

Leadership Styles and their Impact on Organizational Performance: Towards A Leadership Development Program

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the leadership styles of school heads and their relationship with organizational performance in the Schools Division of Nueva Ecija during School Year 2024-2025. A descriptive-correlational design was used, and 85 school heads were selected through simple random sampling. A researcher-developed questionnaire profiled respondents, measured autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire practices, and assessed school performance. Frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and the reported chi-square test of independence were applied. Democratic leadership obtained the highest overall mean ($M = 3.98$), followed by autocratic ($M = 3.34$) and laissez-faire leadership ($M = 3.31$). Organizational performance was rated Very Good overall ($M = 3.77$), with strong ratings for an inclusive school climate, resource allocation, parent satisfaction, communication, and learner participation. Lower ratings were recorded for teacher professional development and extracurricular activities. The source inferential table reported significant relationships for autocratic leadership (test statistic = 0.343, $p < .001$),

laissez-faire leadership (0.517, $p < .001$), and leadership styles overall (0.535, $p < .001$), but not for democratic leadership (0.103, $p = .308$). The findings support a context-responsive leadership development program that strengthens participatory leadership while balancing autonomy with appropriate direction, improves performance monitoring, and prioritizes teacher development and learner enrichment.

Keywords: *leadership styles; school heads; organizational performance; democratic leadership; leadership development*

INTRODUCTION

School leadership shapes organizational climate, teaching quality, staff motivation, resource use, and learner participation. Leadership is especially consequential when schools must respond to curriculum reforms, technology integration, accountability demands, and expectations for inclusive education. The same leadership approach may not be equally effective in every situation; leaders may need to combine participation, direction, and professional autonomy.

The source manuscript examined three familiar approaches. Autocratic leadership concentrates authority and can support rapid, consistent decisions, but may reduce participation. Democratic leadership distributes

influence, invites consultation, and encourages shared ownership. Laissez-faire leadership gives staff substantial autonomy, which may foster initiative when personnel are capable but may weaken coordination when guidance is insufficient. These approaches were considered alongside transformational, distributed, instructional, situational, and servant-leadership perspectives (Bass, 2015; Northouse, 2018; Spillane, 2016).

The study described the profile and leadership styles of school heads, assessed organizational performance, tested the reported relationships between leadership styles and performance, and used the results to identify priorities for a leadership development program.

METHODS

Research Design, Participants, and Setting

The research used a descriptive-correlational design in the Schools Division of Nueva Ecija during School Year 2024-2025. Eighty-five school heads were selected through simple random sampling, giving members of the sampling population an equal opportunity for inclusion.

Instrument and Data Collection

A researcher-developed questionnaire contained three parts. Part I gathered demographic and professional

information. Part II measured autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership practices. Part III assessed organizational performance through indicators related to school climate, communication, resources, learner participation, academic performance, administration, professional development, and extracurricular activities. The source manuscript states that the instrument was based on literature and prior studies but does not report validation or reliability coefficients.

Data Analysis

Frequency and percentage described the respondents. Weighted mean summarized leadership practices and organizational performance. The source manuscript reports the use of a chi-square test of independence at the .05 level to examine relationships between leadership styles and performance. The labels and numerical values of the reported test statistics are reproduced as submitted and require statistical verification before formal publication.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the School Heads

Table 4. Dominant characteristics of the school-head sample (N = 85)

Profile variable	Largest category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	36-40 years	25	29%
Gender	Female	67	79%
Years as school head	10-14 years	37	43%
Highest educational attainment	Master's degree	32	38%
Highest level of training attended	Regional	37	44%

The sample was largely composed of mid-career, experienced female school heads. Most had at least graduate-level preparation, and regional training was more common than national or international exposure. These characteristics suggest a leadership group with substantial field experience but uneven access to broader professional-development opportunities

Leadership Styles

Table 5. Summary of reported leadership-style ratings

Leadership style	Overall mean	Interpretation	Highest-rated practice
Autocratic	3.34	Sometimes	Expected compliance without questioning decisions (M = 4.88)
Democratic	3.98	Always	Shared authority and empowered the team (M = 4.80)
Laissez-faire	3.31	Sometimes	Minimal supervision and independent task handling (M = 4.90)

Democratic leadership had the highest overall rating. School heads strongly endorsed shared authority, opportunities for staff input, consensus, and participatory discussion. Autocratic and laissez-faire practices appeared

more selectively: respondents reported strong use of certain directive or autonomy-granting behaviors, while their overall means fell within the Sometimes category. The mixed pattern supports situational leadership rather than exclusive reliance on one style.

Organizational Performance

Table 6. Selected strengths and development needs in organizational performance

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
Positive and inclusive environment for learners	4.88	Excellent
Resources aligned with educational goals	4.83	Excellent
Parent and guardian satisfaction	4.83	Excellent
Effective communication with staff and parents	4.67	Excellent
Learner participation in classroom activities	4.47	Excellent
Teacher participation in professional development	2.34	Fair
Availability of extracurricular activities	2.53	Fair
Overall organizational performance	3.77	Very Good

Schools were rated strongly in climate, communication, resources, stakeholder satisfaction, and learner participation. By contrast, teacher professional development and extracurricular opportunities were the clearest gaps. This means that positive school operations were not consistently matched by investment in continuing teacher learning and broader learner-development activities.

Reported Relationship Between Leadership Styles and Performance

Table 7. Reported tests of leadership style and organizational performance

Leadership variable	Reported statistic	p-value	Decision
Autocratic leadership	0.343	< .001	Significant
Democratic leadership	0.103	.308	Not significant
Leadership variable	Reported statistic	p-value	Decision
Laissez-faire leadership	0.517	< .001	Significant
Leadership styles overall	0.535	< .001	Significant

Note. The table reproduces the statistical labels and values in the submitted manuscript. Values reported as chi-square statistics are unusually small and should be checked against the original statistical output.

Although democratic leadership was the most frequently practiced style, the submitted inferential table did not show a statistically significant relationship between democratic leadership and organizational performance. Significant relationships were reported for autocratic and laissez-faire styles. This contrast suggests that prevalence and statistical association should not be

treated as the same concept. It may also reflect measurement, categorization, or reporting issues that should be reviewed before the study is published.

Leadership Development Priorities

Table 8. Proposed leadership development components derived from the findings

Component	Purpose	Illustrative activity
Participatory decision-making	Strengthen consultation, shared ownership, and consensus	Case-based workshop on collaborative school decisions
Adaptive use of authority	Match directive leadership to urgent or high-risk situations	Scenario exercises on when to direct, consult, delegate, or monitor
Guided autonomy	Balance staff independence with clear expectations and follow-up	Coaching on delegation, milestones, and feedback
Teacher professional development	Address the lowest organizational-performance indicator	School-based learning plan and mentoring cycle
Learner enrichment	Expand extracurricular participation	Planning laboratory for clubs, arts, sports, and academic enrichment
Data and performance review	Link leadership behavior with measurable school outcomes	Quarterly leadership and school-performance dashboard review

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Democratic leadership was the most commonly reported approach among the participating school heads, while autocratic and laissez-faire behaviors were used selectively. Organizational performance was generally very good, particularly in school climate, communication, resources, parent satisfaction, and learner involvement. Teacher professional development and extracurricular provision were the principal areas for improvement. The reported inferential results associated autocratic and laissez-faire leadership with performance, but not democratic leadership; these statistical results should be verified against the original analysis before publication.

School heads may strengthen participatory leadership while retaining the ability to provide clear direction in urgent or complex situations.

Delegation should include defined expectations, monitoring points, and timely feedback so that autonomy does not become lack of support.

The division and schools may prioritize continuing teacher development and expand extracurricular activities.

Future analysis should use validated instruments, clearly identify the test statistic, report effect sizes, and examine school performance using data beyond self-report.

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