



Analysis of the Relationship among Leadership Styles, School Culture and Student Achievement¹

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Abstract

This research aims to investigate the correlations among school culture, and key leadership style and student achievement, and the relationships between school culture and student achievement. To achieve the purpose of the research, two key questions, four sub-questions, and two hypotheses were developed to uncover the level of student achievement as reflected in their general point average and to find the relationship between the Multifactor leadership and school culture variables. Because of the nature of the study, the descriptive analysis method was used, which is one of the quantitative research methods. The key tool in collecting the data was a structured questionnaire, which was custom-made corresponding to the problem set. Further data were obtained from interviews each time warranted within the scale of the purpose of the research; Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and School Culture Survey were utilized. The findings of the research were analyzed and presented as tables using the SPSS-10 package program. The research universe of this study was selected privately-owned schools which have elementary and high school divisions in Metro Manila and Zamboanga City, Philippines. A total of 38 school administrators and 111 teachers were involved in this work. As for finding, there is no significant relationship between multifactor leadership and student achievement even the correlation that exists between the two variables is high.

Keywords: School culture, multifactor & transformational leadership, student achievement.

Introduction

School is a very important element of society that plays a major role in a nation's future. Students and teachers learn many lessons, academic and otherwise, which influence their well-being and academic success. The school environment or school climate affects the people who work there, and therefore inadvertently can influence the academic success of the students in advertently as well. Each school has its own culture that shapes the climate of the building and sends a strong message to teachers and students about what is important in that environment (Wilén, Ishler, Hutchison & Kindsvatter, 2000). The climate

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within a school context has an impact on the success of the teachers and students. As leaders, teachers, and administration should not be careless to recognize that an administrator's leadership style greatly affects the climate and can create learning ambient that is negative and counterproductive.

According to Allbright & Hough (2020), the climate is favorable to learning, and that teachers use encouraging practices, such as encouragement and practical feedback, varied opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and skills, and support for risk-taking and independent thinking. The atmosphere is conducive to dialog and questioning, academic challenge, and individual attention to support differentiated learning. Transformational leadership has a facilitating impact on the cultural intelligence of school leaders and the organizational health of schools (Velarde, Ghani, Adams & Cheah, 2020). Berkovich (2016) points that in education settings the transformational leadership is accepted as one of the most prominent leadership styles that have taken place over years. Brophy (1998) advocated creating a school environment in which students and teachers feel comfortable, valued, and secure. This environment encourages school members to form positive emotional bonds with others and a positive attitude toward school, which in turn facilitates students' motivation to learn and succeed in learning. This is the very essence of multifactor leadership which has foci on transformational leadership. An encouraging atmosphere is more efficient (Ekici, 2021) also indicates that a culture where people learn, contribute together is shaped according to the dominating environment.

Multifunctional leadership, a rather new term to the education field, was introduced to assist in restructuring initiatives designed to take schools into the 21st century (Leithwood, 1992b). Transformational leadership, organizational learning, and organizational structure have a positive and significant effect on innovation capacity. Transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on organizational learning and organizational structure (Waruwu, Asbari, Purwanto, Nugroho, Fikri, Fauji&Dewi, 2020).

The multifactor leadership, school culture, and school achievement gauged through student success. Likewise, it must be noted that here likewise that the use of the terms school culture and school climate are made here purposively referring to each other. According to Antoniou & Gioumouki (2018) mental incentive is shown when the leader supports team members to take initiatives to be innovative and creative, to confront the mainstream, to redefine problems, and to approach settings in new ways. A study by Kalkan, AltınayAksal, Altınay Gazi, Atasoy & Dağlı (2020) states that in school where principal manifests transformational leadership characteristics, the perception of school culture by the teachers is strong and there are significant relationships between leadership styles, the school culture, and organizational image which significantly predicted school culture, and organizational image.

The interplay of the three variables – multifactor leadership, school culture, and school achievement, is so expected in any school setting where students' achievements are measured on a regular basis. Further, as explained by many education experts, the relationship between and among the three variables mentioned is quite dynamic to the extent of complementing and supplementing each other.

The findings may prompt boards of education to create a set of transformational leadership characteristics for school principals to assist in their ongoing development and evaluation and guide them for greater understanding of potential barriers affecting transformational leadership and to adopt a leadership style that may contribute the greatest impact on student achievement. This study is also hoped to serve researchers as a reference and encourage them to undertake a similar study with a different research environment.

Purpose

In general, this study attempted to explore correlations among the perceived school culture, and principal leadership style, and student achievement, and the relationships between school culture and student achievement.

Four research questions and two hypotheses were developed to achieve the purpose of the research.

The researcher sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the level of student achievement as reflected in their general point average?
2. Is there a significant relationship between the Multifactor leadership and school culture variables?
3. Is there significant relation between Multifactor leadership with school culture and student achievement as assessed in the GPA scores?
4. Are there significant differences in the assessment of two groups of respondents on multifactor leadership and school culture?

Hypotheses

The following are the null hypotheses tested in this study using $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between and among the following variables: multifactor leadership and school culture causing student achievement as its results assessed in the GPA scores.
2. There is no significant difference between the assessments of the two groups of respondents on multifactor leadership and school culture.

Methodology

Research Design

The nature of this study used the descriptive analysis technique, which is one of the quantitative research methods. The descriptive method of research is a fact-finding study with an adequate interpretation of findings. It also describes with emphasis what actually exists such as current conditions, practices, situations, or any (Atmowardoyo, 2018). This descriptive research design is reasonably appropriate for the present study because this study attempted to describe the characteristics/behaviors of the administrators and school culture.

Research Participants

The settings of the study are selected privately-owned institutions in Metro Manila and one school from Zamboanga City. Fountain International Schools (Santolan and Annapolis Campuses) and Jose Rizal University (High School and Elementary Divisions) represent the prior while the latter is represented by Filipino-Turkish Tolerance School (Elementary and High School Divisions).

The participants of the study consist of 25 teachers and 12 administrators from Fountain International Schools, 63 teachers, and 14 administrators from Jose Rizal University, and 23 teachers and 12 administrators from Tolerance School. A total of 38 school administrators and 111 teachers were involved in this work.

Table 1. The Demographic Characteristics of Participants

		f	%
Gender	Male	52	34,9
	Female	97	65,1
Years of Service	0 – 9 years	39	26,2
	10 – 19 years	61	40,9
	20 – 29 years	36	24,2
	30 years - above	23	15,4
Highest Educational Qualification	Bachelor's Degree	54	36,2
	With MS/MA units	43	28,9
	Master's Degree	37	24,8
	With Doctoral Units	12	8,1
	Doctoral Degree	5	3,4
Total		149	100

Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents according to gender, years of service, and educational qualification.

It can be seen from the table that there are 52 or 34,9 % of the respondents are male while the remaining 96 or 65,1% percent are female. Profile of the respondents according to their years of service in the school, 0-9 years of service group has the lowest rate with 39 or 26,2%, while 30 years or above years of service group has 23 or 15,4 % percent.

Respondents profile according to highest educational qualification shows that 54 or 36,2 % has accomplished bachelor's degree while 5 or 3,4 % attained a doctoral degree.

Research Instrument

The major tool in gathering the data is a structured questionnaire, which is customized according to the problem set. Additional information was obtained from interviews whenever warranted within the scope of the purpose of the research; Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and School Culture Survey were used.

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Form 5X was developed and tested by Bass and Avolio (1990). The instrument is copyrighted by Bass and Avolio and published by Mind Garden, Inc. It was developed to measure aspects of transformational, transactional, and non-leadership leadership styles as well as outcomes of leadership. The 45-item instrument contains 12 scales. All of the leadership style scales have four items per scale. Leadership styles scores for each of the nine leadership style scales represent the average scores for the items in each scale. Transactional leadership style scores were derived by averaging all of the scores from the items in the contingent reward and management-by-exception scales, a total of 12 items. Because laissez-faire leadership was the only scale measuring non-leadership, the non-leadership style score was equivalent to the laissez-faire leadership scale score.

In their MLQ technical report, Bass and Avolio (1990) discussed the construct validation process associated with the MLQ-5X. The MLQ-5X was selected for use in this study because of the data indicating the reliability and validity of the instrument. Alpha reliability coefficients for the MLQ-5X rater form scales have all been shown to be above 0.82 with the exception of management-by-exception (0.79) and laissez-faire (0.77). The reliability coefficients for the rater form subscales yielded a range of 0.77 through 0.95.

Table 2.Scale to Interpret Characteristics/ Behavior of the Respondents on Multifactor Leadership

Level of Behavior	Interpretation
4.20-5.00	Frequently, if not always
3.40-4.19	Fairly often
2.60-3.39	Sometimes
1.80-2.59	Once in a while
1.00-1.79	Not at all

School Culture Survey

The School Culture Survey was developed by Steve Gruenert and Jerry Valentine (1998) at the Middle-Level Leadership Center.

School culture was assessed through the School Culture Survey. The School Culture Survey provides insight about the shared values and beliefs, the patterns of behavior, and the relationships in the school. Each factor measures a unique aspect of the school's collaborative culture. The factor definitions are underlined, and the additional sentences provide more detail about the concepts associated with each factor. Each item can be answered "strongly agree," "agree," "neutral," "disagree," or "strongly disagree."

To interpret the perceptions on the extent of school culture, the scale below was used:

Table 3. Scale to Interpret School Culture of the Respondents

Level of Agreement	Interpretation
4.20-5.00	Strongly agree
3.40-4.19	Agree
2.60-3.39	Neutral
1.80-2.59	Disagree
1.00-1.79	Strongly disagree

Data Collection Procedure

As soon as the research instrument is approved by the research adviser, it was administered to the respondents. Permissions from the School Director/Principals were sought to administer the survey questionnaire to the respondents. The questionnaires are administered to the respondents on the date scheduled. In the case where the items are not clearly understood by the respondents, the researcher readily explains and clarifies these items. Likewise, the retrieval of the accomplished instruments is personally done by the researcher through the help of the office secretary/representative of each institution. Upon completion, the questionnaires are checked for any errors, the descriptive statistics will be generated using Microsoft Excel. All statistical computations were done using an open-source version of Statistical Software for the Social Science (SPSS). Moreover, the hypotheses of this study are tested at the 0.05 level of significance. In giving verbal interpretation for the student achievement, the following is used: 75.01 – 80.00 (Low); 80.01 – 85.00 (Average); and 85.01 – 90.00 (High).

Results and Discussion

The findings of the research were analyzed and presented as tables using the SPSS-10 package program.

Level of Student Performance as Reflected in Their General Point Average

The first sub-problem of the study:

What is the level of student achievement as reflected in their general point average?

Data for this sub-problem were obtained from the school grade average of the students. Average values were given on the data obtained. Analysis of statistics is shown in Table 4.

Table 4.Level of Student Performance According to G.P.A

School	G.P.A.	Interpretation
School A	87.31	High
School B	87.90	High
School C	86.52	High
School D	89.90	High
School E	81.92	Average
Grand G.P.A.	86.71	High
Standard Deviation	2.96	

Table 4 shows the level of student performance according to their general point average. It can be gleaned from the above table that School D and School E have the highest and lowest averages of general point average with 89.90 and 81.92 percent respectively with a standard deviation of 2.96.

Be that as it may, the researcher wants to make it clear that direct comparison of the student achievement as reflected on their general point average should not be a stage in any way. This is due to the fact that School E has its transmutation table in gauging students' performances and outputs, which is distinct from those being used in other school respondents. School E uses 75% baseline as the passing grade. On the other hand, Schools A, B, C, and D uses almost the same transmutation table in assigning ratings for student performance. This explanation has to be made clear here in order to properly appraise the students from that school.

Furthermore, to this, the codification is made as such in order to accord utmost confidentiality to the school respondents and thus preventing unfounded, immediate generalization of their students based on g.p.a. only.

Relationship between Multifactor Leadership and School Culture

The second sub-problem of the study:

Is there a significant relationship between the Multifactor leadership and school culture variables? Data for this sub-problem is retrieved from Multifactor Leadership and School Culture. A Computed r value is given based on the data obtained. Analysis of statistics is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Significant Relationship between the Assessments of the Administrator and Faculty Respondents on the Multifactor Leadership and School Culture

Computed <i>r</i>	Interpretation	Tabular value	Decision	Remarks
0.6820	High	±0.878	Do not Reject H _o	Not Significant
$\alpha = 0.05$; two-tailed				

Table 5 shows the test of the significant relationship between the assessments of the administrator and faculty respondents on the multifactor leadership and school culture. It can be seen from the table that for an alpha level of 0.05, two-tailed test, the absolute computed *r* (0.6820) falls outside the range of tabular value (±0.878). Even though there is a high correlation that exists between the two variables, this does not guarantee its significance. Thus, the decision made by the researcher is not to reject the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between multifactor leadership and school culture. Therefore, there is no significant relationship that exists between multifactor leadership and school culture.

The findings above may be further understood in the light of earlier research conducted by Maher, et.al (2001). According to them, while most people believe that school leadership affects school culture or climate, it may not hold true in every situation. School leaders direct the course of the school under typical circumstances (Maher et al., 2001) but play a much more prominent role when change occurs (Leithwood, 1994). A number of scholars (Barnett & McCormick, 2004; Bass, 1990; Brown, 1993; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005) all point to the need for leaders in schools undergoing change to embody the characteristics of a transformational leader. Bass (1990), as well as Leithwood and Jantzi (2005), stress the need for transformational leadership. The characteristics of this type of leader are appropriate when schools are faced with turbulence brought about by uncertainties in the environment (Bass, 1990; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005).

Often in education, change has been unsuccessful because too many programs aimed at comprehensive school reform have been implemented simultaneously (Silins, Mulford, & Zarins, 2002). The change fails not just as a result of the number of programs but also because of the specific actions taken by the leaders and followers within the organization. Leaders often rush into the change process without a plan, and more importantly without a vision or strategy to accomplish school reform (Davis, 2003). The change also fails because leaders do not build coalitions of followers who support the process. Building coalitions is

challenging because many followers are satisfied with the current conditions and do not see a need for change (Davis, 2003).

Studies of leadership continually document that the school leader is a critical element in the successful completion of a change initiative (Leithwood et al., 2006). The debate becomes what specific form of leadership is best suited to bring about change to the educational environment. Many scholars (Barnett & McCormick, 2004; Bass, 1990; Brown, 1993; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005) agree that transformational leadership will help schools change.

Having contemplated on that, principals' leadership behavior can be an early indicator of school climate and student achievement (Bulach, Boothe, & Pickett, 2006).

Multifactor Leadership and Student Achievement as Assessed in the GPA Scores

The third sub-problem of the study:

"Is there significant relation between Multifactor leadership with school culture and student achievement as assessed in the GPA scores?"

Data for this sub-problem is retrieved from Multifactor Leadership and School Culture surveys. Then, with this data, student grade point averages were tested. The Computed r value based on the data obtained is shown in table 6.

Table 6: Significant Relationship between the Multifactor Leadership, School Culture and Student Achievement

Computed r	Interpretation	Tabular value	Decision	Remarks
0.5582	Moderate	± 0.878	Do not Reject H_0	Not Significant
$\alpha = 0.05$; two-tailed				

Table 6 shows the test of the significant relationship between the assessments of the administrator and faculty respondents on the multifactor leadership and school culture. It can be seen from the table that for an alpha level of 0.05, two-tailed test, the absolute computed r (0.5582) falls outside the range of tabular value (± 0.878). Even though there is a moderate correlation that exists between the two variables; this does not guarantee its significance. Thus, the decision made by the researcher is not to reject the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between multifactor leadership and student achievement. Therefore, there is no significant relationship that exists between multifactor leadership and student achievement.

This finding confirms the statement of Harris (2006) who said that education stakeholders do not know, for example, exactly what forms of leadership result in [high performing] schools, across different school contexts, and in different types of schools. Uncertain about a particular combination of experience, training, a professional development most benefits leaders wishing to improve their schools. The correlational nature of the research evidence

that does exist inevitably masks the exact patterning and nature of the relationship between leadership and enhanced student learning (p. 4).

Moreover, other scholars find weak effects (Barnett & McCormick, 2004) between multifactor leadership and student achievement. Leithwood and Jantzi (2005), in a review of research studies, meanwhile, found mixed results between transformational leadership and student achievement.

School Culture and Student Achievement as Assessed in the GPA Scores

The fourth sub-problem of the study:

‘Are there significant differences in the assessment of two groups of respondents on multifactor leadership and school culture?’

The fourth sub-problem is retrieved from the data Multifactor Leadership and School Culture surveys. With this data, student grade averages were tested. *Computed t* value table 7 shows based on the data obtained.

Table 7: Significant Difference between the Assessments of the Administrator and Faculty Respondents on the Multifactor Leadership

Category	Mean	t-computed	Critical value	Decision	Remarks
Administrators	3.60	1.602	± 2.015	Do not	Not
Faculty	3.54			reject H_0	significant

Table 7 shows the test of significant difference between the assessments of the administrator and faculty respondents on the multifactor leadership. It can be seen from the table that the mean for the administrator respondents is 3.60 while their faculty respondent counterparts have a mean of 3.54. Based on the computations made, the t-statistic available for this particular test is 1.602 which falls between ± 2.015 . Accordingly, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the assessments made by the administrators and faculty members as regards the multifactor leadership is henceforth not rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference that exists between the assessments made by the two groups of respondents.

The finding is of no significant difference, especially on assessing school leadership, between two groups of respondents from the same organization, is usually anticipated yet not all-time apparent. Here, it can be deduced that the two groups of respondents share almost the same view or perspective of what a school leader must do, particularly those expectations of multifactor leaders vis-à-vis transformational leaders. Yukl (2006) stated that the general concept of leadership is not easily defined but three common threads are found at least in part in most definitions of leadership. Of these three, the final thread common to leadership definitions is the importance of influence (Leithwood et al., 2006; Yukl, 2006). Yukl (2006)

incorporates each of these threads by defining leadership as “the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives.”

As part of the fourth sub-problem, it was also tested whether there was a significant difference between the scores that teachers and administrators received in the school culture survey. The results are shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Significant Difference between the Assessments of the Administrator and Faculty Respondents on the School Culture

Category	Mean	t-computed	Critical value	Decision	Remarks
Administrators	3.84	-1.997	±2.032	Do not reject H ₀	Not significant
Faculty	3.90				

Table 8 shows the test of significant difference between the assessments of the administrator and faculty respondents on the school culture. It can be seen from the table that the mean for the administrator respondents is 3.84 while their faculty respondent counterparts have a mean of 3.90. Based on the computations made, the t-statistic available for this particular test is -1.997 which falls between ±2.015. Thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the assessments made by the administrators and faculty members as regards the school culture is henceforth not rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference that exists between the assessments made by the two groups of respondents.

As explained by Bolman and Deal (2003), culture has two aspects: product and process. Culture is a product because it has been produced by those previously in the organization (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Culture is a process because it is being renewed and recreated as new members enter the culture and make the old ways their own (Bolman & Deal, 2003). This greatly explains why the two groups of respondents have viewed school culture similarly. This goes along with the fact that culture is “the way we do things around here.” (Deal and Kennedy, 1982). No matter how culture is described or the types of culture which appear in schools, the culture of a school impacts educational stakeholders (Peterson & Deal, 2002; Pritchard et al., 2005). People learn from the culture how to act and often what to feel and think (Gruenert, 2000; Peterson & Deal, 2002). Since the respondents have been in their current school environment for a considerably long time (71.05% of the administrators and 74.77% of the faculty are connected to their schools for more than a decade as reflected on Table No. 5 – Years of Service), this extended and extensive stay have significantly fused them with the school culture. In fact, as Bolman & Deal (2003) had claimed, people in the organization are the ones who create their own culture. This only

confirms that the school administrators and faculty members are the builders of school culture hence they are both referring to their identifiable “ours.”

Conclusions and Recommendations

The conclusions that were drawn from the findings and the recommendations proposed were based on the conclusions.

Conclusions

Based on the preceding findings and discussions, the following conclusions are hereby formulated:

1. This finding confirms the “feminization” of the teaching profession. Working either as school administrators or faculty members, almost two-thirds are female.
2. School administrators have higher educational attainment as compared to their faculty.
3. The grand G.P.A. of the students can already be considered high. The standard deviation suggests that the grade distribution is relatively dispersed.
4. There is no significant relationship between multifactor leadership and student achievement even the correlation that exists between the two variables is high.
5. There is no significant relationship between the school culture and student achievement even there is a low correlation that exists between the two variables.
6. There is no significant difference that exists between the assessments made by the school administrators and faculty on multifactor leadership.
7. There is no significant difference that exists between the assessments made by the school administrators and faculty on school culture.

Recommendations

Generally, school administrators have to be responsive, spontaneous, diligent, stimulating and engaging which characterize good transformational leaders. While many women occupy leadership positions (and roles), they shall do more since the expectation of them transcends from mere supervision. This, of course, does not spare the men school leaders to do their share in improving their respective schools. For the personal and professional improvement of the employees, advanced degrees could contribute to quality education; thus, they must attend and acquire graduate studies. Intensification and aesthetic appreciation of school leadership must be done so as to affect the student achievement significantly positive. School culture must be well observed, felt, and acquired in order to affect and eventually improve student achievement. A similar study is conducted in the future to further validate the findings of the present study by having new respondents, timeframe, and approach.

Conflict of interest

The author(s) declare no conflict of interest.

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