administrators to have high cultural intelligence is also related to the relations between the school principal and the teachers in the school, as well as the population coming from abroad. School administrators and teachers, who are educators, are born into a culture like all people. Factors such as the education level, socio-economic level, worldview of their families, and their place of birth shape their culture. They are programmed according to the culture of the place where they were born and raised (Stefanovic, 2021). They adopt the customs and traditions of the relevant place. Over time, these customs and traditions shape their behaviors and determine their outlook on life, working orders, decision-making styles, productivity, perspectives on the organization they work for and their managers, briefly everything about them. In other words, as employees, they carry this culture to all the institutions they work, including educational organizations. In order for teachers to be satisfied with their jobs and to show high commitment to their organizations, school principals who can eliminate the negative effects of these cultural differences, who benefit from these differences for organizational efficiency and employees' well-being, and who create a cultural synergy are needed.

School principals need to exhibit appropriate behaviors and attitudes in order to be successful in their interactions with individuals from different cultures, both at home and abroad. Therefore, the cultural intelligence levels of school principals are of capital importance (Atan, 2020). In studies about the nature and application of cultural intelligence in multicultural organizations, leadership actions that have a positive effect on organizational dynamics are usually attributed to cultural intelligence factors.

Given the dependency of cultural intelligence on the quality of the environment, Velarde, Adams, and Ghani (2020) noted that cultural exposure can enhance the cognitive cultural intelligence of an individual thus allowing the person to manifest openness and adaptability in a multicultural organization. Although cultural intelligence could be similar with interpersonal intelligence, social intelligence, or emotional intelligence, Kalbasi (2022) argued that cultural intelligence is a distinct intelligence construct because of its focus on cultural attributes and intercultural skills as defined by the following dimensions: metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioural.



Statement of the Problem

This study determined the relationship between the cultural intelligence and leadership practices of school heads in public elementary schools of Panabo City Division. More specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of cultural intelligence of school heads as perceived by the public elementary teachers in terms of:
 - 1.1 metacognitive cultural quotient;
 - 1.2 cognitive cultural quotient;
 - 1.3 motivational cultural quotient; and
 - 1.4 behavioral cultural quotient?
2. What is the level of leadership practices of school heads as perceived by the teachers in terms of:
 - 2.1 leading strategically;
 - 2.2 managing school operations and resources;
 - 2.3 focusing on teaching and learning;
 - 2.4 developing self and other; and
 - 2.5 building connections?
3. Is there a significant relationship between cultural intelligence and leadership practices of school heads?
4. Which domains of cultural intelligence significantly influence the leadership practices of school heads?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative methodology, specifically employing a descriptive correlational approach. Quantitative research entails the collection of numerical data followed by mathematical analysis, often incorporating statistical tools. This method aims to elucidate and provide insights into specific problems or phenomena. Within the domain of descriptive correlational studies, the focus lies in delineating variables and the underlying relationships that arise among them (Bhandari, 2023).

Descriptive research utilizes a non-interventionist stance by the researcher, observing variables without manipulation. Its primary goal is to provide a thorough understanding of the fundamental characteristics of these variables (McCombes, 2023). Conversely, a correlational study seeks to determine whether a relationship exists between two variables. As per Kabir (2016), this involves evaluating whether a change, be it an increase or decrease, in one variable is associated with a corresponding increase or decrease in the other.

This research belonged to the quantitative domain, relying on numerical data for analysis and interpretation. It was descriptive, aiming to evaluate both the cultural intelligence and leadership practices of school heads. Additionally, this scholarly endeavor was classified as correlational since it explored the relationship between the cultural intelligence and leadership practices of school heads in public elementary schools within the Panabo City Division.

Research Respondents

This study extended its invitations to 200 public elementary teachers to participate. Memon et al. (2018) recommended a minimum of 200 samples for Pearson r analysis, indicating that the chosen sample size adequately meets the study's objectives. Hence, the 200 samples were enough to attain the intention of this study.

For the sample selection process, this study employed probability sampling, specifically simple random sampling. This method allows for the determination of the probability or likelihood of inclusion for each item. Essentially, every member of the population has an equal and independent chance of being included in the sample (Ragab & Arisha, 2018). Simple random sampling is employed when the entire population is accessible, and the researchers possess a list of all subjects in the target population, known as the "sampling frame." From this list, a random sample will be drawn, either through a lottery method or by using a computer-generated random list (Elfil & Negida, 2017). In this study, all elementary teachers from public elementary schools in Panabo City Division were considered.

The study's inclusion and exclusion criteria required the selection of elementary teachers with a minimum of 3 years of teaching experience. This criterion was crucial as it enabled teachers with at least a 3-year tenure in public schools to adequately assess the cultural intelligence and leadership practices of their school heads. Furthermore, participants who felt hesitant or uncomfortable responding to the survey questionnaire had the option to voluntarily withdraw from the study. They did not encounter any pressure to continue their participation, and their decision to withdraw was fully respected, highlighting the utmost importance placed on the welfare of the respondents in conducting the study.

Research Instrument

The instrument for the cultural intelligence was adopted from the study of Aytakin (2021). The tool had a total of 16 items. It had four domains namely: metacognitive cultural quotient (1-4), cognitive cultural quotient (1-4), motivational cultural quotient (1-4), and behavioral cultural quotient (1-4). The Cronbach alpha for this instrument is .73 with this, the internal consistency was described as high. All items were accepted. This implied that the tool was appropriate since it covered items that could answer the intention of the study.



The leadership practices questionnaire was a modified form of survey adapted from the study of Dellorias and Deri (2022). The tool had a total of 34 items. It had three variables, namely: reinforcement of needs (1-7), membership (1-6), influence (1-8), influence (1-8), and shared emotional connection (1-5). It will be subjected to pilot testing having a result of .70, suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency. Based on the result, all items in the tool were accepted. The result suggests that the items in the scale are consistently measuring the same underlying construct.

The instruments employed in this study were tailored to align with the study's objectives. The researcher incorporated and consolidated all feedback, comments, and suggestions provided by the adviser, panel members, and expert validators to enhance and refine the research tools, thereby ensuring the achievement of construct validity. For the content validity, three validators scrutinize the survey questionnaire. For the reliability, the survey questionnaire was subjected to pilot testing to selected teachers who were not respondents of the study.

Data Analysis

For more comprehensive interpretation and analysis of the data, the following statistical tools were utilized. These tools were used in answering the statement of the problem.

Average Weighted Mean. This was used to measure the level of cultural intelligence and leadership practices of school heads. This answered the statement of the problem 1 and 2.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. This was utilized to determine the relationships between cultural intelligence and leadership practices of school heads. This was used to answer the statement of the problem 3 and the first null hypothesis

Regression Analysis. This was utilized to determine the significant influence of cultural intelligence on the leadership practices of school heads. It answered the statement of the problem 4 and the second null hypothesis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

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 cultural intelligence and leadership practices of school heads in public elementary schools. The study was conducted in the selected public schools of Panabo City Division. There were two hundred (200) elementary 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 cultural intelligence of school heads is high. This indicates that school heads have their strong awareness, understanding, and adaptability in diverse cultural settings. This suggests that they are capable of effectively engaging with individuals from various cultural backgrounds, fostering inclusive and respectful school environments. Their elevated cultural intelligence likely contributes positively to their leadership effectiveness and overall school performance.

Meanwhile, the level of leadership practices of school heads is high. The high level of leadership practices among school heads reflects their consistent application of effective leadership strategies in managing schools. This implies that they are capable of guiding their institutions toward achieving educational goals through strategic planning, resource management, and stakeholder engagement. Such a level of leadership practice enhances school operations, teaching and learning quality, and overall school performance.

It was found out that there is a significant relationship between the cultural intelligence of school heads and the leadership practices of school heads. More so, all domains of cultural intelligence of school heads are linked with their leadership practices. The significant relationship between cultural intelligence and leadership practices of school heads highlights the integral role of cross-cultural competence in effective school leadership.

Also, all the domains of cultural intelligence of school heads significantly influenced the leadership practices of school heads. Specifically, motivational cultural intelligence is the domain that has the greater impact on the leadership practices of school heads. This highlights the importance of cultural awareness in effective leadership. Among these domains, motivational cultural intelligence emerged as the most impactful, suggesting that the ability to stay motivated and inspire others across cultural contexts is key for successful leadership. This underscores the significance of fostering strong motivational cultural intelligence in school heads to enhance their leadership effectiveness.



Conclusions

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

The level of cultural intelligence of school heads means that it is oftentimes evident. Notably, metacognitive cultural intelligence and motivational cultural intelligence are oftentimes evident while cognitive cultural intelligence and behavioral cultural intelligence are occasionally evident.

Meanwhile, the level of leadership practices of school heads is high. Specifically, focusing on teaching and learning and building connections are always evident while leading strategically, managing school operations and resources, and developing self and others are oftentimes evident.

Based on the findings, cultural intelligence and leadership practices of are related. All domains of cultural intelligence are linked to the leadership practices of school heads. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

More so, all domains of cultural intelligence significantly influenced the leadership practices. In particular, motivational cultural intelligence is the domain that has the great significant impact on the leadership practices of school heads. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

The significant and positive correlation between the cultural intelligence and the leadership practices of school heads supports the principles established in Transformational Leadership by Burns (1985). As highlighted by Stoermer et al. (2021), effective leadership practices highlight the importance of adaptive leadership strategies that recognize and value cultural diversity, promote collaborative decision-making, and prioritize the development of culturally responsive pedagogies. The significance of integrating cultural intelligence into leadership practices to foster inclusive and culturally responsive school environments.

Recommendations

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

In light of the findings of this study, it is recommended that DepEd officials strengthen professional development programs for school heads by integrating targeted training on all domains of cultural intelligence, particularly on cognitive and behavioral aspects where occasional evidence was noted. Since cultural intelligence is significantly related to leadership practices, enhancing school heads' cultural understanding and adaptability will further improve their effectiveness in key leadership areas such as strategic leadership, school operations management, and staff development. Emphasizing cultural intelligence alongside leadership competencies will ensure that school heads are better equipped to lead diverse learning communities and sustain high standards in teaching, learning, and community engagement.

Moreover, school heads are encouraged to further enhance their cultural intelligence, particularly in the areas of cognitive and behavioral cultural intelligence, where evidence of practice is less consistent. Strengthening these aspects will not only deepen their understanding of diverse cultures but also improve their ability to adapt behaviors appropriately in varied cultural contexts. Given the strong link between cultural intelligence and effective leadership practices, continuous self-development in these areas will support school heads in leading strategically, managing operations efficiently, and fostering personal and professional growth among their staff. By actively cultivating all domains of cultural intelligence, school heads may sustain high levels of leadership performance and create more inclusive, responsive, and dynamic school environments.

Furthermore, teachers may actively support and engage with the initiatives and leadership practices of their school heads, recognizing that strong leadership is closely linked to the development of cultural intelligence. Teachers may contribute by fostering open communication, participating in professional development activities that promote cultural awareness, and modeling culturally responsive behaviors in their classrooms. By working collaboratively with school heads who are continually enhancing their cultural intelligence, teachers may help create a more inclusive, respectful, and effective learning environment that benefits all learners. In doing so, they not only support the leadership growth of school heads but also contribute to the overall success and unity of the school community.

Lastly, future researchers are encouraged to explore further the relationship between cultural intelligence and leadership practices among school heads, particularly focusing on the less evident domains of cognitive and behavioral cultural intelligence. Expanding the scope of future studies to include larger and more diverse populations, as well as investigating additional variables such as teachers' perceptions or student outcomes, may provide deeper insights into how cultural intelligence directly influences school leadership effectiveness. Longitudinal studies may also be beneficial in examining how cultural intelligence and leadership practices evolve over time.

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