

WORKING PAPER

Better Leaders, Better Schools? Public School Heads' Leadership Styles and School Climate in Quezon City*

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Abstract

Quality public education requires quality school heads. This study aims to determine the correlation between the leadership style of a school head and school climate in the context of public elementary schools in Quezon City, a highly urbanized city in Metropolitan Manila, Philippines. The study included 36 individuals—one school head and two school teachers from each of the 12 randomly selected schools. The data was analyzed using ordinary least squares statistical test. Out of the nine indicators of the three leadership styles and three school climate indicators, only the relationships between intellectual stimulation and two aspects of school climate—physical resources and security—yielded statistically significant results. The findings also show that school heads and teachers perceived social support as the most-provided aspect of school climate, and physical resources as the least-supported. A key policy recommendation of the study is to design training programs with special focus on critical skills involved in school-based management for public school heads to more effectively address the needs of the school community.

Keywords: *Public education, educational governance, leadership, school climate*





Introduction

The quality of basic education in the Philippines has improved since the start of the new millennium, but public schools in the country continue to face a multitude of challenges. Developments in access to education and in soft and hard infrastructure have ameliorated certain school conditions. For instance, kindergarten enrolment almost doubled from 2008 to 2014 and the proportion of school-age children attending basic education also increased. Student-teacher ratio in public high schools improved from 38:1 in 2010 to 29:1 in 2013, while student-classroom ratio fell from 64:1 in 2010 to 47:1 in 2013 (World Bank, 2016). Dropout rates decreased from 6.29% in school year (SY) 2010–2011 to 2.70% in SY 2015–2016 at the elementary level and from 7.79% to 6.65% at the secondary level in the same period (NEDA, 2017).

In spite of these achievements, public schools still suffer from poor basic infrastructure and facilities, absenteeism of teachers particularly in highly urbanized cities, lack of operational funding, and professional development opportunities for school teachers, and limited support from the local government (World Bank, 2016). For example, in SY 2014–2015, student-classroom ratio was higher than the national average of 1:34 at elementary level and 1:48 at secondary level in Region IV-A (1:41 and 1:52), Bicol Region (1:35 and 1:41), Davao Region (1:41 and 1:46), Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) (1:49 and 1:55), and National Capital Region (NCR) (1:70 and 1:60). Absenteeism is more of a problem in highly urbanized cities where almost one in 10 teachers was absent in 2014, which is 54% higher than the national average. With regard to the national government's budget allocation, elementary and high schools received only Php448 of the Php581 allocated for each student for student appropriations, as part of

the maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) of the schools (World Bank, 2016).

National Development and Administrative Strategies for Basic Education

The key development strategies that the national government is pursuing to address concerns in public education are found in the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) of 2017–2022. The government seeks to “ensure lifelong learning opportunities for all” (NEDA, 2017, p. 10–10), particularly through the goal “to achieve quality accessible, relevant, and liberating basic education for all” (p. 10–13), notably through the following:

- a. strengthening capacity building among basic education teachers and other educational agents (including school administrators and non-teaching personnel);
- b. ensuring that curriculum is responsive and relevant (gender-responsive, culture-sensitive) to the needs of the community and will be able to develop 21st century skills;
- c. improving school facilities and providing additional classrooms and teachers for new school entrants due to natural population increase and migration; and
- d. prioritizing the provision of quality learning resources such as textbooks, libraries, tools and equipment, and ICT-assisted learning. (NEDA, 2017, p. 10–6)

In line with the goal of building the capacity of all educational agents, public school heads, mostly commonly known as school principals, are instrumental to the overall development of schools and of the community. They are both instructional leaders as well as administrative managers (Republic Act 9155), and their leadership styles are reflected in their approach to governing and running their respective schools. Through the effective leadership of school heads,



school communities as well as the surrounding communities will thrive. Ongoing efforts of the government reflecting this sentiment are found specifically in the school-based management policy of the Department of Education (DepEd), and the School Head Development Program (SHDP) of the National Educators Academy of the Philippines (NEAP).

The school-based management (SBM) is a national policy of DepEd that evolved from efforts within the Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA, Department Order 29, s. 2007), which sought “to systematically, institutionally, and sustainably improve nationwide basic education outcomes” (DepEd, 2007, para. 1). A number of frameworks, assessment processes, and tools have been developed since the introduction of the SBM through various department orders (DepEd, 2009a; DepEd, 2009b; DepEd, 2010; DepEd, 2011; DepEd, 2012; DepEd, 2013; DepEd, 2015) to better improve the program on a macro level. The SBM tightened the coordination between the central, regional, and division offices, and partnerships between the government education agencies and the private sector. Through the SBM, the Department exerted efforts to decentralize its decision-making authority from the central, regional, and division offices to the individual schools by uniting school heads, teachers, students, local government units, and the community (DepEd, 2006), placing the school heads at the helm.

The SHDP is a DepEd-funded competency building program that was started in 2015 by NEAP (Office of the President Administrative Order 289, 1992) in partnership with the Development Academy of the Philippines. The Program is a foundation course for new school heads and Principals’ Test passers. It is based on the National Competency-Based Standards for School Heads, which cover topics and issues that public school heads face every day, such as curriculum

management, alternative delivery modules, alternative learning system, school processes, school improvement planning, strategic human resource management, financial management, and partnerships and communications (DepEd-NEAP, 2016).

Given the developments and institutionalization of the K to 12 curriculum through the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, the pilot program targeted “high-performing and proactive” school heads for senior high schools (DepEd-Office of the Undersecretary for Regional Operations, 2015). The program was conducted in two batches, with two modules for each batch. The school heads from the Luzon cluster comprised the first batch, while school heads from Visayas and Mindanao participated in the second batch. The first module covered the theme “Curriculum and Leading Change,” while the second module covered “Operations and Building Partnership for Senior High School,” with each module spanning over six days. NEAP is now extending the program to all public school heads across the country, not just those of senior high schools (DepEd-NEAP, 2016).

Objectives and Goals of the Study

Both the SBM, as a national policy, and the SDHP, as a national program, highlight the importance of the role of the school head in leading the school community. They also underscore a concern that has yet to be researched extensively, especially locally, a question that will validate efforts of the government as well as non-government organizations and the rest of the private sector in this endeavor: Is there a relationship between leadership styles of a public school head and school climate? The null hypothesis (H_0) is “there is no relationship between the leadership style of a school head and school climate,” and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is “there is a



relationship between the leadership style of a school head and school climate.”

This research seeks mainly to validate the school-based management policy and efforts to empower public school heads in the country through training programs. It also hopes to contribute to the virtually dearth of local literature connecting the two components of educational administration by determining the most appropriate leadership style to improve school climate. More specifically, the paper aims to (1) determine the relationship or lack thereof between the three types of leadership styles, and the three aspects of school climate; and (2) propose policy recommendations in approaching school head training programs.

Review of Related Literature

Various components determine what constitutes a better and more effective school. These include strong leadership, a climate of expectation, an orderly but not rigid atmosphere, and effective communication (Brookover, 1979; Edmonds, 1979; Rutter et al., 1979), to name a few. However, school leaders are one of the most influential factors in the development of the quality and character of a school (Allen et al., 2015). School leadership is still an area of research that should continue to be investigated, given the issue of how school accountability falls mostly on the shoulders of school principals as administrators and instructional leaders (Stewart, 2006).

It is through these roles that school heads are able to affect school effectiveness (Brauckmann & Pashiardis, 2011), contribute to the quality of the education (Gurr et al., 2005), and influence willingness to engage in community partnerships (Ross & Gray, 2006). Collaborative school cultures (Gruenert, 2005) and collaborative or distributive leadership structures (Lashway,

2003; Liang & Sandmann, 2015) are becoming more popular and are increasing community engagement not only for internal purposes (parent-teacher associations) but also external ones (funding partners), given the dual role the school leader has to fulfill.

Existing literature on the relationship between leadership style and school climate are sometimes conflicting. While Allen et al. (2015) and Lorraine (2011) state that no relationship exists between leadership style of the principal and school climate, Sergiovanni and Starratt (1998) argue that the climate of a school can be shaped by the actions and behaviors of the principal. Deal and Peterson (1990) and Bulach et al. (1998) relate behaviors of school principals to school climate. Some of these behaviors include effective communication, teacher advocacy, participatory decisionmaking, and equitable evaluation procedures (Kelley et al., 2005). As instructional leaders, school principals can foster an understanding of the school vision, facilitate implementation of the mission, and establish the school climate. Ubben and Hughes (1992) stated that school principals could create a school climate that improves the productivity of both staff and students, and that the leadership style of the principal can foster or restrict teacher effectiveness.

In a research that focused on the effect of the school principal's leadership style on teachers, Nir and Kranot (2006) aver that the relationship between teacher efficacy and the leadership style of a school principal cannot be directly attributed to the presence or the lack of job satisfaction of teachers. In more recent studies, Aydin et al. (2013) and Lai et al. (2014) show that the kind of leadership exercised by the school leader particularly affects job satisfaction and organizational commitment of teachers in a positive way. Other studies show that teachers' trust in the school principal affect positive work



engagement (Chin-Yi, 2015) and, in a negative way, motivation (Kadi, 2015).

While a sizeable amount of foreign research studies have proven that the leadership style of a school principal can greatly influence school climate, there is hardly any local research that explores or confirms this relationship. With this in mind, it is important to note that cultural differences are highly influential. In a validation study by Brauckmann and Pashiardis (2011), it is becoming “increasingly more evident that there is no best cocktail of leadership styles mix for all school leaders” and that “school leadership is highly contextualized not only at the system level, but also (and particularly) at the school level” (p. 29). It is every school leader’s responsibility to assess the situation of his/her school before taking action.

Meanwhile, Leithwood (2005) identified some characteristics of successful school leaders who “brought to their work key dispositions, skills and cognitive styles.” These leaders were good communicators, willing to listen to others carefully, open-minded, creative, persistent and optimistic in pursuing goals (Leithwood, 2005, p. 622). In terms of transformational and transactional leadership, more research is suggested “to identify the most effective approach in balancing the two leadership styles” (Pepper, 2010, p. 53). No specific kind of leadership style will affect one school exactly the same way it would in another. The specific formula for the best approach to solve pressing school problems has yet to be determined in research studies.

Methodology

To achieve the goals stated earlier, the researcher surveyed 12 public elementary schools in Quezon City using one set of questionnaires on the

leadership style of the school head, and another set on school climate. To determine whether there is a relationship between leadership styles and school climate, the researcher used the ordinary least squares (OLS) method on R statistical software.

Definition of Terms

This exploratory study aims to assess the leadership styles of public elementary school heads and the school climate of Quezon City public elementary schools. Using individual schools as a unit of analysis, the study investigated the leadership style of a public school head and the school climate. For the purposes of this paper, the following operational definitions will be used:

School head refers to the instructional leader and administrative manager of a public elementary school, public high school, or a cluster thereof (Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, 2001). They hold the position of Principal I to IV, School Head I to III, or Head Teacher III or Officer-in-Charge.

Leadership style was distinguished using three types: *transformational leadership* (TF), *transactional leadership* (TS), and *passive-avoidant* (PA). The instrument used to collect data for the three leadership styles was the multifactor leadership questionnaire form 5X (MLQ-5X) (Avolio & Bass, 1995; 2004), with a Likert scale from 0 to 4. The types of leadership were broken down into the predefined indicators as developed by Bass (1997), Bass and Steidlmeier (1999), MacKenzie, et al. (2001), and Bass et al. (2003). The following descriptions detail each of the indicators for the three types of leadership styles explored in the study:

1. *Transformational leadership* emphasizes a leader’s ability to recognize the potential skills of an employee and engage the person



holistically and not just with their specific traits. Transformational leaders in the public sector activate the higher-order needs of their employees and encourage them to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of the organization and its clientele (Wright et al., 2012). More importantly, transformational leaders practice purposing, provide a clear and concise goal focus uniting the organization, and encourage commitment (Sergiovanni, 2007, as cited in Allen et al., 2015, p. 3). Transformational leadership has five indicators: *idealized influence*, *idealized attributes* (IA), *idealized influence, idealized behaviors* (IB), *inspirational motivation* (IM), *intellectual stimulation* (IS), and *individual consideration* (IC).

IA leaders are able to build trust from their followers. These leaders inspire power and pride in their followers by going beyond their own individual interests and focusing on the interests of the group and its members. IB leaders, on the other hand, are leaders who act with integrity. Leaders with high level of this characteristic manifest positive and highly valued behaviors like dominance, consciousness, self-control, high moral judgment, optimism, and self-efficiency. They also zero in on building a shared sense of vision or mission for the team or group. Meanwhile, IM leaders inspire others. Inspirational leaders can articulate, in simple ways, shared goals and mutual understanding of what is right and important. They provide visions of what is possible and how to attain them. They enhance meaning and promote positive expectations about what needs to be done.

IS leaders are able to encourage innovative thinking. They help others think about old problems in new ways. These leaders encourage their associates to question their own beliefs, assumptions, and values, and,

when appropriate, those of the leader, which may be outdated or inappropriate for solving current problems. An intellectually stimulating leader arouses in others a greater cognizance of problems, awareness of their own thoughts and imagination, and recognition of their beliefs and values. Lastly, IC leaders are able to coach people. These leaders not only recognize and satisfy their associates' needs, but they also expand and elevate those needs in an attempt to maximize and develop the associates' full potential.

2. *Transactional leadership* acts under the principle of awarding and involves mutual exchange between leaders and followers (Yukl, 1989; Bass et al., 2003, as cited in Avci, 2015, p. 2759), where the leaders do not interfere with the functioning system of organization coming beforehand (Bass, 1997), where they motivate the employees with rewards, and where they promise authority, status, and money to their employees for their success (Howell & Avolio, 1993) within the frame of fundamental mission and vision of the organization (MacKenzie et al., 2001; Bass et al., 2003).

Under transactional leadership are *contingent reward* (CR) and *management-by-exception: active* (MBE-A) indicators. CR indicates leaders who reward achievement. Leaders scoring high on this characteristic tend to discuss in clear terms responsibilities for specific tasks and projects, state performance objectives, clarify rewards and punishments and express satisfaction when they get the correct output. MBE-A leaders focus on monitoring mistakes, errors, exceptions from the rule and on the treatment of these oversteps.

3. *Passive-avoidant* leadership refers to what is often called "no leadership," as it describes managers who do not react systematically



to situations and problems that arise (Avolio & Bass, 1995; 2004). Passive leaders do not clarify misunderstandings, make their expectations clear, and set clear objectives and performance standards for their followers. This style has very often a serious negative effect upon individual, group, and organizational results. Most of the time, outcomes are exactly opposite of the intended consequences. Indicators under passive-avoidant leadership are *management-by-exception: passive* (MBE-P) and *laissez-faire* (LF). MBE-P leaders are able to fight fires. If an MBE-A leader focuses on continuously monitoring mistakes and deviations from the expected norm and taking corrective measures before these errors appear, an MBE-P leader waits for problems to appear before taking corrective actions, which are often punitive. LF leaders tend to avoid involvement. This leadership style could be easily defined as “non-leadership,” and is the exact opposite of an efficient transformational leadership style. Leaders adopting this style do not offer enough information or feedback to their followers, nor acknowledge or work towards their followers’ satisfaction. They avoid approaching important problems and making decisions, are absent when needed, and have late reactions to urgent problems.

School climate (SC) refers to the quality and character of school life as it relates to the school personnel’s norms and values, interpersonal relations and social interactions, and organizational processes and structures (National School Climate Center, 2016). School climate is embedded in NEDA’s goal to “invest in soft and hard infrastructure for basic education to make the facilities more accessible and the curriculum more relevant” (2017, p. 4-7). SC is further broken down into three factors: *physical resources* (Ph), *social support* (So), and *security*

(Se). Physical resources refer to whether there is a fair ratio of classrooms, books, and teachers to students, if there are enough facilities or not, and if the school administration allocates resources fairly. Social support, on the other hand, refers to the involvement of teachers, students, and parents in school activities, their level of respect in their engagement with one another, and whether both the students and teachers are good examples of the values that the DepEd and the school espouse. Lastly, security refers to school infrastructure that ensures the safety of the school community. Respondents rate these indicators using a Likert scale from 0 to 4.

Limitations of the Study

This study focused on public elementary schools in Quezon City, a highly urbanized and densely populated city in Metropolitan Manila. A major limitation of the study is its interview and survey sample size of 12 public schools, which is rather small compared to the ideal sample size of 77. This limitation is due to time constraints and practical considerations to personally visiting each of the schools. The survey results were based only on perceptions of the school head and two school teachers per school.

This study tested two major hypotheses: (1) *the higher the indicators of transformational leadership a school head scores, the better the physical resources in place, the higher social support given, and the higher the security measures in place;* (2) *the higher the indicators of transactional or passive-avoidant a school head scores, the worse the three components of school climate are.* It must be noted that the three leadership styles were more closely evaluated through their respective indicators, and not as a whole style on their own. The study focuses on the characteristics of what makes a leader transformational, transactional, and passive-



avoidant, and how these characteristics influence school climate, rather than categorizing a leader solely as one of the specified types. Given this, the relationship between the two main constructs is presumably direct, as shown in Figure 1.

Data Gathering Procedure

Approval to proceed with the study was sought and then received from the DepEd Schools Division of Quezon City before the interviews were conducted. The components detailed above are to be assessed in two parts: first, MLQ-5X questionnaires were planned to be administered to a random sample of 77 from the total of 96 public elementary schools in Quezon City. However, only 12 out of 77 public elementary schools were able to participate in the study.

Second, one-on-one, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the school heads to supplement their answers in the survey, and to obtain their insights as administrators on the following questions: (1) *“What are the challenges you face as a school head, or the urgent needs of your school community? How do you address them, and what are your best practices?”* (2) *“How would you describe an ‘effective school’ and an ‘ideal school head’?”* (3) *“In your opinion, how may the DepEd system improve in general?”*

The researcher hopes to explore the ways in which school administrators understood the roots of pressing concerns in their schools, and how they

addressed these concerns. The interviews were conducted to further substantiate and describe their goals for themselves as school heads, and for the school community. The interviews also helped identify common and prevalent challenges that public elementary schools face. The study seeks to frame these problems within the broader basic education system in the country.

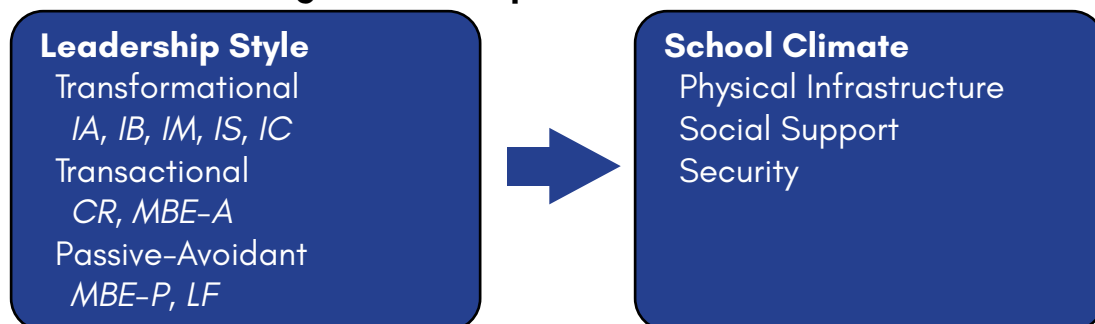
Quezon City has a total of 96 public elementary schools in the City, based on the Public Elementary Schools Directory 2015-2016 of the DepEd Schools Division of Quezon City – School Governance and Operations Division (DepEd QC SGOD, 2016). Using a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 5%, 77 or 80% of the total public elementary schools (N=96) needed to be surveyed. The sample size was computed using the following formula:

$$n = \frac{z^2(p)(1-p)}{c^2}$$

Where *n* = number of schools to be evaluated; *Z* = confidence level; *p* = % of picking a choice; *c* = confidence interval

A random sample of 77 schools was generated from the provided master list of the DepEd QC SGOD (2016) using R statistical software, and the generated numbers corresponding to the enumeration on the directory were identified as the schools to be included in the study. Out of the 77 schools, 23 expressed their willingness to participate in the study. However, only 12 public elementary schools were actually visited, due to

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework





time constraints and other practical concerns. For each of the 12 schools, one principal and two school teachers participated in the study, giving a total of 36 participants. The survey was administered to the respondents between 25 October and 7 November 2016.

The findings of whether there is a relationship between the independent variables of leadership style and the dependent variable of school climate were assessed using the ordinary least squares (OLS) method, with each school climate indicator measured separately per set of leadership style indicators. OLS, being a linear regression method, was chosen to test the relationship between variables. All responses of the public school heads and the public school teachers were processed together to retrieve an aggregate score of perceived leadership styles and school climate. This was done in order to identify the overall perception of both groups regarding the three factors of school climate, physical resources, social support, and security. Detailed discussion of the regression results are provided, while insights from the semi-structured interviews of the public school heads are thematically examined in the succeeding sections.

Findings

School Climate Indicators in relation to Leadership Types

Twelve principals and 24 teachers of varying levels of experience from Quezon City public elementary schools participated in the study. Some of the teachers had only recently been employed by the school three months prior to the interview and held the positions ranging from Teacher I to Teacher III. Others had been teachers for ten or more years and, at the time of the interview, were Master Teacher III

or IV. Meanwhile, most of the school principals interviewed have been in the public school system for over 16 years. Five of them were appointed school administrators as School Principal I, and were subsequently promoted to School Principal III.

As shown in Table 1, the dominant and highest-scoring characteristic for transformational leadership is inspirational motivation (15.42 on average out of the total 16.00), for transactional leadership is contingent reward (14.03 out of the total 16.00), and for passive-avoidant leadership is MBE-P (7.58 out of the total 9). This means, on average, the school heads perceive themselves as being able to inspire others, while the school teachers also perceive the same of their school heads. Rewarding achievement is also a strong tendency on average and so does fighting fires or waiting for problems before they appear. Moreover, social support, based on the summary statistics, is perceived to be most well-provided aspect of school climate by the interviewed school heads and school teachers, while the least supported is safety and security.

The regression results are shown in Tables 2 to 4 with the coefficient estimates, including the standard error, t value, and p value.

Hypothesis 1 postulated that the higher the indicators of transformational leadership a school head scores, the better the physical resources in place, the higher social support, and the higher the security measures. On the other hand, Hypothesis 2 indicates that the higher the scores in the transactional or passive-avoidant indicators, the worse the three components of school climate are. Based on the regression results shown in Tables 2 to 4, not all school leadership style indicators are significantly linked to school climate.



Table 1. Summary Statistics (n = 36).

Variables	M	SD	Min.	Max.
Dependent variables				
Physical resources	14.83	4.34	3.00	20.00
Social support	42.53	5.91	23.00	50.00
Safety and security	6.75	1.61	0.00	8.00
Independent variables				
Transformational				
Idealized influence, idealized attributes	12.83	2.27	7.00	16.00
Idealized influence, idealized behaviors	12.33	2.23	8.00	16.00
Inspirational motivation	15.42	0.94	12.00	16.00
Intellectual stimulation	13.81	2.12	10.00	16.00
Individual consideration	13.83	2.26	4.00	16.00
Transactional				
Contingent reward	14.03	1.83	10.00	16.00
Management-by-exception - Active	9.64	4.38	0.00	16.00
Passive-Avoidant				
Management-by-exception - Passive	7.58	2.83	0.00	12.00
Laissez-faire	2.00	2.22	0.00	9.00
Control variable				
Number of Months in School (log)	1.71	0.50	0.48	2.49

Table 2. Logistic Regression Results for Physical Resources (n = 36).

Variables	Estimate	SE	t Value	p Value
Intercept	5.14221	15.30977	0.336	0.7394
Transformational				
Idealized influence, idealized attributes	-0.07218	0.36028	-0.200	0.8426
Idealized influence, idealized behaviors	0.10575	0.40293	0.262	0.7948
Inspirational motivation	-0.28207	0.96862	-0.291	0.7730
Intellectual stimulation	0.73216	0.41244	1.775	0.0864*
Individual consideration	0.13006	0.34212	0.380	0.7066
Number of Months in School (log)	1.02786	1.72274	0.597	0.5554
Intercept	2.6878	5.8708	0.458	0.6502
Transactional				
Contingent reward	0.9922	0.3922	2.530	0.0165**
Management-by-exception - Active	-0.2380	0.1669	-1.426	0.1637
Number of Months in School (log)	0.3047	1.4125	0.216	0.8306
Intercept	13.8827	2.7681	5.015	1.9e-05***
Passive-Avoidant				
Management-by-exception - Passive	-0.0069	0.2959	-0.023	0.982
Laissez-faire	-0.3518	0.3640	-0.967	0.341
Number of Months in School (log)	0.9915	1.5835	0.626	0.536

* $p < .1$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$.



Table 3. Logistic Regression Results for Social Support (n = 36).

Variables	Estimate	SE	t Value	p Value
Intercept	11.632331	20.879602	0.557	0.582
Transformational				
Idealized influence, idealized attributes	-0.006425	0.491347	-0.013	0.990
Idealized influence, idealized behaviors	-0.214632	0.549519	-0.391	0.699
Inspirational motivation	1.760787	1.321018	1.333	0.193
Intellectual stimulation	0.485833	0.562485	0.864	0.395
Individual consideration	-0.245517	0.466591	-0.526	0.603
Number of Months in School (log)	1.856044	2.349494	0.790	0.436
Intercept	27.725773	8.455716	3.279	0.00252**
Transactional				
Contingent reward	0.914950	0.564915	1.620	0.11513
Management-by-exception - Active	0.001921	0.240414	0.008	0.99367
Number of Months in School (log)	1.141485	2.034480	0.561	0.57866
Intercept	41.137953	3.682559	11.171	1.41e-12***
Passive-Avoidant				
Management-by-exception - Passive	-0.003901	0.393643	-0.010	0.992
Laissez-faire	-0.732481	0.484214	-1.513	0.140
Number of Months in School (log)	1.684940	2.106621	0.800	0.430

* $p < .1$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$.

Table 4. Logistic Regression Results for Security (n = 36).

Variables	Estimate	SE	t Value	p Value
Intercept	9.83602	5.63338	1.746	0.09148*
Transformational				
Idealized influence, idealized attributes	-0.13428	0.13257	-1.013	0.3195
Idealized influence, idealized behaviors	-0.03487	0.14826	-0.235	0.8157
Inspirational motivation	-0.32222	0.35641	-0.904	0.3734
Intellectual stimulation	0.27683	0.15176	1.824	0.0785*
Individual consideration	0.08035	0.12589	0.638	0.5283
Number of Months in School (log)	-0.52622	0.63390	-0.830	0.4132
Intercept	6.08586	2.32744	2.615	0.0135*
Transactional				
Contingent reward	0.15830	0.15549	1.018	0.3163
Management-by-exception - Active	-0.08619	0.06617	-1.302	0.2021
Number of Months in School (log)	-0.42506	0.55999	-0.759	0.4534
Intercept	7.263131	1.041078	6.977	6.64e-08***
Passive-Avoidant				
Management-by-exception - Passive	0.001234	0.111285	0.011	0.991
Laissez-faire	-0.056032	0.136890	-0.409	0.685
Number of Months in School (log)	-0.238961	0.595552	-0.401	0.691

* $p < .1$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$.



Lastly, out of the nine different indicators within the three different types of leadership, only intellectual stimulation is statistically significant and holds a relationship with only one school climate indicator—physical resources—as shown in Table 2. Most surprising is how absolutely none of the indicators for any of the leadership styles holds a relationship with social support (see in Table 3). The only statistically significant indicator relating to security is also intellectual stimulation (see Table 4).

These findings mean physical resources and security measures of a public school can be improved when the school head re-examines

critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate (Q2), seeks differing perspectives when solving problems (Q8), gets others to look at problems from many different angles (Q30), and suggests new ways of looking at how to complete tasks and projects (Q32). However, none of the indicators under either the transactional or passive-avoidant leadership styles have yielded statistically significant results with any of the school climate indicators, providing evidence that transformational leadership, at least in the area of intellectual stimulation, is a relatively more effective style in addressing the needs of public elementary schools.

Table 5. Results of Validation Interview with Public School Heads

Challenges in School Climate	Insights on challenges from public school heads	
	Manifestation in School	Responses
Poor basic infrastructure and facilities	Not enough school supplies such as books, ICT-assisted instruction materials, science equipment, sports equipment. Classrooms accommodate students twice their capacity. Poor waste management. School used as venues for meetings and seminars by the general community putting the school security at risk; maintenance still responsibility of school.	Choose people who are passionate to teach. Employ remedial reading programs for underperforming students. Encourage tree planting and proper waste management. Set up murals around school. Limit entrance of unidentified individuals into the school, whether during or after school hours, to ensure safety of students.
Absenteeism of teachers	Lack of motivation and low morale a factor: <i>"Pag ayaw nila, 'di nila gagawin. (If they do not like the task, they will not do it.)"</i>	Continuous encouragement of and check in on the teachers.
Absenteeism of students (<i>not identified by World Bank [2016] report, but cited by school heads</i>)	High absenteeism rates, particularly for indigent students, and those with poor nutrition status.	Conduct home visitations especially for students who are at risk of dropping-out, talk to parent/guardian, with help of barangay tanod. Hold regular general assemblies or meetings with parents. Implement feeding programs.
Lack of professional development opportunities for school teachers	Teachers unsure how to address low learning outcomes of students.	Apply mentorship system between more experienced teachers and new recruits. Address least-mastered skills in subject knowledge of curriculum content.
Lack of operational funding	Difficult to find sources of funding.	Implement donation programs for benefit of students, ex. <i>"Adopt a non-reader."</i>
Limited support from local government	District representatives donate either buildings or instruments for the school band.	Actively seek assistance from local government officials.



Input of Public School Heads

Through their insights in the semi-structured interviews to supplement the responses to the MLQ-5A questionnaires, the public school heads substantiated the prevalent problems that public schools face (World Bank, 2016), which also relate to the school climate factors identified in this study (physical resources, social support, and security). Table 5 summarizes the six identified common public school concerns identified by the school heads.

The insights provided by the school administrators show that although these problems persist in their school community, they have strived in their own ways to address some of them. Most of the issues identified in Table 5 pertain to physical resources and social support. Out of six of the challenges raised, four relate to physical resources (poor basic infrastructure and facilities), and two to social support (lack of operational funding, limited support from local government, absenteeism of teachers, absenteeism of students, and lack of professional development opportunities for school teachers). The issue of security was raised by one school head, but only briefly in relation to physical resources, specifically to a lack of physical infrastructure such as a gymnasium to house events organized by members of the surrounding community, without risking the safety of the students.

When asked about how they would describe an “ideal school head,” the school administrators responded with characteristics that corresponded to attributes related to transformational, none of which to transactional or passive/avoidant leadership. In particular, adjectives specified by the school principals that related to transformational leadership were: (idealized influence, idealized attributes [IA]) open communication, participative, encourage feedback; trustworthy, able to generate respect;

(idealized influence, idealized behaviors [IB]) democratic in administration of school, knowledgeable of subject areas of teaching and of laws of DepEd and of the CSC, punctual, responsible, committed to the job, courageous in facing challenges; and (intellectual stimulation [IS]) prudent in decisionmaking, critical thinker, and innovative. There were no traits identified that may be linked to inspirational motivation (IM) and individual consideration (IC) indicators.

When asked generally how the DepEd system may be improved, the school heads pointed to the overwhelming amount of overlapping programs from the central and division offices. The school heads are unsure which programs to prioritize as teachers are already overloaded with work. School heads also stated that the following will be helpful in fulfilling their duties as educator: protecting the interests of teachers, providing safety nets for students (possibly referring to the Child Protection Policy) and teachers (most likely referring to higher salaries, incremental increases, etc.). Although the above insights on the common challenges were anecdotal, they shed light on concerns of the basic education system at the macro level.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Considering the government’s objective to “ensure life-long learning opportunities for all,” particularly through the goal “to achieve quality accessible, relevant, and liberating basic education for all,” the challenges in school climate discussed in the preceding section may be aligned with the public policy commitments that the government has already made in the PDP 2017-2022. The national government is striving to pursue programs “(1) to improve school facilities and providing additional classrooms and teachers for new school entrants due to natural population increase and migration; (2) to prioritize the provision of quality learning



resources such as textbooks, libraries, tools and equipment, and ICT-assisted learning; and (3) to strengthen capacity building among basic education teachers and other educational agents” (NEDA, 2017). In view of these priorities, the Department of Education may be able to address particular concerns in school climate and leadership.

Basic infrastructure and facilities needs to be better provided to improve student learning outcomes. Appropriate operational funding from the local government may also be obtained. Meanwhile, professional development opportunities for school teachers and professional training for public school heads are needed to be addressed to attain basic education targets.

Quality public education also requires effective school principals. The key policy recommendation of this paper is to design leadership training programs for public school heads around critical skills involved in school-based management—such as innovative and design thinking, stakeholder engagement, financial management, project management, and monitoring and evaluation—to enable them to better provide the basic needs of the school community and address other challenges.

Given the limitations and results of the study, the following require further investigation: (1) surveying of public high schools; (2) involving more members of the school community in assessing the leadership style of the public school head and the school climate; (3) exploring other assessment and survey tools adapted to the Philippine context; (4) administering surveys in Filipino and other local languages to facilitate better readability and comprehension; (5) and conducting the study in cities of other classifications and in rural areas outside Metro Manila. As issues of public education discussed at the national level are much more felt on the

ground, it is imperative that school heads are equipped with the necessary skills and attitudes to solve the problems holistically.

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