

SCHOOL CLIMATE INNOVATIVENESS WITH ENCOURAGING LEADERSHIP STYLE OF SCHOOL HEADS AS MEDIATOR

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ABSTRACT

The current study aimed to evaluate whether encouraging leadership styles of school heads mediates the relationship between school climate and teachers' innovativeness. In this study, the researcher selected the 200 public elementary school teachers in Maco North District, Davao de Oro as the respondents of the study. Stratified random sampling technique was utilized in the selection of the respondents. Non-experimental quantitative research design using descriptive-correlational method was employed. The data collected were subjected on the following statistical tools: Mean, Pearson Moment Product Correlation, and Structural equation model using mediation analysis. Descriptive analysis showed that school climate and teachers innovativeness were described as extensivise, while, encouraging leadership style of school beads was rated as moderately extensive. Further, correlation analysis demonstrated that there is a significant relationship among school climate, teachers' innovativeness, and encouraging leadership style of school heads. Evidently, SEM using mediation analysis proved that encouraging leadership style of school heads mediates the relationship between school climate and teachers' innovativeness. In other words, encouraging leadership style of school heads is a significant mediator on the school climate and teachers' innovativeness in Maco North District, Davao de Oro. The study, therefore conducted for further utilization of findings through publication in reputable research journal.

Keywords: Educational management school climate, focusing innovativeness, encouraging leadership styles, Davao del Norte, Philippines

1. INTRODUCTION

The study focuses on the intricate relationship between school climate, teachers' innovativeness, and the leadership styles of school heads in the Maco North District, Davao de Oro. Globally, educational institutions are increasingly recognizing the pivotal role that school leadership plays in shaping an environment conducive to innovation and growth (Leithwood et al., 2019). Effective leadership is essential for fostering a positive school climate, which in turn encourages teachers to experiment with new teaching methods and ideas (Bush, 2018). Nationally, the Philippines has been striving to enhance the quality of its education system, addressing issues such as resource allocation, teacher training, and administrative support (Bernardo & Mendoza, 2019). Local challenges in the Maco North District include maintaining a positive school climate amidst varying socio-economic conditions and ensuring that teachers remain innovative despite constraints. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of leadership in influencing school climate and teacher performance, yet there is a lack of empirical research specifically examining these relationships in the context of the Philippines (Castillo & Hallinger, 2018). This study addresses this research gap by examining how encouraging leadership styles can mediate the relationship between school climate and teachers' innovativeness, providing insights that are crucial for policy-making and administrative strategies. The urgency of this study is underscored by the need for empirical evidence to support leadership practices that foster educational excellence in the region. By understanding these dynamics, stakeholders can implement more effective strategies to enhance both school climate and teacher innovativeness, ultimately improving educational outcomes. The findings of this study are expected to contribute significantly to the literature on educational leadership and innovation, particularly in developing country contexts. This research will also offer practical recommendations for school heads and policymakers aiming to create environments that support and enhance teacher innovativeness.

2. METHODS

Philosophical Assumptions

This study is grounded in the positivist paradigm, which assumes that reality is objective and can be measured through empirical methods (Creswell, 2018). Positivism emphasizes the use of quantitative data and statistical analysis to uncover patterns and relationships between variables. This philosophical stance is suitable for investigating the relationships between variables such as school climate, leadership styles, and teacher innovativeness. By adhering to a positivist approach, the study aims to produce reliable and generalizable findings that can inform educational policy and practice. The objective nature of positivism ensures that the study's conclusions are based on empirical evidence rather than subjective interpretation. This approach allows for a structured investigation, where hypotheses are tested through measurable data, enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings. Moreover, positivism supports the replication of studies, enabling other researchers to verify results and build upon the existing knowledge base. This philosophical

foundation aligns well with the study's goal of providing actionable insights for educational leaders and policymakers. By focusing on observable and quantifiable phenomena, the study ensures a rigorous examination of the factors influencing school climate and teacher innovativeness.

Research Design

A non-experimental, quantitative research design employing a descriptive-correlational method was utilized. This approach allows for the examination of relationships between variables without manipulating the study environment (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2018). The descriptive aspect of the design provides a detailed overview of the current state of school climate, leadership styles, and teacher innovativeness in the Maco North District. The correlational component explores the strength and direction of relationships between these variables, offering insights into how they interact with each other. This design is appropriate for addressing the study's research questions and hypotheses, providing a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under investigation. The non-experimental nature of the study ensures that it reflects real-world conditions, enhancing the ecological validity of the findings. Additionally, the quantitative approach allows for the use of statistical techniques to test hypotheses and validate results, ensuring a robust analysis. The combination of descriptive and correlational methods offers a balanced perspective, capturing both the breadth and depth of the research topic. This design also facilitates the identification of potential mediating variables, such as leadership styles, that influence the relationship between school climate and teacher innovativeness.

Procedure

The study employed stratified random sampling to select 200 public elementary school teachers from the Maco North District. This method ensures that various subgroups within the population are adequately represented, enhancing the generalizability of the findings (Etikan & Bala, 2019). Stratification was based on factors such as school size, location, and teacher demographics, ensuring a diverse and representative sample. Participants were informed about the study's purpose and procedures, and consent was obtained prior to data collection. The sampling procedure was carefully designed to minimize bias and ensure that the sample accurately reflects the broader population of teachers in the district. Detailed instructions were provided to respondents to ensure consistency in data collection. Follow-up reminders were sent to maximize response rates and minimize attrition. The stratified random sampling approach not only improves representativeness but also enhances the study's external validity. By systematically including different subgroups, the study captures a wide range of experiences and perspectives, providing a comprehensive understanding of the research variables. This method also allows for subgroup analyses, offering deeper insights into how different categories of teachers perceive and experience school climate, leadership, and innovativeness.

Research Respondents

The respondents included 200 public elementary school teachers from the Maco North District, selected using stratified random sampling. This method ensured a representative sample across different schools in the district. Respondents varied in terms of age, gender, teaching experience, and educational background, providing a comprehensive perspective on the variables being studied. The diverse sample enhances the study's external validity, allowing the findings to be applicable to a wide range of educational settings. By including teachers from various backgrounds, the study captures a holistic view of the factors influencing school climate and teacher innovativeness. Detailed demographic data were collected to facilitate subgroup analyses and understand the nuanced impacts of leadership styles on different teacher groups. The diverse respondent profile also helps in identifying specific needs and challenges faced by various teacher demographics, enabling targeted recommendations. Ensuring diversity in the sample helps in uncovering differential effects and patterns that may not be apparent in a homogenous group. This approach also provides a robust basis for drawing generalizable conclusions that can inform policy and practice across different educational contexts.

Research Ethics/ Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were paramount, with informed consent obtained from all participants. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study, adhering to ethical guidelines set by the Philippine Research Ethics Board (PREB, 2019). Participants were assured that their responses would be used solely for research purposes and that their identities would not be disclosed. The study also complied with ethical standards related to voluntary participation, allowing respondents to withdraw at any time without consequence. These ethical safeguards ensured that the study respected the rights and dignity of all participants. Ethical approval was sought and obtained from the relevant institutional review board before commencing data collection. Regular checks were conducted to ensure compliance with ethical protocols throughout the research process. Transparent communication about the study's aims, methods, and potential benefits helped build trust with participants. Ensuring ethical rigor in the research process enhances the credibility and acceptance of the findings among the academic community and stakeholders. Ethical considerations also included the careful handling and secure storage of data to prevent unauthorized access. The adherence to ethical principles ensured the integrity of the research and safeguarded the well-being of participants.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher acted as an objective observer, ensuring that personal biases did not influence data collection and analysis. This role was crucial in maintaining the study's integrity and reliability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2018). The researcher maintained a neutral stance throughout the study, focusing on accurately recording and analyzing the data. Regular checks were conducted to ensure that the researcher's presence did not affect the respondents' answers. By adhering to these principles, the researcher upheld the standards of objectivity and impartiality that are essential for high-quality research. The researcher's role also included ensuring methodological rigor, such as proper administration of questionnaires and adherence to sampling protocols. Consistency in the research process was maintained to avoid variability that could compromise the study's validity. The researcher also facilitated clear communication with participants, providing necessary clarifications without leading or influencing their responses. This approach ensured that the data collected was a true reflection of the respondents' perceptions and experiences. The researcher's commitment to ethical and professional standards was instrumental in achieving credible and trustworthy results. Ongoing reflection and self-monitoring helped the researcher stay vigilant against potential biases and methodological deviations.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using validated questionnaires that measured school climate, teachers' innovativeness, and leadership styles. The reliability and validity of these instruments were established in previous studies (Hoy & Tarter, 2019; Scott & Bruce, 2019). The questionnaires included both closed and open-ended questions, allowing for a detailed and nuanced understanding of the respondents' perceptions. Pilot testing was conducted to ensure clarity and relevance of the questions, and adjustments were made based on feedback. The use of validated instruments enhances the accuracy and credibility of the study's findings. The questionnaires were designed to be user-friendly, with clear instructions and a logical flow to facilitate ease of response. Scales used in the questionnaires were tested for internal consistency, ensuring reliable measurement of the constructs. The instruments also included demographic sections to gather background information on respondents, which aided in contextual analysis. The comprehensive nature of the questionnaires allowed for the capture of both quantitative and qualitative data, providing a richer dataset for analysis. The robust design of the research instruments ensured that they effectively measured the intended variables, contributing to the overall reliability of the study.

Research Procedure

The research procedure involved distributing questionnaires to the selected respondents, followed by the collection and analysis of the data. The process was systematic and structured to ensure consistency and reliability. Questionnaires were distributed both in person and electronically, providing flexibility for respondents. Follow-up reminders were sent to ensure a high response rate. Data collection was completed within a specified timeframe, ensuring that the findings reflect current conditions. The systematic approach minimized potential errors and biases, contributing to the study's overall validity. The data collection phase was carefully monitored to address any issues promptly, ensuring the smooth execution of the research plan. Data were securely stored and regularly backed up to prevent loss. Detailed records of the distribution and collection processes were maintained to ensure transparency and traceability. The procedure also included regular progress reviews to ensure adherence to the research timeline. Ensuring a rigorous and transparent procedure enhanced the reliability and credibility of the research findings. The structured approach to data collection facilitated a comprehensive and accurate analysis of the research questions.

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted through self-administered questionnaires, ensuring that respondents could complete them at their convenience. This method facilitated a high response rate and accurate data representation. Respondents were given detailed instructions to ensure they understood each question and provided thoughtful responses. The questionnaires were designed to minimize response bias, with a mix of positively and negatively worded items. Regular follow-ups and reminders were conducted to encourage timely completion and submission of the questionnaires. The data collection process was completed within the planned timeframe, ensuring the data's relevance and timeliness. All responses were treated with confidentiality, and data were securely stored to maintain privacy. The systematic collection of data ensured a comprehensive dataset for subsequent analysis. The approach also allowed for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, providing a holistic view of the research variables. Ensuring the integrity and quality of data collection was paramount to achieving reliable and valid results. This phase was crucial in laying the foundation for accurate and meaningful analysis and interpretation of the findings.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involved several statistical techniques to examine the relationships between school climate, leadership styles, and teachers' innovativeness. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data and provide an overview of

the variables. Pearson Moment Product Correlation was employed to explore the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to test the mediation effect of leadership styles on the relationship between school climate and teachers' innovativeness. The data were carefully screened for any missing values or outliers, and appropriate measures were taken to address these issues. Statistical software such as SPSS and AMOS was used to conduct the analyses, ensuring accuracy and reliability. The results of the analysis were interpreted in the context of the research questions and hypotheses, providing insights into the complex interplay between the variables. The use of SEM allowed for a detailed examination of the mediation effects, offering a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which leadership styles influence the relationship between school climate and teachers' innovativeness. Ensuring rigorous and thorough data analysis was essential for drawing valid and meaningful conclusions from the study.

Analytical Framework

The analytical framework for this study was based on established theories and models related to educational leadership, school climate, and teacher innovativeness. The framework guided the selection of variables, the development of hypotheses, and the choice of analytical techniques. The framework posited that school climate influences teachers' innovativeness, with leadership styles acting as a mediating variable. This theoretical foundation was supported by a review of the relevant literature, which provided evidence for the proposed relationships. The use of an analytical framework ensured a systematic and coherent approach to the study, facilitating a comprehensive examination of the research questions. The framework also guided the interpretation of the results, linking the findings to the broader theoretical context. By grounding the study in a robust analytical framework, the research achieved a higher level of rigor and validity. The framework also facilitated the identification of key variables and their interrelationships, providing a clear roadmap for the analysis. Ensuring a robust analytical framework was essential for achieving credible and meaningful insights from the study.

Trustworthiness of the Study

The trustworthiness of the study was ensured through various measures such as the use of validated instruments, rigorous data collection procedures, and comprehensive data analysis techniques. Triangulation was employed to enhance the credibility of the findings, with multiple data sources and analytical methods used to corroborate the results. Member checking was conducted to validate the findings with the respondents, ensuring that their perspectives were accurately represented. The study also adhered to ethical standards and guidelines, ensuring the integrity and ethical rigor of the research process. Detailed documentation of the research procedures was maintained to ensure transparency and replicability. Regular audits were conducted to ensure compliance with the research plan and ethical standards. The use of established theoretical frameworks and validated instruments further enhanced the reliability and validity of the study. Ensuring the trustworthiness of the study was essential for achieving credible and reliable findings that can inform educational policy and practice. By adhering to these measures, the study achieved a high level of rigor and integrity, contributing to the overall quality and impact of the research.

3. RESULTS

The results of the study revealed significant relationships between school climate, leadership styles, and teachers' innovativeness. Descriptive statistics indicated that both school climate and teachers' innovativeness were rated as extensive, while the encouraging leadership style of school heads was rated as moderately extensive. Pearson Moment Product Correlation analysis demonstrated significant positive relationships among the variables, indicating that a positive school climate and supportive leadership styles are associated with higher levels of teacher innovativeness. Structural equation modeling (SEM) further confirmed that leadership styles significantly mediate the relationship between school climate and teachers' innovativeness. This finding highlights the crucial role of school heads in fostering an environment that supports and enhances teacher innovation. The results align with previous research, which has shown that effective leadership is essential for creating a positive school climate and promoting teacher innovativeness (Leithwood et al., 2019; Bush, 2018). The study also found that specific leadership behaviors, such as providing support and encouragement, are particularly effective in mediating the relationship between school climate and teachers' innovativeness. These findings have important implications for educational policy and practice, suggesting that targeted leadership training and development programs could enhance school climate and teacher innovativeness. The study contributes to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence from the context of the Philippines, highlighting the importance of leadership in shaping educational outcomes. The discussion also explores potential mechanisms through which leadership styles influence teacher innovativeness, such as fostering a sense of autonomy and encouraging risk-taking. The findings underscore the need for school heads to adopt leadership practices that create a supportive and empowering school environment.

4. CONCLUSION

The implications of this study are significant for educational leadership and policy. The findings suggest that encouraging leadership styles of school heads play a crucial role in enhancing school climate and teacher innovativeness. This highlights the need for targeted leadership development programs that focus on fostering supportive and empowering leadership practices. Educational policymakers should consider incorporating leadership training into professional development programs for school heads to enhance their ability to create positive school climates and support teacher innovation. The study also suggests that schools should prioritize creating an environment that fosters innovation, as this is essential for improving educational outcomes. Future research should explore the specific leadership behaviors that are most effective in promoting teacher innovativeness, as well as the contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of these behaviors. Longitudinal studies could provide insights into the long-term impact of leadership styles on school climate and teacher innovativeness. The study also highlights the importance of considering the local context in educational research, as the findings provide valuable insights into the dynamics of school climate and leadership in the Philippines. Further research could explore the impact of other variables, such as teacher motivation and professional development opportunities, on the relationship between school climate and teacher innovativeness. By building on the findings of this study, future research can contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors that influence educational outcomes and inform the development of effective policies and practices.

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