

Exploring Leadership Characteristics of Public and Private High School Administrators in The Division of Malabon: A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract

The study investigated Administrators' Leadership Characteristics in terms of style, traits and integrity. Twenty-one (21) administrators, 145 middle level administrators and 378 teachers were involved in the study from 12 public and nine (9) private high schools in the Division of Malabon. The descriptive method of research was used with questionnaire as the data gathering instrument. The hypotheses were formulated and tested using t-test, ANOVA procedures and Pearson r statistical tools. The findings showed that there was a significant difference when comparing the leadership styles, and traits of public and private high school principals. When testing the difference between the integrity of administrators, result showed that there was no significant difference between the two. It also revealed that there was no significant relationship between leadership style and leadership traits among public high school administrators. There was a significant relationship between the leadership style and trait among private high school principals. In terms of the relationship between leadership style and integrity, both administrators showed no significant relationship. The leadership traits and integrity showed that there was a significant relationship among the private high school administrator and public high school administrators showed no significant relationship between traits and integrity. Based on the findings, it is recommended that administrators should be aware of their leadership characteristics and its effect to the organization. Training should be given to develop and strengthen leadership traits and integrity. Finally, a Strategic Leadership Program for administrators must be reinforced.

Keywords: Leadership characteristics, traits, integrity, style, administrators

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Introduction

Educating the nation is the greatest responsibility of school leaders, specifically, the principals. The principals are the chief educational leaders who play significant roles in shaping the nature of the school organization. They have the capacity to influence, give support, build leader-follower relationship, and taking into consideration their characteristics as a true leader. These characteristics are very important to school leaders in shaping the nature of their organization. Through their leadership characteristics, they can influence their organization as they aid and give support to the people in achieving the success or and to make a difference in the organization. The focus of this study is to explore the leadership characteristics of public and private high school administrators in Malabon City and have a comparative analysis. Leadership characteristics are focused on the leadership style, traits and integrity of the administrator.

Three groups of respondents which include the principals themselves, the middle level administrators, and the teachers were asked to assess the leadership characteristics of the principals as to their style, traits and integrity in leading their respective schools. The groups of respondents answered a questionnaire in exploring the leadership characteristics of the principals. The questionnaire was to identify the style preferred by the principals in performing their duties, as well as to determine the traits and integrity they had manifested in dealing with issues in relation to their functions. The gathered responses were utilized in proposing a Strategic Leadership Program for Administrators.

Leadership Characteristics

Leadership style

Leadership style is an element of administrator's leadership characteristics that eventually the decision making behavior of the administrator. Leadership style can be influenced by one's personality which deals mainly with the manner of the leader on how he/she carries his/her functions or authority and power and the decision-making process. Leadership style is defined and identified by competencies and skills that the leader applies to guide facilitate and support the people of the organization in their efforts to accomplish the tasks. This reveals decision-making behavior which is a result of the philosophy, personality and experience of the leader. Consequently, principals need adequate knowledge and skills of selecting and using leadership style as the situations require in order to successfully achieving the goals of their schools (Wote, 2014).

Autocratic Leadership Style

Autocratic leadership style or authoritarian refers to the condition where the leader trains the followers what to do next, when is the correct timeframe to do it, and how to execute it. All decision-making powers were centralized in the leader with the minimal participation from the followers. This style allows quick-decision-making, since only one person decides for the whole group and keeps each decision to him until he feels it is needed to share with the group. The leader does not entertain suggestions or initiatives from subordinates. He does not delegate authority nor permit

subordinates to participate in policy –making. Autocratic leaders are controlling, power-oriented, and prefer punishment instead of reward.

In autocratic leadership, Lewin, White and Lippit concluded that autocratic leaders are found to work harder when the group leader is present. It was also found out that autocratically led groups experienced more resentment, aggression and indifference than any other group (Heutt, 2011). On the other hand, individuals and groups who are not motivated, not interested or not familiar with the task benefit the most from working with autocratic leaders and had been found to influence multiple people and be helpful in certain settings (Galanes and Adams, 2010 & Iqbal, et al, 2015).

Democratic leadership Style

Democratic or participative leadership style refers to a situation where there is an equal work among leaders and followers. This leadership style favors decision making by the group. This is in contrast with the autocratic style as it often says- “I want you”, but in participative style, it is more of “let us”. There is a decentralization of authority, participatory planning, and mutual communication. There is consultation before decisions are taken, although he makes the final decisions. This is beneficial because if the employees are not being consulted, they might just be following orders from the leaders and sometimes secretly resist the order by insubordination (Jay, 2014). A democratic leader with consultative style has a substantial but not complete confidence and trust in the employees. More so, a democratic leader is a persuasive leader. The leader makes a decision about new policy and then informs the members of the organization about the decisions made and seeks their support to the decision made by convincing them with the benefits they can get from it.

Considering these conditions, the subordinates are empowered to their maximum capacity and desire. The democratic leaders place a strong synergy and commitment and collaboration with team members and act as advisor to develop a natural motivating environment in the group. However, democratic or participative leadership style is appropriate when the organization have competent and skilled employees who can be part in the organization’s planning, decision-making and evaluating results (Iqbal, et al, 2015).

Laissez-Faire Leadership Style

Laissez-faire leadership style is where the leaders provide maximum supervision, since the group members have to work on their own, and make decisions, on the next phases they need to take to finish their tasks. This style was defined as the manner and approach of providing directions, implementing plans, and motivating people who eventually promote teamwork, and good interpersonal relationship. Leaders keep off and allow group members to make decisions. A laissez-faire leader does not lead, but leaves the group entirely as it is such a leader allows maximum freedom to subordinates. Freedom are freely determined by the group’s goals, techniques, and working methods. There is autonomy among the members of the organization, thus they have complete freedom to make decisions.

Laissez-faire leaders do not influence their subordinates and do not demonstrate abilities to lead, but rather demonstrate a lack of leadership (Northouse, 2011).

Laissez-faire style could lead to team anarchy, chaos, and incompetence which may lead to inefficiency (Ronald, 2011). This style is not ideal in situations where group members lack the knowledge or experience to complete the task and make decisions (Emery, 2015).

Putting together the three leadership styles practiced by administrators, there is no single leadership style that a successful leader may use. Leadership style is not a one size fits all phenomenon, rather it should be selected and adapted to fit the organization, situations, groups and individuals. It can be applied depending on the personality, and experiences of the leader which may influence the decision-making process of the leaders and eventually affect the whole organization.

Leadership Trait

Leadership Trait is anchored on trait theory. It focuses on the innate qualities and characteristics possess by a great leader or even to anyone. Traits are characteristics that are innate to anyone. Whether leaders are born with leadership characteristics or not, people who have leadership potential may change their traits. Leadership traits are essential among the leaders who are given responsibility. It paves the idea that personality trait has an important role in leadership to manage an organization. Consequently, it highlights the leaders' component of the leadership process which typically composed of the leaders, followers, and the situations.

The trait exhibited by the leaders provided a clearer picture of who they are as leaders and how they fit in the organization. Leadership traits include collaboration, commitment, trust, respect, articulation, perception, self-confidence, self-assurance, flexibility, persistence, determination, trustworthiness, dependability, friendliness, and enthusiasm. Effective leaders have high level of commitment to the goal of improving school readiness and to the organization's mission. School leaders must stabilize pleasant school culture. Leaders are committed to and believe in the benefits of collaboration. Studies emphasized the importance of collaborative relationship between principals and teachers when they studied teacher retention strategies.

Leadership Integrity

Integrity of leaders is anchored on moral or ethical behaviors of leaders. When we speak of ethical or moral, it encompasses actions which are in accordance with social accepted behavior (Pillay, 2014). In dealing with conflicts, a leader must be guided by ethical behavior in considering options, as our choices shape us as being good or bad, and whether an action that taken will harm someone or something (Van Aswegen & Engelbreecht as cited by Pillay, 2014). Effective leadership requires leaders of integrity, thus leaders must act following code of standard of moral virtue which prevents undesirable behavior in thought, in words or in deed. These leaders show the desire to excel in order to meet to achieve the school's vision and goals. A person of high integrity may be filled with challenges, but most all rewards, and the legacy of good leadership that will bring lasting effect (Azuka, as cited by Pillay, 2014).

Lack of integrity may affect the trust and confidence of the followers or subordinates to their leaders and believed to have an impact on the organization's operation. Without integrity, there will be no real success, as the leaders are more likely to

engage in unethical or counterproductive behaviors. It is therefore vital that leaders conduct themselves with integrity to facilitate the day to day operations and the overall functioning of an organization.

Findings

High School Administrators Leadership Style

Teachers rated their principal Frequently True that they *always try to include one or more employees in determining what to do and how to do it, however, they maintain the final decision making authority*. It is Occasionally True that they *do not consider suggestions made by the employees as they do not have time for them*. These results convey that the teachers believed their public high school administrators consider decentralization of authority, participatory and mutual communication. Middle level administrator respondents rated their public high schools principals Frequently True that they *always try to include one or more employees in determining what to do and how to do it, however, they maintain the final decision making authority and they wanted to create an environment where the employees take ownership of the project and they allowed them to participate in the decision –making process*. It is Seldom True that they *do not consider suggestions made by the employees as they do not have time for them*. The principals rated themselves Frequently True that they *wanted to create an environment where the employees have ownership on the projects and allowed them to participate in decision-making process*, and Seldom True that they *do not consider suggestions made by the employees as they do not have time for them*, with the lowest mean of 1.50. These results suggest that the administrators believed that when employees are involved in the decision-making, the employees will feel the power of confidence in decision-making, making them more effective in the organization. This was supported by the findings of the study of Iqbal et al (2015) that leadership has a positive effect on the performance of the employees.

Private School Administrators Leadership Style

Teachers rated their principals Almost Always True that they *always try to include one or more employees in determining what to do and how to do it, though, they maintain the final decision-making authority*. They were rated Seldom True that they *do not consider suggestions made by the employees as they do not have time for them*. This means that the private high school administrators believed in the power of participation and consultation of employees in the decision-making process. The middle level administrators rated their principals Almost Always True that they *delegate tasks in order to implement a new procedure or process*. This result is due to the fact that the principals and the middle level administrators are working closely together where they have developed a leader- follower relationship which resulted to the development of trust and confidence that the middle level can do the tasks without close supervision. The principals rated Frequently True that *employees can lead themselves just as well as leaders can*.

High School Administrators ‘Leadership Traits

The teachers and the middle level administrators in the public schools rated their public high school principals Agree to have high level of commitment to the goals of

improving school readiness and to the organizations' mission. The principals rated themselves Strongly Agree in assessing their level of commitment to the goal of improving schools readiness. They rated themselves the lowest in driving enthusiasm, and tolerance for stress which means that they have a problem in terms of motivating and influencing people. They felt and believed that they still need to improve their enthusiasm and tolerance to stress to make a difference in their organization. Table 3 shows the summary of responses of the three groups of respondents on the public high school administrators in terms of traits.

Teachers in private high schools rated their principals strongly agree in assessing the commitment to the goal of improving school readiness and to the organization's mission. Further, teachers strongly agree that their principals view other stakeholders positively and trust their positions, were respectful as they respect and appreciate differing perspectives, have self-confidence, they are flexible as they are able to adjust to different situations and were friendly since they show kindness and warmth. However, teachers assessed their principal the lowest in terms of effective communication. They perceived that their principals have difficulty in conveying the message they wanted to disseminate which may affect the plans or projects they want to implement. Middle level administrators strongly agree that the principals possess all the qualities of effective leaders. This is also true with the ratings of the principals themselves. These findings show that the middle level administrators who are working closely with the principals know very well the characteristics displayed by their principals.

High School Administrators Leadership Integrity

The public school administrators, as well as the private high school principals were rated **Rarely** that they practiced integrity indicators based on the assessment made by the three groups of respondents. This means that both public and high school principals display High Integrity. These results manifested that the principals were believed that they are doing what is right and they observe ethics to keep this integrity intact. To get the trust and confidence of the followers, leaders should create a climate that is fulfilling to the organization and to the school itself. It is vital that the administrators conduct themselves with integrity to facilitate the day-to-day operations and the over-all functioning of an organization.

Test of Difference between public and private high school administrators leadership characteristics

Table 1 Test of Difference between the Public and Private High School Administrators 'Leadership Styles

School Administrators	Mean	SD	Computed t-value	Tabular value at 0.05	Description	Decision
Public	3.25	0.39	4.98	2.00	Significant	Reject Ho
Private	3.94	0.63				

It can be observed that the computed t value of 4.98 is higher than the tabular value of 2.00. This indicates that there was a significant difference in the leadership styles of their administrators, thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. This may be because of the

nature, culture and climate, as well as other related factors that may affect the decision-making behavior of the two groups considering the differing environment of the public and private school.

Table 2 Test of Difference between the Public and Private School Administrators' Leadership Traits

School Administrators	Mean	SD	Computed t-value	Tabular value at 0.05	Description	Decision
Public	4.19	0.13	8.86	2.05	Significant	Reject Ho
Private	4.59	0.11				

The computed t value of 8.86 is higher than the tabular value of 2.05. This indicates that there was a significant difference in the leadership traits of the public and private high school administrators as assessed by the three groups of respondents from the public and private high schools. It reveals that private schools administrators strongly agree that they exhibit the leadership traits expected of them.

Table 3. Test of Difference between the Public and Private School Administrators' Leadership Integrity

School Administrators	Mean	SD	Computed t	Tabular value at 0.05	Description	Decision
Public	1.56	0.20	0.37	0.72	Not Significant	Accept Ho
Private	1.54	0.21				

The data show that there was no significant difference in terms of leadership integrity as perceived by the teachers, middle level administrators and the principals themselves with a computed t value of 0.37 and tabular value of 0.72. This indicates that the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that the integrity of teachers was not affected by where the principals are rendering their services. This is because, as an educator, they must be guided by the Code of conduct observed by a professional teacher and the ethical values of being a leader. A leader to be able to implement change is a person of high integrity.

Test of relationship between public and private school administrators' leadership characteristics

Table 4 Test of Relationship between School Administrators' Leadership Styles and Leadership Traits

School Administrators	Computed r	Tabular value at 0.05	Description	Decision
Public	0.33	0.5760	Not Significant	Accept Ho
Private	0.86	0.6664	Significant	Reject Ho

Among the public high schools, the computed values of $r=0.33$ is less than their corresponding tabular r values $=0.5760$ showed no significant relationship between the leadership style and the leadership traits of their principals, thus the null

hypothesis is accepted. This reveals that the leadership style or the authority of the public school principals is not in any relation to the trait they possess. This may be explained by the fact that public school principals are practicing not only one style of leadership instead, they use a certain style depending on the situation they are in without looking into the trait they manifested. This also reveals that style and traits of the public high school principals were not the basis of an effective leader.

However, in the private high schools, the computed r- value of 0.86 is higher than the tabular r-value of 0.6664, therefore, there was a significant relationship between the style and traits of the private high school principals. The null hypothesis was rejected. This may be explained by the fact that the private high school principals are closely monitored by the owners of the schools and the Board of Trustees, therefore, the administrators need to be very careful with the leadership style they practice and the leadership traits they need to manifest in performing their tasks. It denotes that the style of leading the school should be in accordance to the innate traits of the leader which is dependent on the school culture and climate.

Table 5 Test of Relationship between School Administrators' Leadership Styles and Leadership Integrity

School Administrators	Computed r	Tabular value at 0.05	Description	Decision
Public	-0.39	0.5760	Not Significant	Accept Ho
Private	0.01	0.6664	Not Significant	Accept Ho

Table 5 shows a negative correlation between the styles and integrity of the public high school administrators with computed r- value of -0.39 and tabular value of 0.5760, as well as the private high school principals with a computed r- value of 0.01 and tabular values of 0.6664. The obtained data shows that the styles and integrity were not significant, thus accept the null hypothesis. This means that the leadership style was independent of the leadership integrity of the administrators. The leadership styles practiced by the administrators may depend on other variables like the school culture and climate. It may also shows that the leadership traits and leadership integrity of the principals depend upon the situations and the moral and ethical considerations of the administrators themselves.

Table 6 Test of Relationship between School Administrators' Leadership Traits and Leadership Integrity

School Administrators	Computed r	Tabular value at 0.05	Description	Decision
Public	-0.63	0.5760	Significant	Reject Ho
Private	0.01	0.6664	Not Significant	Accept Ho

In as much as the computed values of r – is higher than the tabular r values, then there is a significant relationship between principals' traits and leadership integrity. Among the public high school principals having computed tabular r -value of -0.63 against the tabular value of 0.5760, thus the null hypothesis therefore is rejected. This reveals that the public high school principals are always guided by their traits and integrity in all circumstances. On the other hand, for the private high schools, the computed r value of 0.01 is lower than the tabular r value of 0.6664; thus, there is no significant relationship between the traits and the leadership integrity of the principals. This means that the private high school administrators are confident that leadership traits they manifest is more than enough to become effective leaders. It reveals that high integrity does not in any relation to the traits of the private high school principal's manifest.

Based on the findings, a Strategic Leadership Program for Administrators (SLPA) was proposed to enhance the leadership characteristics, develop communication skills and management, enhance the moral and ethical standards of administrators and develop a well-rounded, highly moral and ethical and potential leader.

Conclusions

1. Public and private high school administrators' in the division of Malabon use democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership style in decision –making, with democratic style as the most commonly used in leading the organization.
2. Public high school respondents Agree that their principals possess the personal traits of effective administrators while the private high schools Strongly Agree that their principals possess the personal traits of an effective leader.
3. Public and Private high school principals are seen to be of high integrity based from the assessment made.

Suggestions

1. In as much as the leadership characteristics, administrators should be given more trainings about leadership styles, traits and integrity to be cascaded to the community especially to teachers and middle level administrators.
2. The researcher may disseminate the findings of the study to the Division of Malabon enhancing administrators and middle level administrators to develop potential leaders in the division.
3. The adoption of the crafted Strategic Leadership Program for Administrators be tested by the organization to see the effectiveness of democratic style of leadership for schools to achieve excellent performance in education.
4. Lastly, for future researchers, due to the limitations of the study, it is recommended that similar studies be conducted in order to strengthen and affirm its findings.

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