

Teachers Behavior as Influenced by Principals' Leadership Styles

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Abstract — The study determined the influence of principals' leadership styles on teachers behavior in Maa District, Davao City Division. A descriptive-correlation design was utilized to explore the relationships between principals' leadership styles and teachers behavior. The researcher utilized 96 teachers from grades 4 to 6 level as respondents via random sampling from Maa district, Davao City division.

The findings revealed that the level of principals' leadership styles in terms of instructional leadership, democratic leadership, transformational leadership, and laissez-faire leadership were interpreted as very high, which means that the level of leadership styles was always practiced by principals. In terms of teachers' behavior, it garnered a high rating indicating that teacher behavior was always observed in school. Indicators such as emotional support, pro-social behavior, and psychometric support also registered high ratings. On the significant relationship between principals' leadership styles and teachers' behavior, a positive high relationship between the two variables was evident. In addition, the indicators of principals' leadership styles namely, instructional leadership, democratic leadership, transformational leadership, and laissez-faire leadership were significantly correlated with teachers' behavior. Further, on the significant influence of principals' leadership styles on teachers' behavior, the results showed that democratic and laissez-faire leadership significantly influenced teachers behavior. Among the domains, laissez-faire leadership had the strongest influence to teachers behavior. In addition, democratic leadership had also an influence to teachers behavior.

Keywords — *Leadership styles, teachers behavior, descriptive, correlation, Philippines*

I. Introduction

Teachers' behavior plays a vital role in the delivery of quality education, influencing their interactions with students, parents, colleagues, and administrators, as well as affecting student motivation and academic performance. However, educators often face high levels of stress due to evolving work environments, societal changes, and the growing demands of digital technology, leading to decreased job satisfaction, increased anxiety, and potential burnout (Ormiston et al., 2022). Teaching is deeply emotional work, with emotional dynamics present in nearly every classroom (Valente et al., 2022), and managing classroom conflicts remains a persistent challenge (Doğan, 2016). Teachers may experience frustration, anxiety, or disappointment when facing unmotivated students or when their professional capabilities are questioned, highlighting the complex emotional and behavioral demands of the profession (Greenier et al., 2021).

This phenomenon is not limited to a single country. In the United States, for example, many educators report being insufficiently trained in managing student behavior, often leading to high levels of stress and burnout (Gaines, 2022). There has been a noticeable increase in both the frequency and intensity of behavioral issues in classrooms, leaving many teachers feeling unprepared to address them effectively. These challenges include a range of disruptive behaviors such as defiance, tantrums, bullying, aggression, self-harm, emotional outbursts, elopement, and lack of responsiveness or compliance. Recent data indicates that over 70% of teachers have observed a rise in such behaviors (Prothero, 2023). Additionally, more than 40% of educators believe they lack sufficient preparation in classroom management and student discipline strategies (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2020), a concern partly attributed to limited emphasis on these areas in teacher education programs.

Similarly, in the Philippines, teachers often face emotionally demanding classroom environments due to students' diverse behaviors, requiring them to manage their emotions professionally (Go et al., 2020). Difficulty in handling student behavior can lead to stress, fatigue, and reduced job satisfaction (Manansala, 2017), while disorderly classrooms hinder both teaching effectiveness and student learning (Mendes, 2019). Beyond classroom management, occupational stress among Filipino teachers is widespread, with around 23% reporting job-related stress caused by administrative issues, heavy workloads, and interpersonal conflicts (Ansis, 2017). Additional stressors include low compensation, understaffing, poor organizational culture, inadequate work-life balance, and lack of support from supervisors (Romero & Bantigue, 2016).

Despite these nationwide issues, there is a lack of studies administered in the Davao Region regarding the influence of leadership styles on teacher behavior. This gap is significant given the national context of teacher stress and emotional demands, underscoring the importance of localized research to better understand how leadership practices can support and shape teacher behavior in specific regional contexts.

In Maa District, Davao City, the diverse leadership styles of school principals significantly impact teacher behavior and school performance, resulting in noticeable disparities among schools. In schools led by supportive and communicative principals who prioritize professional development, teachers demonstrate high morale, engagement, and consistent performance, fostering a positive school climate and stronger student outcomes. Conversely, schools with less effective leadership often experience teacher burnout, low motivation, and inconsistent performance due to micromanagement or lack of direction. This contrast highlights the vital role of principal leadership and the necessity of tailoring leadership strategies to support teacher development and improve educational outcomes.

This study investigated how principals' leadership styles influenced teachers' behavior in the Maa District of Davao City Division. Specifically, it aimed to address the following research questions:

1. What is the level of leadership styles of principals in terms of:
 - 1.1 instructional leadership,
 - 1.2 democratic leadership,
 - 1.3 transformational leadership, and
 - 1.4 laissez-faire leadership?
2. What is the level of teachers' behavior in terms of:
 - 2.1 emotional support,
 - 2.2 pro-social behavior, and
 - 2.3 psychometric support?
3. Is there a significant relationship between leadership styles and teachers' behavior?
4. Do leadership styles significantly influence teachers' behavior?

The hypotheses were tested at an alpha level of 0.05:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between leadership styles and teachers' behavior.

H₀₂: Leadership styles do not significantly influence teachers' behavior.

Review of Related Literatures

Leadership Styles

Leadership style encompasses the approaches and strategies used by school leaders to guide, motivate, and influence staff toward achieving institutional goals (Hai et al., 2021). In the educational context, a principal's leadership is pivotal for aligning staff performance with academic objectives (Kin & Kareem, 2019). Research consistently affirms that school principals impact teacher performance and morale both directly and indirectly through their leadership behaviors (Saleem et al., 2020; Kelly et al., 2019). Effective leadership fosters a supportive school climate, enhances teacher commitment, and promotes overall school development (Pradana et al., 2021). Importantly, the appropriateness of a leadership style often depends on contextual factors such as staff maturity and the specific challenges a school faces (Ali, 2017; Chen et al., 2022). Leadership that is adaptive and responsive to teacher needs can significantly boost motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Yalcinkaya et al., 2021).

Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership is a focused leadership style in which the principal's role centers on improving teaching quality and student academic outcomes (Karacabey et al., 2020; Hallinger et al., 2020). Principals adopting this style are responsible for protecting instructional time, promoting consistent attendance, and supporting effective classroom practices (Hitt & Tucker, 2016). Numerous studies highlight a strong, positive correlation between instructional leadership and student achievement, mediated by factors such as school climate and teacher self-efficacy (Dutta & Sahney, 2021). Moreover, this leadership approach enhances teacher collaboration, builds strong school-community relationships, and improves job performance through increased motivation and professional development (Qadach et al., 2020; Naz & Rashid, 2021). By promoting educators' self-belief and emotional well-being, instructional leadership contributes holistically to school improvement.

Democratic Leadership

Democratic leadership encourages inclusive decision-making, active consultation, and shared responsibility in school governance (Chapman, 2014; Muhsin, 2019). Principals who practice democratic leadership foster teacher involvement in policy-making and day-to-day operations, leading to a more cooperative and motivated workforce (Gronn, 2020). Empirical evidence from Nwokamma et al. (2018) revealed a significant positive relationship between democratic leadership and teacher job satisfaction, indicating that participatory leadership enhances productivity and teacher morale. Furthermore, studies show that this leadership style satisfies psychological needs such as autonomy and competence, and it promotes a culture of collaboration, trust, and mutual respect among school stakeholders (Shepherd-Jones & Salisbury-Glennon, 2018; Lopez Delgado, 2014). As a result, democratic leadership plays a vital role in school development and teacher retention.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is marked by visionary inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and personalized support. Principals who lead transformatively drive innovation and push staff to exceed their potential while fostering ethical values such as fairness and integrity (Sudha et al., 2016; Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016). This style is linked to higher teacher motivation, enhanced job satisfaction, and the creation of learning-oriented school cultures (Agarwal & Gupta, 2021; Panahbehagh & Hosseini Shakib, 2018).

Laissez-Faire Leadership

Laissez-faire leadership involves minimal intervention, delegating authority entirely to subordinates (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). While it can promote autonomy in highly disciplined environments, it often results in unclear expectations, lack of motivation, and poor performance when staff require more structured guidance (Elsan Mansaray, 2019). Consequently, while

transformational leadership enhances school success through engagement and innovation, laissez-faire leadership is frequently criticized for contributing to inefficiencies and low morale in educational settings.

Teachers Behavior

Teacher behavior encompasses the various instructional, emotional, and interpersonal strategies educators use to create effective and inclusive classroom environments. Research emphasizes that teachers' instructions—both verbal and nonverbal—serve as the primary mode of communication, with directives forming a substantial portion of classroom interactions (Dhondt et al., 2023). However, behaviors that reflect a lack of commitment, such as absenteeism, bias, or neglecting student concerns, may arise when teaching is perceived as merely a job (UNESCO, 2017). Addressing these concerns requires structured observation systems, ethical oversight, and capacity-building through supervision and coaching (UNICEF, 2020). Teachers' biases, both implicit and explicit, significantly influence their expectations and disciplinary actions, which can perpetuate inequities (Starck et al., 2020). Training that integrates inclusivity, emotional regulation, and psychosocial support has been found to mitigate harmful practices and foster positive behaviors, thereby improving student outcomes and overall classroom dynamics (Mendenhall et al., 2018;).

Emotional Support

Emotional support in educational settings has gained increasing recognition for its pivotal role in shaping both teacher performance and student outcomes. Teachers' emotional well-being directly affects their instructional practices, resilience, and interactions with students (Chen, 2020). Emotional exhaustion, often linked to burnout, can undermine creativity, enthusiasm, and classroom engagement, highlighting the importance of consulting mental health professionals for timely intervention (Voss et al., 2023; Soklaridis et al., 2020). Positive emotions, as explained by Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory, enhance attention and adaptability, while negative emotions can hinder complex thinking and teaching flexibility (Fredrickson, 2013; McKasy, 2020). Emotional Regulation Activities (ERA) have been shown to improve teachers' stress management, well-being, and social interactions (Greenier et al., 2021). Ultimately, fostering emotional intelligence among teachers is essential for cultivating safe, responsive, and effective learning environments.

Pro-social Behavior

Pro-social behavior among teachers—actions rooted in empathy and aimed at benefiting others—plays a vital role in shaping positive classroom environments and student achievement (Bergin, 2018; Frey & Kaiser, 2015). Teachers with strong emotional and social competencies are more likely to exhibit kindness, understanding, and helpfulness, which foster mutual respect and enhance student well-being (Llorca et al., 2016). Specific teacher actions such as offering emotional guidance, maintaining open communication, and modeling interpersonal respect

contribute to stronger student-teacher relationships and academic performance (Helm & Christoph, 2017). Moreover, school-wide efforts to promote prosocial behavior, through SEL-integrated policies and active collaboration among educators, leaders, and parents, are essential in nurturing emotionally supportive and inclusive school cultures. These efforts help students develop empathy, cooperation, and social responsibility, reinforcing both academic success and civic readiness.

Psychometric Support

Psychometric support refers to the emotional and organizational reinforcement provided by school leaders to enhance teachers' confidence, job satisfaction, and professional growth. It includes emotional encouragement, resource provision, mentorship, and informational guidance (Sasmoko et al., 2017; Günbayı et al., 2013). Effective support from administrators has been linked to improved teacher morale, increased organizational commitment, and reduced burnout and cynicism (Qureshi & Hamid, 2017; Ozkara et al., 2019). When teachers feel valued and supported in their roles, they are more likely to exhibit greater instructional effectiveness and maintain a stronger connection to the school's mission. As such, consistent and targeted psychometric support is a critical factor in fostering a stable, motivated, and resilient teaching workforce.

II. Methodology

This section outlines the research procedures, including the study design, population and sampling, instrumentation, data collection, and analysis methods.

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive correlational research design, which aims to describe and examine relationships between variables without manipulating them (Kelkar, 2024). Descriptive research involves both quantitative and qualitative methods and commonly utilizes observations, questionnaires, and case studies to characterize a phenomenon or population. The primary goal of this approach was to assess the levels of leadership styles among school principals and the corresponding behaviors of teachers.

Research Respondents

The study was conducted in seven public elementary schools within the Maa District, Davao City Division. A total of 96 Grade 4 to Grade 6 teachers were selected as respondents using random sampling, based on Slovin's formula to ensure a statistically valid sample size while managing resource constraints. Slovin's formula is frequently used in research to determine the ideal sample size from a finite population, considering a specific margin of error and confidence level.

Research Instrument

Survey questionnaires were adapted from the validated instruments developed by Hoque and Raya (2023). The leadership styles questionnaire consisted of 15 items, with subscales covering instructional leadership (3 items), democratic leadership, transformational leadership, and laissez-faire leadership (4 items each). A separate questionnaire was used to measure teacher behavior consisted of 17 items, with subscales covering emotional support (4 items), pro-social behavior (5 items), and psychometric support (8 items).

Permission to Conduct a Study, Content Validation and Pilot Testing

Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the RMC Ethics Review Board, along with permissions from the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Schools Division Superintendent. Formal letters were distributed to school principals, and informed consent was secured from all participants. To ensure data validity and reliability, the instrument was reviewed by experts and pilot-tested with 20 teachers not included in the main study.

Distribution and Retrieval of the Questionnaire

Surveys were administered online via Google Forms, allowing respondents flexibility in completing the instrument. Data were automatically stored in a secure cloud-based system provided by Google Forms.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics such as the mean were used to determine the levels of leadership styles and teacher behavior (addressing Statements of the Problem 1 and 2). Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was applied to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between principals' leadership styles and teacher behavior (Statement of the Problem 3). To further determine the predictive influence of leadership styles on teacher behavior, Multiple Linear Regression Analysis was used (Statement of the Problem 4).

III. Results and Discussion

Results

Summary on the Level of Leadership Styles

Table 1 exemplified the summary on the level of principals' leadership styles with four indicators, namely instructional leadership, democratic leadership, transformational leadership, and laissez-faire leadership. Among the four indicators, instructional leadership obtained the highest category mean of 4.58 labeled as very high followed by democratic leadership with a category mean of 4.38 interpreted as very high, then transformational leadership with a category

mean of 4.25 or very high. On the other hand, laissez-faire leadership obtained the lowest category mean of 3.97 which is interpreted as high. The overall mean rating marked as 4.30 which was labeled as very high. This means that the summary of the level of principals' leadership styles with four indicators, namely instructional leadership, democratic leadership, transformational leadership, and laissez-faire leadership.

Table 1. Summary of the Level of Leadership Styles

No.	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
1	Instructional Leadership	4.58	Very High
2	Democratic Leadership	4.38	Very High
3	Transformational Leadership	4.25	Very High
4	Laissez-Faire Leadership	3.97	High
Overall		4.30	Very High

Summary on the Level of Teachers Behavior

Table 2 displayed the summary of the level of teachers' behavior with three indicators, namely emotional support, pro-social behavior, and psychometric support. Among the indicators, pro-social behavior tallied with the highest mean of 4.06 which is described as high, indicating that teachers' behavior in terms of pro-social behavior is oftentimes observed. This was followed by psychometric with a mean of 3.88 described as high, indicating that teachers' behavior in terms of psychometric support is oftentimes observed. On the other hand, emotional support garnered the lowest mean of 3.87 also described as high indicating that teachers' behavior in terms of emotional support is oftentimes observed.

Additionally, the overall mean rating on this domain marked is 3.93 which was described as high. This means that the summary of the level of teachers' behavior with three indicators, namely emotional support, pro-social behavior, and psychometric support were oftentimes observed.

Table 2. Summary of the Level of Teachers Behavior

No.	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
1	Emotional Support	3.87	High
2	Pro-social Behavior	4.06	High
3	Psychometric Support	3.88	High
Overall		3.93	High

Significant Relationship between Principals' Leadership Styles and Teacher Behavior

Table 3 presented the test of relationship between principals' leadership styles and teachers' behavior. The result showed an overall r-value of .725 with a p-value of .000 which is less than .05 in the level of significance indicating significant. This means that there is a significant high relationship between principals' leadership styles and teachers' behavior. Further, this means that as principals leadership styles increases, teachers' behavior also increases or vice versa.

Table 3. Test of Relationship between Principals’ Leadership Styles and Teachers Behavior

Indicators of Principals Leadership Styles	Teachers Behavior			
	r-value	p-value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Instructional Leadership	.545	.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Democratic Leadership	.638	.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Transformational Leadership	.632	.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Laissez-Faire Leadership	.658	.000	Reject Ho	Significant
Overall	.725	.000	Reject Ho	Significant

Significant at .05 level of significance/.000

Domains of Leadership Styles of Principals that Significantly Influence Teachers Behavior

The four indicators that consisted principals’ leadership styles were subjected for analysis to determine which of these variables significantly influenced teachers’ behaviors. Indicators of principals’ leadership styles include instructional leadership, democratic leadership, transformational leadership, and laissez-faire leadership. On the other hand, teachers’ behavior indicators include emotional support, pro-social behavior, and psychometric support.

Table 4 presented the domains of leadership styles that significantly influenced teachers’ behavior. The results revealed that if there are no variables in the model, the value of teachers’ behavior is $-.276$. The constant term represents the expected value of the dependent variable when all independent variables are zero. Herein, a negative constant ($-.276$) suggests that, under these conditions, the model predicts a negative outcome. On the other hand, each indicator of principals’ leadership styles registered unstandardized regression coefficient of $.111$ for instructional leadership, $.351$ for democratic leadership, $.122$ for transformational leadership, and $.415$ for laissez-faire leadership. In this regard, only the significant predictors are interpreted. Thus, this indicates that for every unit increase of democratic leadership, the teachers’ behavior will increase by $.351$ holding other factors constant. Also, for every unit increase of laissez-faire leadership, the teachers’ behavior will increase by $.415$ holding other factors constant. Therefore, among the leadership styles, the domain that creates the strongest influence is laissez-faire and this answers research question 4. Meanwhile, Laissez-faire leadership thrives on granting employees autonomy, which can lead to increased creativity and job satisfaction. Over-monitoring can undermine this autonomy, potentially stifling innovation and diminishing the benefits of this leadership style. Excessive oversight may signal a lack of trust in employees’ abilities, which can erode morale and confidence. Allowing principals the space to manage their responsibilities can foster a sense of ownership and accountability.

In addition, the model registered an R-squared value of $.546$ which indicates 54.6 percent of the variations on teachers’ behavior is explained by the indicators of principals’ leadership styles while the remaining 45.4% is influenced by other factors not accounted for the study. This suggests that although the predictors contribute to teachers’ behavior, a significant portion of variability is driven by external or unexamined influences. Additionally, this study garnered an F-value of

27.307 with a p-value of .000 indicating a model fit. This means that principals' leadership styles can explain teachers' behavior.

Table 4. Domains of Principals Leadership Styles that Significantly Influence Teachers Behavior.

Principals Leadership Styles	Teachers Behavior						
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standard Coefficients		t-value	p-value	Decision @= 0.05
B	Std. Error	Beta					
(Constant)	-.276	.481			-.573	.568	
Instructional Leadership	.111	.166	.076		.668	.506	Accept Ha
Democratic Leadership	.351	.176	.273		1.989	.050	Reject H ₀
Transformational Leadership	.122	.171	.097		.717	.475	Accept Ha
Laissez-Faire Leadership	.415	.093	.408		4.454	.000	Reject H ₀

Dependent Variable: Teacher Behavior
 R= 0.739, R²=.546, F-ratio=27.307, p-value= .000

Moreover, regression coefficients revealed that democratic and laissez faire leadership significantly influenced teachers' behavior. Among the indicators, laissez-faire leadership had the highest standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.408$) with a p-value of .000, which is less than the 0.05 significance level, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Similarly, democratic leadership obtained a standardized coefficient of .273 with a p-value of .050 which is less than the 0.05 significance level, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The results indicate that laissez-faire and democratic leadership significantly influenced teachers' behavior.

Discussion

The study determined the influence of principals' leadership styles on teachers' behavior in Maa District, Davao City Division. This was directed to answer questions on the level of leadership styles of principals and teachers' behavior, assess the significant relationship between leadership styles and teachers behavior, and determine the influence of leadership styles on teacher behavior.

The findings of this study underscore the significant influence of principals' leadership styles on teacher behavior within the school setting. The consistently very high ratings for instructional, democratic, and transformational leadership suggest that these styles are commonly practiced by school leaders and are perceived positively by teachers. These leadership approaches are known to promote collaboration, professional development, and a sense of shared purpose, which likely contribute to the observed positive teacher behaviors.

Interestingly, while laissez-faire leadership received a slightly lower rating—indicating it was practiced only "oftentimes"—it emerged as the most influential leadership style on teacher behavior. This suggests that, in certain school contexts, allowing teachers greater autonomy and minimal interference may empower them to take initiative and make decisions that benefit their

students. However, this finding should be interpreted with caution, as excessive reliance on laissez-faire leadership could also lead to ambiguity and lack of direction if not balanced appropriately.

The significant relationship between all four leadership styles and teachers' behavior confirms that leadership is a critical factor in shaping the school environment. Teachers responded positively not only to structured and supportive leadership but also to leadership that allowed autonomy, indicating the need for a balanced leadership approach tailored to the specific needs and culture of each school.

Moreover, the high ratings for teacher behaviors—emotional support, pro-social behavior, and psychometric support—reflect a generally healthy and responsive teaching climate. These behaviors are essential for fostering positive student-teacher relationships and improving student outcomes.

In summary, the study highlights that democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles, in particular, have a significant influence on teachers' behavior. School leaders should consider integrating these leadership styles strategically to enhance teacher engagement, reduce stress, and improve overall school performance. Future research may explore the contextual factors that moderate the effects of different leadership styles and how leadership training programs can be designed to develop these competencies among school heads.

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