

Leading the Way Together: How Davao City School Heads Empower Secondary Teachers to Become Leaders in the Classroom

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Abstract: This study meticulously investigated the Leadership Competencies of School Heads and their relationship with the Instructional and Organizational Leadership displayed by Public Secondary Teachers within the Davao City Division. Recognizing that the quality of school leadership is intrinsically linked to teacher performance and, ultimately, student outcomes, this research aimed to provide empirical evidence supporting a holistic, distributed leadership model. The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design, utilizing a validated survey instrument administered to a stratified random sample of School Heads and secondary teachers. Preliminary findings suggest a significantly high level of leadership competency among School Heads, particularly in the domain of Strategic Thinking and Innovation. Concurrently, teachers reported a strong demonstration of leadership in areas such as Curriculum Implementation and Professional Development. Crucially, the correlational analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between the School Heads' competencies (especially People Management) and the teachers' perceived organizational leadership contribution. These results underscore the need for targeted professional development programs that foster collaborative leadership, thereby optimizing the combined human capital for enhanced educational service delivery across the division.

Keywords: *Leadership Competencies, School Heads, Instructional Leadership, Organizational Leadership, Public Secondary Teachers, Davao City Division.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the Philippine educational landscape, specifically within the dynamic and expansive Davao City Division, the role of the School Head has evolved from a mere administrator to a transformative instructional leader. The efficacy of these leaders—how they strategize, manage resources, and, most importantly, develop people—directly shapes the working environment, motivation, and effectiveness of their teaching staff. Conversely, for a school to truly excel, leadership cannot reside solely in the Principal's office; it must be distributed and exercised by the teachers who are on the front lines of instruction and student engagement.

While the Department of Education (DepEd) mandates specific competency standards for School Heads, there is a distinct gap in localized, current research that empirically links these leadership competencies (e.g., those defined by the National Competency-Based Standards for School Heads, or NCBS-SH) to the actual leadership behaviors and organizational engagement exhibited by secondary teachers in Davao City. This study seeks to close that gap. The fundamental question guiding this research is: To what extent do the self-assessed and perceived competencies of School Heads influence the leadership actions and organizational contributions of their secondary teachers? Understanding this nexus is critical for the Division Office to design interventions that foster a genuine culture of shared accountability and high performance.

II. METHODS

➤ *Design and Data Collection*

This study utilized a Descriptive-Correlational research design. This approach was chosen to not only characterize (describe) the current level of School Head competencies and teacher leadership but also to statistically determine the nature and strength of the relationship (correlate) between these two variables.

➤ *The Participants: A Voice from Every Corner*

The participants included all Public Secondary School Heads and a stratified random sample of 300 Public Secondary Teachers across the Davao City Division. Stratification ensured representation from schools categorized as small, medium, and large, providing a comprehensive and balanced snapshot of the divisional reality.

➤ *The Instruments: Measuring What Matters*

A two-part, modified-standardized survey questionnaire was the primary instrument. Part I measured the School Heads' competencies across domains such as *Instructional Leadership*, *Crisis Management*, and *Personal and Professional Attributes*. Part II assessed the teachers' leadership contributions in areas like *Peer Mentorship*, *Action Research Involvement*, and *Participation in School Policy Formulation*. The instrument underwent rigorous validation by education experts and a pilot testing phase to ensure both reliability and construct validity.

➤ *Statistical Treatment: Making Sense of the Numbers*

Data gathered were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools:

- **Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation:** Used to describe the level of School Head competencies and teacher leadership.
- **Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r):** Employed to determine the presence, nature, and strength of the relationship between the two main variables.
- **Regression Analysis (Multiple):** Used to identify which specific competency domains of the School Head are the most significant predictors of teacher leadership.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

➤ *A Snapshot of Leadership Competency*

The analysis revealed that the overall computed Weighted Mean for School Head Leadership Competencies was 4.65 (on a 5-point scale), falling into the descriptive rating of "Very High". The highest-rated domain was consistently *Ethical Leadership and Integrity* (WM=4.81), indicating a strong moral compass and adherence to professional standards. The domain with the lowest, though still high, rating was *Resource Management and Financial Accountability* (WM=4.42).

➤ *Teachers Stepping Up to Lead*

Similarly, the teachers' demonstration of leadership was rated as "High" (Overall WM=4.30). They excelled particularly in the *Instructional Domain* (e.g., curriculum planning and innovative teaching methods), reflecting their primary professional focus. Teachers showed the least involvement in formal *Policy and Governance* roles (WM=3.98), suggesting an area for potential distributed leadership development.

➤ *The Interplay: Finding the Connection*

The computed Pearson r value was found to be $r = 0.72$ ($p < 0.01$), which is interpreted as a strong, significant positive correlation between the School Heads' competencies and the teachers' leadership demonstration. This is a critical finding: the better the School Head is perceived, the more likely the teachers are to exercise leadership. Further regression analysis highlighted that the School Heads' competency in *People Management and Professional Development* was the strongest predictor ($\beta < 0.001$) of a teacher's willingness to assume leadership roles beyond the classroom.

➤ *A Culture of Empowerment*

The high correlation signifies that School Heads in Davao City are effectively cultivating an empowering school culture. Their leadership is not top-down; it is one that encourages risk-taking, provides professional autonomy, and acknowledges teacher expertise. This finding resonates with the principles of *Transactional and Transformational Leadership* theory, where the leader inspires subordinates to transcend self-interest for the good of the organization. The strong showing in the *Ethical Leadership* domain by School Heads is likely the bedrock of this trust, making teachers feel safe and supported in taking on additional responsibilities.

➤ *The Call for Targeted Growth*

While the results are overwhelmingly positive, the slightly lower ratings in *Resource Management* for School Heads and *Policy/Governance* for teachers point to areas ripe for intervention. The Division Office could, for example, implement a "Teacher-as-Policy-Partner" program, where selected teachers are formally integrated into the School Governing Council or strategic planning committees, thereby enhancing their organizational leadership skills. For School Heads, targeted training on sustainable resource allocation and transparency protocols would complement their otherwise stellar performance.

➤ *A Path to Sustained Success*

In conclusion, this study offers compelling evidence that effective leadership from the School Head is a prerequisite for fostering leadership among teachers. The Davao City Division is on a commendable trajectory toward educational excellence, powered by a mutual understanding and high level of competence among its educational leaders. The way forward is to institutionalize these collaborative practices and address the minor competency gaps to ensure that leadership is not just

distributed, but truly shared and sustained across all levels of the secondary school system.

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