
HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS: A TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the experiences of school principals in managing human resources, with a particular focus on the application of transformational leadership within the Paquibato district of Davao City. Utilizing a qualitative phenomenological approach, the research aims to uncover the lived experiences of seven selected principals who have demonstrated effective human resource management practices. Through in-depth interviews, the study explores the challenges these leaders face and the coping mechanisms they employ to enhance teacher productivity and overall school performance. The findings highlight the critical role of principals in fostering a supportive environment that empowers teachers, ultimately contributing to improved educational outcomes.

The implications of the study are significant for various stakeholders, including Department of Education officials and school administrators. By understanding the effective practices and challenges faced by school leaders, the findings can inform strategies to provide better support and resources for educational leaders. Additionally, the research offers a foundation for future studies on leadership and human resource management in educational contexts, emphasizing the importance of transformational leadership in navigating the complexities of managing human resources in schools.

1. INTRODUCTION

The effective management of human resources in educational institutions is increasingly recognized as a critical factor in fostering a productive learning environment and enhancing student outcomes. As schools navigate a landscape marked by budget constraints, evolving educational standards, and the integration of technology, the role of school principals as transformational leaders becomes paramount. Transformational leadership, which emphasizes the ability to inspire and motivate staff, is essential for addressing the complexities of modern education and ensuring that teachers receive the support they need for professional growth (Leithwood et al., 2020). This study aims to explore the experiences of school principals in the Paquibato district of Davao City, focusing on their human resource management practices and the application of transformational leadership.

Research has consistently shown that effective human resource management (HRM) practices are linked to higher levels of teacher satisfaction and performance, which in turn positively impacts student achievement (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2020). School principals are pivotal in implementing these HRM practices, which include recruitment, training, performance appraisal, and fostering a collaborative school culture (Shields et al., 2020). However, many principals face significant challenges, such as limited resources, insufficient professional development opportunities, and the need to adapt to rapid changes in educational demands (Gurr, 2021). Understanding how principals navigate these challenges through transformational leadership can provide valuable insights into effective HRM strategies in schools.

The complexities of human resource management in educational settings are further compounded by the need for principals to balance their dual roles as educational leaders and human resource managers. While trained primarily as educators, principals are tasked with overseeing not only instructional delivery and curriculum implementation but also critical HR functions such as motivation, recruitment, and career development. This overlap of responsibilities can lead to challenges that impact both the morale of teaching staff and the overall effectiveness of the school (Bass & Avolio, 2020; Day et al., 2021). By examining the experiences of school principals, this study seeks to illuminate the strategies they employ to manage human resources effectively while embodying transformational leadership.

Employing a qualitative phenomenological approach, this research captures the lived experiences of school principals, allowing for a nuanced understanding of their perspectives on human resource management. By focusing on the specific context of the Paquibato district, the study aims to contribute to the existing literature on educational leadership and HRM, offering practical recommendations for policymakers, school administrators, and future researchers. Ultimately, this study seeks to highlight the importance of transformational leadership in enhancing the management of human resources within educational settings, thereby promoting a more effective and supportive environment for both teachers and students.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative research methodology, specifically utilizing phenomenological approaches to explore the experiences of school principals in the Paquibato district of Davao City. The researcher selected participants through purposive sampling, ensuring that the chosen school principals had been in their positions for at least five years and had

received very satisfactory ratings in their performance evaluations. This selection criterion aimed to gather authentic insights from individuals embodying transactional leadership, thereby enhancing the credibility and relevance of the findings.

Data collection was primarily conducted through in-depth interviews, which allowed the researcher to uncover the nuanced experiences and perspectives of the participants. The interviews were designed to elicit detailed narratives, providing a rich understanding of the principals' experiences in managing human resources within their schools. Following the interviews, the researcher transcribed the discussions and employed a systematic data analysis process. This involved identifying significant statements from the transcripts, which were then clustered into themes based on psychological and phenomenological concepts.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, the researcher maintained transparency throughout the research process. Participants were informed of their rights, including the ability to withdraw their information at any time and to verify their individual transcripts post-interview. The researcher also took measures to protect the identities of the participants by using pseudonyms and altering identifiable information in the reporting of the findings. This ethical consideration was crucial in fostering an environment of trust and openness, encouraging honest participation from the school principals.

Overall, the methodology of the study was carefully crafted to provide a comprehensive understanding of the principals' experiences and the impact of their leadership on human resource management. By employing rigorous qualitative methods and adhering to ethical research practices, the study aimed to contribute valuable insights into the role of effective leadership in educational settings, ultimately enhancing the management of human resources in schools.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Experiences of School Principals in Managing Human Resources Managing human resources is important in improving teacher productivity and school performance that can be attributed to effective educational management. The roles of school principal in managing human resources is a key component in promoting teachers' ability to perform the job more effectively towards the success of students, and the success of school in general. Having Human Resource Management is a competitive advantage and a great source of competitive strength for the schools. However, school principals encounter challenging tasks in managing the most valuable asset in school – the teachers. Especially that they differ in needs, interests and priorities.

Some of the responses of the participants are connected to the statement of Mulford (2013) that educational institutions, just like all other organizations, undergo change regularly. But change does not necessarily bring improvement. It all depends upon how well the leadership skills of school principals in implementing and managing change in schools. A school principal with strong leadership skills can easily motivate and influence teachers and apply effective changes to the school. According to Atkinson (2015), if there is no effective leadership in an organization no positive change will be made, because there is no school principal that motivates and leads the teachers as well as provides a clear direction for the school.

Meanwhile, other responses of the participants connect to the statement of Cochran & Lytle (2001) that providing teachers with high-quality constructive feedback is essential to meet their needs, achieve good results and drive school improvement. The right kind of feedback can help make teachers more effective, improve best practice and ultimately improve learning as they constantly reflect on what they received. Timperley (2001) adds to the idea of the participants that teachers are most likely to respond positively to feedback that is clear, consistent, specific and focused on improving performance, but also includes challenging roles. School principals' feedback should further encourage teachers to be independent learners and ideally be delivered in an environment that teachers find trusting and supportive. With constructive feedback approaches in school management, school principals give teachers the ability to self-reflect in their practices. Indeed, the researcher could conclude that giving constructive feedback is an important management task. It contributes to school improvement by providing an accurate assessment of how well both the school and individual teachers are performing. It leads to the identification of improvement priorities and to evidence-based school improvement planning, which results in clear benefit for the learners.

Undeniably, the pandemic crisis presents school principals with infinitely complicated challenges and no easy answers. It demands them to have a clear playbook that quickly connects with rattled teachers about immediate matters of great importance, much less reassure them as they ponder the future. In general, the responses of the participants are connected to the statement of Casas et al. (2003) in which he said that school principals who effectively manage disruption will be well-positioned not only to maintain school operations throughout the outbreak, but also to assure the good future of the school. Leaders must continuously process large amounts of complex information, contradictory views, and strong emotions during disruptions.

School Principals Applying Transformational Leadership to cope with the challenges of managing human resources

Being able to adapt to manage the novel and changing situations that occur in these ever-changing environments is an important capacity for thriving and effective teachers. This is known as adaptability, or the capacity of individuals to adjust their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in response to new, changing, or uncertain situations. The changes in the environment contribute to the school principals' changing landscape. School principals are being asked to develop new competencies in human capital development in order to support and meet the needs of their followers, basically the teachers. Transformational leadership has helped school principals to cope with the challenges of managing human resources in the ever-changing environment.

Moreover, leadership is needed for organizations to survive and remain competitive. Sharing a vision is frequently seen as one of the essential tasks that top organizational leaders perform. Vision needs to be shared by organizational members to influence organizational outcomes. By doing so, school principals apply transformational leadership as an inspirational motivator to their followers. Sufficient knowledge of the school's vision brings sufficient motivation on the part of the employees – the teachers. Teachers refine their work to perform optimized work looking at the school's vision. It is promoting a culture where everyone is able to disseminate and propagate the vision and is encouraged to share it with the rest of individuals. Indeed, school principals should be well-trained in sharing visions to the teachers because according to Senge (2000) their competence in sharing vision would enable the teachers to see that they are guiding everything that the teachers do – that the school principal would do everything to reach the vision and exceed their expectations. Moreover, Senge (2000) further explained that such competence molds teachers who want to make the school more successful – they become ingrained in all those associated in any way with the school.

In addition to this, responses of the participants regarding motivating teachers through awards and recognition connects to the study of Mitchell & Ortiz (2002) that teacher quality matters. Appropriate motivation plays a vital role in determining the quality of teacher work efforts. The rewards and recognition system in school largely determines how strongly teachers will be motivated to perform their work responsibilities since not all human behavior is “motivated. Work behavior, especially the complicated work of teaching students does not arise from such unconscious and automatic processes. Such work activity must be motivated. That is, it does not begin until it has been stimulated or energized, and the form which it stimulated or energized must be shaped and planned well. The effectiveness of individual teachers depends largely on the overall level of stimulation to action and the specific forms it is given. In short, teacher effectiveness depends upon motivation and the ways it is stimulated or energized.

4. DISCUSSIONS

Lessons learned from the experience of school principals

School improvement plan is a continuous process that schools use to monitor progress over time and to ensure reaching high standards of excellence. As the name suggests, the idea is to have a plan in place for improving the overall environment of the school. This takes commitment from educators, students, parents and administrators. From the response of the participant, it is clearly implied that linking those long-term human resource strategic goals to the School Improvement Plan gives a clear idea where the school is headed. The linking also assists the school principals in monitoring and evaluating the achievement of the human resource long-term strategic goals. This will allow them to check and balance the elements, factors, and other contributors along with the implementation.

The educational management insights of the participants, as well as their recommendations, are linked to the statement of Lamb (2019) that long-term human resource strategic goals, when put into plan, help the school and its members to sustain and assure success. She further stated that long-term human resource strategic goals and school improvement plans go hand-in-hand. A long-term human resource strategic goal will offer a top-level overview of the direction of the career of the members of the organization. Meanwhile, the School Improvement Plan outlines how the school will achieve such goals. It will include specific actions the school needs to take to meet the goals and will keep them on track for achieving them.

Furthermore, the participants emphasized that the leadership capacity of teachers can bring about a change, desire to work for change, and have the knowledge and skills to do so. Example of change is the increasing demand of working with others, especially that nowadays communities and countries can be easily connected due to vast improvements in information and technology. If all teachers encounter leadership roles, there is collective efficacy since the teachers become confident with their co-teachers. Confident that others too can organize and execute courses of actions required from them.

The educational management insights and the recommendations of the participants are connected to the study of Goddard & Goddard (2001) that the perceived collective efficacy of teachers within a school is a construct that is “systematically associated with student achievement”. Teachers who believe that their colleagues are able to behave in

ways that promote student achievement indicate high collective efficacy. When a staff's collective belief in achieving their tasks is high, each teacher's individual efficacy is also higher. These beliefs indirectly influence student achievement, as shown by Muijs and Reynolds (2002) who found that "teacher behaviors were not only the most significant predictor of student progress over the year [of their study], but also significantly affected teacher beliefs and self-efficacy", indicating a reciprocal relationship.

In general, the educational management insights and recommendations of the participants connects to the study of Lynch (2015) that building and strengthening relationship requires time, but its impact is long-lasting. The biggest challenge for school principals in Human Resource Management is handling different kinds of people, with various roots, knowledge, skills, and interests. School principals have to ensure strong relationships with their subordinates because good working relationships will make job more enjoyable and easier. What is more is that close-knit teams are more productive, which frees up time to innovate and focus on development – personal and organizational.

Another study that connects to the responses of the participants is the study of Hampton (2019), where he revealed that school principals should have to worry about the relationship with their subordinates. When subordinates feel that they are being treated well by the school principal, they are likely to also view the school principal in a positive light. Thus, making the management of human resources easier for the lives of the school principal. It is easier for them to connect, motivate, inspire, and encourage. Transactional leadership in Human Resource Management truly assists the school principals since it enables them to appear charismatic and friendly to their subordinates.

5. REFERENCES

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