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THE EFFECT OF SCHOOL HEADS' LEADERSHIP STYLE ON LEARNERS' PERCEPTION OF SCHOOL CLIMATE

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Abstract: A positive school climate and excellent leadership are essential to promote holistic school administration and high-quality education. Researchers wanted to find out how school leaders' leadership styles affect the perception of students in a high-quality educational environment using a mixed-method research design. A total of 1018 people participated in this survey, including 907 students and 111 school officials from 24 different schools. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was used to determine the most common leadership style among school heads. The SCAI Secondary General Version was used to assess students' perceptions of the school climate level. Also, four school principals participated in one-on-one interviews on how their leadership styles changed during the pandemic. All aspects of school climate, including community relations, student interactions, learning and assessment, physical appearance, discipline environment, attitude, and culture, had high levels of perceived school climate. Results show that transformational leadership, contingent reward, management by exception, and inspirational motivation are the most prevalent styles of leadership, while laissez-faire, idealized influence, and intellectual stimulation are the least prevalent. Only two out of forty-two (42) correlations between school atmosphere and leadership style were significant. Student interactions and idealized influence are also included in this category. School administrators and teachers need to understand the level of transformational leadership and the school climate to create the best school environment, which will improve the quality of teaching and learning and, in the end, school performance.

Keywords: Leadership Style, Learners' Performance, Quality Teaching, School Climate

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INTRODUCTION

School heads are essential in schools since they're responsible for social control, political leadership, mentoring, institutional planning and goal setting, human resource management, and symbolic leadership roles (Hackman and Johnson, 2013). Due to the diversity of school settings, available resources, and principal characteristics, principals adopt various leadership styles within the school, each with a distinct emphasis, purpose, and method for utilizing school resources and influencing students and employees (Nir and Hameiri, 2014). As a result, we can assert that the capacity to lead is critical. There are many ways to define leadership, and each one leads to the different set of results. Leadership is a complex concept comprising the office or position of a leader, the capacity to lead, and the act or instance of leading (Chen, 2014). It also involves persuasion, the art of persuading someone to do something since they want to (Borg, 2013). At the same time, the conversation between different individuals in a group often requires the structure or rearrangement of the state and the members' perspectives and awareness (Egeberg and Trondal, 2018). These components are essential for driving reforms, developing policies, implementing them, and having a more significant impact on school climate (Damanik and Aldridge, 2017). Therefore, it is crucial to consider which leadership style can best alter or enhance the school climate. The most effective leadership style is likely one that creates an environment where people can learn and work.

School leaders must transform the school environment into self-directed, systems-thinking organizations surrounded by professional learning communities capable of adapting to change and creating a high-performing learning environment for students and teachers (Garmstone and Wellman, 2016). It is the goal of this research to look at how a variety of leadership styles influences students' perceptions of school climate. Leaders with a transformational leadership style handle change better than others (Allen et al., 2015). Despite the plethora of research on leadership, no definitive evidence exists that adopting transactional, transformational, or laissez-faire leadership styles results in advancement. Although the study says leaders have a high prevalence of transactional leadership, no implications are made in the study's conclusion,

according to Druga and Qosja (2014). This study would help students, teachers, and administrators establish a holistic learning environment by assessing the school climate and the principal's transformative leadership qualities. It will heighten the student's sensitivity and awareness of potential prospects to pursue higher education and be productive in the future. Teacher competence, assessment, discipline style, and relationships with other faculty and instructors are all critical teaching concerns that might influence intended learning results. These traits can be linked to what teachers do in the classroom and, ultimately, to how well those activities address the implicit skills needed to create a healthy environment for students' growth.

This study will assist management and faculty in developing, expanding, and enriching school improvement plans (SIPs) and initiatives. It also acts as a guide for developing opportunities that facilitate the development of more determined policy and action about the critical nature of systematically identifying the many issues, concerns, challenges, and barriers pertaining to the subject. This work will be valuable as a reference for researchers, graduate students, and others interested in this topic. The ideas in this article can be used to guide future research or figure out how reliable findings have already been published. School climate is commonly considered to be one of the essential factors in determining a school's success (Thapa et al., 2013). Differences in the school climate caused by the leadership styles of school leaders give us a different perspective on school improvement (Wang and Degol, 2016). The retention of teachers, student and staff engagement, and meaningful relationships are all enhanced by fostering a positive school atmosphere (Simbre and Ancho, 2019). For this study, researchers analyzed the relationship between students' perceptions of school climate aspects and the principal's transformational leadership. Studies show that the school climate, leadership style, teacher self-efficacy, positive engagement and support (Damanik and Aldridge, 2017), affiliation, innovation, professional interest, and resource adequacy (Damanik and Aldridge, 2017; McCarley et al., 2014) are all positively correlated (Damanik and Aldridge, 2017). According to Baughman (2016), principals who demonstrate leadership qualities can significantly impact the school climate. There is a statistically significant

ant link between how teachers and staff feel about the school environment and how well they think they do their jobs.

Berkovich (2016) presented the theory of transformational leadership. This sort of leadership motivates every employee to work diligently for the organization. It encourages diverse stakeholders to exceed expectations with their performance (Rapti, 2013). Rudasill et al. (2018) define school climate as the nature of the school. a) appearance and physical plant; b) faculty relations; c) student interactions; d) leadership/decision making; e) discipline environment; f) learning environment; g) attitude and culture; and h) school-community relations define a school's atmosphere. This study will investigate the relationship between students' views of the school atmosphere and the principals' transformational leadership styles. This research aims to examine the relationship between the leadership style of school administrators and students' views of a high-quality school climate. Specifically, the objective of this research is to investigate the level of the perceived school climate of the students, examine the prevalent leadership style among the school heads, determine the relationship between the measured leadership styles of school heads and the measured school climate based on the perception of the students, and how the leadership style of school heads adapts to the school climate during the pandemic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

School leadership is broadly defined as the ability of a school leader to create and maintain a positive school climate. These leaders can include principals, assistant principals, and other school administrators (Deal and Peterson, 2016). School climate is the overall atmosphere of a school that affects the social, emotional, and academic functioning of students, staff, and the community. It is determined by the collective beliefs, values, and attitudes of the school's members (Kutsyuruba et al., 2015). Conversely, research has found that effective school leadership is essential for creating a positive school climate. Leaders set the tone for the school environment, influencing the school's culture and how the students, staff, and other stakeholders interact (Smith et al., 2020). Furthermore, research has found that the relationship between school climate and leadership is bidirectional

(Petrie, 2014). Effective school leaders create a positive school climate, while a positive school climate can also influence the effectiveness of school leadership (Allen et al., 2015). Moreover, the impact of school leadership on school climate is significant. During this time, school leaders must adapt to the changing environment and support the students, staff, and community (Sindhi, 2013). Research has found that effective school leadership is essential for maintaining a positive school climate (Ross and Cozzens, 2016). By providing clear guidance and support, school leaders can help create a sense of safety and security for the school community (Whitehead et al., 2013). In addition, research has found that school leaders should be proactive in creating a supportive learning environment and responding to the needs of students and staff (Minkos et al., 2017). Furthermore, leadership style, learners' performance, quality teaching, and school climate are important aspects of education that have received considerable attention in the literature (Uthman, 2018). Leadership style has been identified as an important factor in determining a school's success. The research has shown that different leadership styles affect learners' performance (Vasilescu, 2019). Transformational leadership has been associated with higher motivation levels and improved learning outcomes (Thibault et al., 2019). On the other hand, transactional leadership has been attributed to lower the motivation levels and poorer learning outcomes (Clarke, 2013). The results suggest that transformational leadership is more effective in promoting better learning outcomes than transactional leadership.

Quality teaching has been a major focus of research in educational contexts. Studies have consistently found that quality teaching is associated with higher levels of student achievement (Aquino and Reyes, 2022; Trigwell et al., 2013). Quality teaching includes providing clear instructions, engaging students in classroom activities, and promoting critical thinking (Aquino and Chavez, 2022). The findings of these studies suggest that quality teaching is an essential factor in influencing students' learning outcomes (Alsaleh, 2020). Likewise, school climate is another important factor in determining learners' performance. Research has identified several factors associated with a positive school climate, including a sense of order, safety, and respect (Wang and Degol, 2016). Studies have

also found that a positive school climate is associated with higher student engagement and achievement (Konold et al., 2018). In conclusion, the literature review on this research has highlighted the importance of school leadership in creating and maintaining a positive school climate. Effective school leadership is essential for creating a supportive learning environment and responding to the needs of students and staff. This review has explored the existing research on the effects of different leadership styles, quality teaching, and school climate on learners' performance.

METHOD

Research Design

The researchers employed a mixed method to determine the effects of leadership styles on students' perception in high-quality school climates. Mixed methods research frequently employs qualitative or quantitative approaches (Morse, 2016). In the context of the current study, a quantitative method used to quantify a certain experience, as well as a qualitative strategy, were incorporated into the study design to allow for the description of a feature of the phenomenon which cannot be quantified and would improve the interpretive understanding of the phenomenon.

Participants

A quantitative survey design that utilizes surveys and questionnaires. The participants of the study were 907 students and 111 school administrators (principals, assistant principals, teachers-in-charge, head teachers, academic coordinators, and Grade 10 students) from 24 schools in the division of Bulacan, with a total of $N = 1018$. The inclusion of these classifications of leaders was based on the statement that transformational leadership can be found at all levels of the organization's ladder (Gier, 2016). The schools are selected from the four educational districts (EDDIS I-IV). Students are selected using stratified sampling. That's how the researcher came up with grade 10 students. The whole population of students was grouped according to year level, and then from different year levels, the researcher chose grade 10 based on the criteria of maturity and length of stay in school. The participants were instructed clearly about the purpose of the study, and they answered the survey questionnaire during the regular classes. This study

gathered data from 907 students and 111 school officials from 24 schools for a total of $N = 1018$. Self-report survey instruments on leadership style and school environment were scored in this study to provide a total school measure for each of these variables and a subtest for each. Also, for qualitative data, four (4) secondary school principals were chosen and given in-depth interviews.

Instrument

Three instruments were used in the study. The SCAI Secondary General Version was used to measure the school's administrators' school climate and leadership styles using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (Northouse, 2001). The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, Form 6-S (MLQ6S), was used to determine whether or not a leader has a transformational leadership style (Northouse, 2001). In contrast, the transactional leadership scales include contingent reward and management-by-exception (Tejeda, 2001), while the transformational leadership scales include idealistic influence, individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation. Internal reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, and the scale's internal consistency is .88, which is interpreted as reliable. A version of the School Climate Assessment Instrument for Secondary Schools (SCAI) The Alliance for the Study of School Climate (ASSC), chaired by Mr. John Shindler, developed the tool to assess school climate. Using email, we were able to reach the author and get his approval for the instrument's exclusive use in the study.

In addition, the interview guide was used to identify how the principals' leadership styles adapted to the school climate during the epidemic. Before conducting in-depth interviews with the principals, the guide questionnaire is validated for construct validity. The primary focus of the questionnaire is on the period of school adjustment to the new normal during the epidemic. The interview guide illustrates the following concepts: How would you characterize your leadership style? How would you describe your style of leadership? How does your leadership style affect the climate of the school? What modifications were made to your leadership style in response to the pandemic? Lastly, how has the pandemic altered your leadership style?.

Data Analysis

The scoring process was two-step, with the first stage determining the school and leadership meanings for each item and variable. After averaging the means of each item, the overall school and leadership style means for each variable were calculated. Statistical software was used to evaluate the data. The mean, standard deviation, range, bivariate correlation, linear regression, and reliability analysis were all performed statistically. MLQ-6S assesses your leadership based on seven dimensions of transformational leadership. The scores for each element were calculated by adding the responses to three specific questions on the questionnaire. To get your score for component 1, idealistic influence, for example, add your replies to questions 1, 8, and 15. Carry out this approach for each of the seven factors. On the other hand, the researchers used thematic analysis to analyze the qualitative data from the four principals. Thematic analysis was utilized to comprehend life experiences, ideas, and even behaviors throughout a set of data provided by the respondents. In addition, themes and codes were used by the researchers. The researcher identifies "themes" as aspects of participant stories that characterize specific perspectives and experiences consistent with the research issue. Coding is finding themes in an account and giving them labels (codes), so they can be indexed (Adu, 2019).

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered strictly to ethical principles. A letter to the Superintendent of Schools Division was sent and authorized. The researcher also presents a letter to the respondents following the release of the endorsement, requesting their agreement prior to completing the survey. Before the data collection, informed consent from the student's parent or guardian was obtained. The study was conducted voluntarily, and those who consented to participate could withdraw at any moment. The researcher provided participants with the complete disclosure information, which aided them in making an informed decision to participate, which converted into an autonomous decision free of influence. The participants' identities were concealed to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. Each school, administrator, and student participant were assigned a code name. Participants were also allo-

wed to withdraw from the study at any moment. There was no apparent conflict of interest during this study's conduct.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

School Climate

Results from the survey show the mean percentage score on school climate dimensions based on the student's perceptions. Most students believe that their school looks welcoming and safe, with a mean score of 4.22. The least dimension, with a mean score of 3.54, focuses on students' work displayed to show pride and ownership of good performance. Student interactions have a general interpretation of high middle, and among the statements stated, "My school feels like a community in which I belong," which has a mean score of 4.28. The least is 3.62, which refers to the humiliating remarks. In addition, the disciplined environment has an overall interpretation of HIGH MIDDLE in all statements. The highest has a mean score of 4.09 and deals with the consistent implementation of policies. The least mean score, which is 3.79, deals with classroom management and class discipline. Moreover, it also discusses the learning and assessment scenarios inside the classroom. It is generally interpreted as "high middle. Cooperation between the classes is usually observed; thus, it received the highest mean score of 4.09. On the contrary, a mean score of 3.76 discusses how students' reflection needs improvement and priority and is currently the lowest. Meanwhile, the attitude and culture are generally interpreted as high middle-class. It shows the relationship between a school and students. Students feel they should be thankful for what they have from the school they graduated from. Among the statements in this dimension, it has the highest mean score of 3.96. The lowest mean score is 3.71; it is all about the expectations of teachers of their students. Hence, community relations show a high middle interpretation. The students are fully aware of the impact of community relations on school. The sense of voluntarism in schools is visible; it received the highest mean score of 4.09 under the Community Relations dimension. The lowest mean score is 3.68, which explains that students are unaware of the support given to athletes by their parents. To sum up, Table 1 presented the study's results for the school climate dimensions. The overall mean score is 3.88, which

is interpreted as high middle. Community relations rank as highest with a mean score of 3.93, followed by students' interactions with a mean score of 3.92, Learning and Assessment with a mean score

of 3.89, Physical appearance with a mean score of 3.88, Discipline Environment with a mean score of 3.84, and lastly, Attitude and Culture with a mean score of 3.83.

Table 1. General Weighted Mean of Six (6) Dimension of School Climate based on the Perception of the Students (N = 906)

Dimensions of School Climate	Mean	SD Description
Physical Appearance	3.88	0.49 High Middle
Student Interactions	3.92	0.49 High Middle
Discipline Environment	3.84	0.58 High Middle
Learning Assessment	3.89	0.43 High Middle
Attitude and Culture	3.83	0.54 High Middle
Community Relations	3.93	0.53 High Middle
General Weighted Mean	3.88	High Middle

*Range of rating Description and Verbal Interpretation: 1-1.49; Low, 1.50-2.49; Middle Low, 2.50-3.49; Middle, 3.50-4.49; High Middle, and 4.50 - 5; High

Leadership Style

Table 2. The mean and SD indicate the school administrators' perception of their transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles (N=111)

Leadership Style	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
Idealized influence	9.71	1.32	High
Inspirational motivation	10.00	1.26	High
Intellectual stimulation	9.47	1.46	High
Individualized consideration	10.14	1.26	High
Contingent reward	10.04	1.46	High
Management by exception	10.01	1.42	High
Laissez-faire leadership	8.32	1.55	Moderate

*Score range: High = 9-12, Moderate = 5-8, Low = 0-4

Table 2 presents the result of the self-reported leadership styles of school administrators. The individualized consideration has a mean score of 10.14, the contingent reward is second with a mean score of 10.04, management by exception is equal to 10.01, inspirational motivation is equal to 10.00, idealized influence is equal to 9.71, intellectual stimulation is equal to 9.47, and laissez-faire leadership is equal to 8.32. The transformatio-

nal leadership style has the majority of the components with the highest combined mean. Individual attention and motivation that is both inspiring and motivating. Both idealized influence and intellectual stimulation have 9.71 and 9.47, respectively. Individualized consideration is a type of leadership that considers each follower's wants and worries. The leader acts as a mentor or coach for each adherent, as well as listening to the follower to under-

stand what they are thinking and feeling (Sharifirad, 2013).

The transactional leadership style is the next type of leadership under this umbrella. This leadership relies on incentives and penalties to get others to do what you want them to (Goleman, 2017). Supervisory, organizational, and short-term planning are some of the core management procedures

that managers often handle. Management by exception and contingent rewards are also included. Lastly, we have laissez-faire management. The leader creates an environment where the subordinates have a variety of options to choose from. In most cases, the cluster lacks direction because the leader abdicates responsibility and refuses to make decisions (Dou et al., 2017).

Table 3. Correlation and Regression Statistics of School Climate and Leadership Style (N = 111)

	Physical Appearance	Student Interactions	Discipline Environment	Learning/ Assessment	Attitude and Culture	Community Relations
Idealized influence	.240	.036*	.146	.864	.829	.820
Inspirational motivation	.301	.744	.442	.708	.488	.610
Intellectual stimulation	.014*	.472	.319	.095	.325	.197
Individualized consideration	.646	.470	.303	.486	.545	.598
Contingent reward	.645	.835	.813	.726	.743	.853
Management by exception	.771	.961	.485	.744	.946	.859
Laissez-faire leadership	.363	.487	.716	.854	.862	.878

* = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$

Table 3 shows the correlation and regression statistics of school climate and leadership style. Two out of forty-two are statistically significant. These are physical appearance with intellectual stimulation, with a p-value of .014, and student interactions under the idealized influence, with a p-value of .036. The study's findings are connected to those of Somprach et al. (2017) and Allen et al. (2015). His study discovered a strong, though not statistically significant, positive linear relationship between the principal's transformational leadership behaviors and learning communities and a similar relationship between student interactions and idealized influence under transformative leadership. Additionally, they demonstrate that transformational leadership is associated with academic optimism. Positive student interactions result in a positive academic environment. Because transformational leadership places a premium on motivation and encouragement to contribute to positive out-

comes (Srivastava and Shree, 2019; Hong, 2017). The findings indicate that students' perceptions of school climate are not closely related to the leadership styles of school heads. The finding is comparable to the work of Allen et al. (2015). The results show that only two of the twenty-five correlations between how the principal sees his transformational leadership qualities and how his teachers see those same qualities are significant. However, the correlation with school climate was found to be positively significant.

The Leadership Style of School Heads Adapts to the School Climate during the Pandemic

During the interviews, the school principals generously shared how leadership styles adapt to the school climate during the pandemic. The principals reiterated four points under the three dimensions of school climate (faculty relations, leadership and decisions, and community relations) on

how they ignited their school climate during the pandemic. The study's data analysis summary is displayed in Table 4 (below). Based on the infor-

mation acquired from the semi-structured interviews, the analysis revealed 6 open codes, which were subsequently categorized into 4 major themes.

Table 4: Overview of Themes, Identified Codes, and Descriptions

Themes	Open Codes	Code Description
Open and constant communication	Communication	A school with open and constant communication fosters a more committed, engaged, and trustworthy working environment.
Improved community involvement	Stakeholders' engagement	The improved community involvement has the capacity to effect positive and quantifiable change in both communities and schools.
Improved Relationship	Delegation of tasks to all	The act of school leaders in transferring responsibility for specific duties from one person to another.
	Trusting, Motivating, and Encouraging Teachers	Building a culture of trust, motivation, and encouragement embodies the concept that teachers can accomplish the school's goals.
Sensitivity	Mental health and socio-emotional support	It is the process by which teachers, students, and school staff learn the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to develop healthy identities, handle emotions, reach personal and group goals, feel and show empathy for others, form and keep supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions (Niemi, 2020).
	Emotional Flexibility	Matching oneself to the ever-evolving environment requires emotional flexibility (EF), the capacity to regulate one's feelings in response to shifting circumstances and recover quickly from an initial emotional reaction (Aldao et al. 2015).

Theme 1: Open and Constant Communication

The principal participants unanimously agreed that open and constant communication is fundamental to any school endeavor. Communication in educational issues may serve a variety of reasons, but the most essential is to interact efficiently. Communication governs every encounter among school community members (Stamatis and Chatziniolaou, 2020). To prove that, P1 stated, "Everyone feels valued if people give time to communicate with openness." P1 shared that their stakeholders helped them because the status of their school is shared through open communication. She added that their stakeholders know the important information about their school. She also mentioned that they conduct a School Report Card twice a year wherein stakeholders are gathered to listen and discuss the data of school reports and plans". The school also has a transparency board where everyone can see and validate the finances, records, and other school data. P2 agreed that constant commu-

nication is essential; she believes words should translate into actions and true examples. P2 also emphasized that everyone should be welcome to contribute and feel their value as an individual. The communication climate among stakeholders must stay open, and sending information must be accurate to all to impact everyone positively (McCarley et al., 2014). Meanwhile, P3 shared that she is the kind of leader with little background and training in crisis management, particularly during the pandemic. She shared a great need to improve her teachers' participation through more effective communication. She stated that they used varied communication platforms during the pandemic and that this should be maintained to have an effective understanding and strong commitment from all their school constituents.

Theme 2: Improved Community Involvement

In the time of the pandemic, where many changes happen, especially in the mode of learning

delivery, principals need to improve and extend their arms to their community to ensure learners' learning continuity. Ferri et al. (2020) reiterated that to ensure the continuity of students' learning, it is necessary to extend arms to students across the globe, including all stakeholders of the academic institution. With these, principals all agreed that the pandemic allowed them to widen the scope of involvement towards the community and linkages. P1 shared the most relevant stories in the time of pandemic when he mentioned that "Before the pandemic, Sangguniang Barangay (SB) was not totally involved in our school because they did not want to use the budget for education in our school although it was allocated and stated in the Barangay Development Plan. But after we gathered them through dialogues and several meetings, we convinced them that their support financially and manpower would create a big impact on the delivery of education during a pandemic. They even donated the school supplies to all our students' days after our meeting." Participative leadership and transformative leadership work, she added. On the other hand, P2 was amazed that the involvement of the teachers was extensive during the pandemic; they were able to cascade it into the community and involve families in school activities. It helped them realize their programs.

Theme 3: Improved Relationship

Covid 19 pandemic was a good reason to improve the school heads' interpersonal relationships with their stakeholders at school (Metcalf and Perez, 2020). The principal participants stated that they have become more united in providing ideas and taking action to implement the continuous learning plan of their schools. That ignites a sense of volunteerism. P1 shared that during the pandemic, the school stakeholders extended so much help to their school by offering financial support and donating bond papers, ink, printers, and other school materials that will help them to provide modules to their students quickly and more efficiently. Moreover, the principal respondents agreed that the Sangguniang Barangay (SB) helped the schools to distribute the modules in different learning hubs and food components to the school feeding program beneficiaries. The SB also facilitated the maintenance and cleanliness of school grounds.

That is one of many good factors resulting from the pandemic.

Delegation of Tasks to All

The principals also found it necessary to delegate the tasks equally during the pandemic to their teaching and non-teaching staff. P1 mentioned that this revitalized their school climate as everyone was more involved, engaged, and unified through constant collaboration. A school with a good climate has a community that participates and engages in school activities. Also, he said there should be a sense of ownership and responsibility, which can be ignited when everyone is involved. P2 agreed to this, as he mentioned that school heads should have a sense of responsibility for everything that happens at school.

Trusting, Motivating, and Encouraging Teachers

The principals also realized they had become more motivating and encouraging during this pandemic. It is because they recognized that their teachers' tasks have expanded. In line with this, P2 stated that "everyone took the initiative because teachers felt that they were valued." Also, P4 added that teachers performed better because they were inspired and well-motivated, which led to higher learning outcomes. School principals also mentioned that trusting their teachers more had positively improved their school climate as this had pumped up their will to perform better. P2 mentioned that everyone contributes to the success of the implementation of their programs. In addition, the principal participants mentioned that they have become more considerate of their teachers. P3 and P4 stated that their teachers' mental wellness should be given a premium as everyone struggles, especially during the pandemic. P2 mentioned that in response to this, they provide some of their needs to enter school, like food and transportation. She believed that these would lessen some of their teachers' worries.

Theme 4: Sensitivity

All the principal respondents agreed that school leaders must be sensitive to the predicaments of their teachers. It is important in an organization that we also look at the situation of the other. It is not just designating the roles and responsibilities

of everyone but also being mindful of their situation. P2 believed in what former DILG secretary Jesse Robredo said about proximate leaders- to walk and eat with them. By doing these, both parties will have the opportunity to see the situation of each other by having dialogues.

Mental Health and Socio-Emotional Support

In addition, one of the sensitive factors that the principals must consider is mental wellness and giving attention to the socio-emotional concerns of their colleagues. P3 shared, "Before the pandemic, my focus was on how to get the full participation of my constituents and stakeholders on the achievement of tasks. But this time, I needed to pay attention to students and faculty members' social and emotional concerns". She also added that there was a need to provide them with information/webinars promoting a sense of safety and mental health awareness to guide them. Schools should train teachers to undertake student mental health screenings and surveys to improve health literacy and offer preventive actions where necessary (Sage Thrive, 2020).

Emotional Flexibility

Consequently, principals become more humane, which makes them more sensitive. P4 added that there was a paradigm shift more on more practical intellectuals. Principals transform from mind to heart. P2 also shared that there are scenarios in which someone asks or approaches the principals and always asks about what's stated in the guideline. But during the pandemic, they said that the heart and feelings should be more present to see what the teachers are going through, what they need, and how they can respond. According to İme and Ümmet (2022), understanding people's emotional responses to the pandemic is crucial for meeting their needs. Because of the challenges they confront, such as dealing with negative emotions and responding to the expectations of their circumstances, teachers may be especially susceptible to poor outcomes. Negative mental health may affect result from inadequately navigating these challenges.

Likewise, principals become more flexible in a way that they tend to deviate from the existing rules to accommodate the needs of their staff so they can all continue to serve their stakeholders. P2 shared that during the pandemic, they turned

one of the classrooms into a dormitory for their teachers who live away from school and could get the virus during their long commute. She also emphasized that she should put a premium on their safety.

IMPLICATIONS

Leadership style and its impact on the school climate always vary in institutions. However, regardless of how school administrators and principals differ, it is still essential to identify their leadership styles and their impact on the school institution, the students, faculty members, and the other stakeholders to whom they are leading. Their effectiveness in this area developed a favorable perception of the school climate. Thus, leadership, contrary to the old definition presented, is more than the ability to persuade others to do something (Borg, 2013). Leading also includes using the heart to provide compassion to others through open communication, community involvement, and engagement, and providing support and sensitivity. This study provides relevant information that may serve as a basis for the training and development of school leaders and principals for private and public institutions. This training must be geared towards developing transformational leaders who may increase teachers' retention and engagement of students and staff and, eventually, develop meaningful relationships fostered by a positive school atmosphere (Simbre and Ancho, 2019).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The limitations of this study include the instrument Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, Form 6-S (MLQ6S) was used to determine whether or not a leader has a transformational leadership style is limited to three leadership styles such as transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership style, which may not fully define the existing leadership style of the institutions being studied. The tool also focused too much on the characteristics of transformational leadership and had limited information on other leadership style characteristics. The tool, however reliable and has the validity to measure the leadership styles, may not be able to help surface the indigenous culture and climate of the institutions innate in their location, surroundings, and behaviors because it is not contextualized to the culture of the participants.

Finally, the results included a small number of participants, which may not represent most of the school leaders' general characteristics of the nature of climate and culture.

For future studies, the researchers may utilize a localized tool to identify the characteristics of the school leaders in terms of the leadership styles contextualized to the participants' nature. It is also recommended to administer the tool to more participants to capture the general responses. It is also suggested to include focus group discussions with the learners to understand the impact of leadership styles.

CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to determine the effect of school heads' leadership styles on students' perceptions of a high-quality school climate. The study demonstrates that students have a favorable perception of their school climate across all dimensions, including community relations, student interactions, learning and evaluation, physical appearance, discipline, environment, attitude, and culture. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) results indicate that individualized consideration (transformational leadership) is the most prevalent leadership style. Following are contingent rewards and exception management (transactional leadership), inspiring motivation, idealistic influence, intellectual stimulation (transformational leadership), and laissez-faire. Understanding the level of transformational leadership displayed by school administrators and how students perceive school quality in terms of school climate is critical for cultivating a positive school climate that contributes to the refinement of teachers' teaching quality, students' learning, and, ultimately, school performance cultivated by cordial relationships between teachers, school heads, community, and students.

Moreover, the leadership style of the principals adjusts to the school's climate during a pandemic, in which they share how they adapt to the situation. The administrators emphasized the four points on how they ignited their school atmosphere during the pandemic under the three elements of school climate, which talk about the relations with the faculty, the style of leadership and decision-making, and the relations with the community. The qualitative findings show that a school with open and consistent communication produces a

more dedicated, engaged, and trustworthy working environment. Improved community involvement can influence positive and tangible transformation in communities and schools. The act of school leaders in sharing responsibility for specific duties from various members of the school community is critical to creating a culture of trust, enthusiasm, and encouragement that embodies the idea that teachers are capable of carrying out the school's vision, mission, and goals. Awareness of mental health issues and providing sufficient mental support were also emphasized. Finally, adapting to an ever-changing environment necessitates a certain level of emotional flexibility.

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