

# A Study of the Relationship between School Administrators' Behavioral Traits and Effective School Management: Basis for Continuous Improvement

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## Abstract:

School administrators are the most important in achieving the educational objectives of schools. This research examined the variables of behavioral characteristics and agreement of school administration to the school administrators of the School Division of Tangub City. The descriptive-correlational research design was the data analysis and study guide. A cross-sectional survey approach was utilized in data collection, there was no sampling technique used since the target population was not large enough to collect the required data. After statistical analysis was done, it was found that there was no difference in the behavioral characteristics of the respondents when categorized in terms of length of service, and number of hours of training. Compared based on educational attainment, it was found that there is a difference in the respondents' perception on the behavioral characteristics  $X^2(4) = 7.97$ ,  $p < .05$ . In addition, the correlation between behavioral characteristics and agreement of school management was positively correlated,  $r(49) = 0.57$ ,  $p < .05$ . The result is statistically significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The conclusion is that behavioral characteristics among school administrators are very significant in school management and vice versa. Furthermore, since administrators pursue continuous improvement, they have difficulty in Developing Work Systems. Therefore, corresponding training on work system development and implementation should be enhanced to bridge the gap in this parameter.

**Keywords:** School Administrators, Behavioral Traits, Work Systems.

## INTRODUCTION

School administrators play a pivotal role in shaping the overall effectiveness of educational institutions. Their leadership extends beyond policy implementation to fostering a supportive environment that enhances teaching and learning. Effective school management requires administrators to establish clear goals, create inclusive policies, and ensure efficient resource allocation to meet educational standards. Moreover, their ability to engage with teachers, students, and the community significantly impacts school culture, student performance, and institutional growth. By exhibiting strong leadership qualities and behavioral competencies, school administrators influence decision-making processes, promote collaboration, and drive continuous improvement efforts within the school system. Their ability to communicate effectively, resolve conflicts, and adapt to educational reforms determines the success of schools in meeting both short-term and long-term objectives.

The significance of administrators' behavioral traits in effective school management has been highlighted in various studies. Kalkan et al. (2020) emphasize that an administrator's conduct directly affects the learning environment and organizational effectiveness. According to Algarni (2020), understanding and assessing these behavioral traits can serve as a foundation for refining leadership strategies and enhancing school performance. Additionally, Constantinides (2023) argues that administrators who exhibit leadership-oriented behaviors contribute to a more productive academic culture by fostering positive relationships with teachers,

staff, and parents. By demonstrating strong decision-making skills and ethical leadership, administrators set the standard for professionalism and collaboration, ultimately influencing school improvement efforts.

Despite existing studies on school administration and leadership, there are still gaps in knowledge on how certain behavioral characteristics propel long-term school improvement. Most previous studies only emphasize the overall role of administrators without exploring the particular individual characteristics and how they affect decision-making and governance. There is also limited empirical evidence on the direct effect of the behavioral characteristics of administrators on the success of school improvement. Addressing these gaps is essential in the formulation of focused strategies that can foster sustainable school improvement, thus this study will be conducted.

This study assesses the relationship between school administrators' behavioral traits and effective school management as a basis for continuous improvement. Specifically, it seeks to identify the key behavioral traits exhibited by school administrators, analyze the impact of these traits on school governance and decision-making, examine the role of leadership behaviors in fostering a positive school culture, and determine how administrators' attributes influence their ability to implement continuous improvement strategies. By bridging the existing research gaps, this study provides valuable insights into the role of administrators' behavior in enhancing school effectiveness, offering recommendations for leadership development and policy enhancements in educational institutions.

## **METHODS**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a descriptive correlational method, which involved gathering data without altering the study subjects. It aimed to describe and predict relationships between variables in real-world settings without researcher intervention. Correlation measured the statistical association between two variables, determining whether the relationship was significant or not. If the computed value exceeded the critical value, the correlation was considered significant.

### **Research Setting**

This study was conducted in the School's Division of Tangub City. The selection of this site was because of its relation to the research topic in order to make the findings practicable to the leadership and management of education in the division.

### **Research Respondents**

The target population of the study consisted of school administrators under the Division of Tangub City. Considering the population size of school administrators, no sampling technique was used, as data were gathered conveniently using the population parameter.

### **Research Instrument**

The research instrument used in this study consists of three parts. Part I gathers the demographic profile of administrators including age, gender, years of service, educational qualifications, and hours of relevant training. Part II assesses the behavioral traits of the school administrators which are evaluated along the lines of communicating with Coworkers, Active Listening, Facilitating Discussion, Social Orientation, Social Perceptiveness, Nurturing Relationships, Reinforcing Success, Developing and Building Teams, Assessing Others, Coaching, Developing, Instructing, Cooperating, Persuading, Resolving Conflicts/Negotiating, Empowering, Inspiring and Coordinating Work Activities, Attention to Detail, Decision Making, Designing Work Systems, Managing Materials and Facilities, Managing Information Resources, Performing Administrative Activities, Maintaining Quality, Personnel Decision Making, Maintaining Safety, Eliminating Barriers to Performance, Strategic Task Management. Part III is on the administrators' level of concurrence with school management.

### Instrument Validity

The draft questionnaire was first submitted to the dissertation committee for comments and suggestions. After incorporating the recommended revisions, it was forwarded to the research adviser for a thorough review before being submitted to the Research Committee for approval. Once approved, the questionnaire underwent validation to ensure its reliability and accuracy. To further verify its validity, the Kuder-Richardson test was conducted, leading to necessary revisions, removal, modification, or retention of items based on the results.

### Data-Gathering Procedure

Permission was first obtained from the Division of Tagub City. The survey was administered both in printed form and online for greater accessibility. Respondents were provided with informed consent, ensuring voluntary participation and confidentiality. Follow-ups were conducted to maximize responses.

### Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to ethical research standards by ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Respondents were informed about the study's purpose and assured that their identities and responses would remain confidential. They had the freedom to withdraw at any time without consequences. Prior to data collection, authorization was obtained from the School Division Office. The study posed no harm to participants, and all data were collected and processed with integrity, ensuring accuracy and honest reporting. The findings were used solely for academic purposes, upholding ethical research principles (Badampudi et al., 2022).

### Statistical Treatment

Various statistical tools were employed in the study. The mean was used to quantify teachers' and students' perceptions of the two key variables. To determine significant differences based on gender, a t-test was applied. Meanwhile, the F-test (one-way analysis of variance) assessed significant differences within groups regarding teachers' and students' perceptions. Lastly, the Pearson r correlation was used to examine the relationship between the level of manifestation of behavioral traits and school administrators' concurrence with school management. Additionally, the Pearson r coefficient indicated the strength of the association between the correlated variables.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1 - Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

Category	Descriptive	
	N	%
Age		
30 years old and below	11	26.8
31-35 years old	5	12.2
36-40 years old	5	12.2
Category	Descriptive	
	N	%
41-45 years old	8	19.5
46 years old and above	12	29.3
Gender		
Male	17	41.5
Female	24	58.5
Educational Attainment		
Undergraduate Course	24	58.5
MA Units	8	19.5
Full Pledge MA	5	12.2
Doctoral Units	2	4.9
Full Pledge Doctoral	2	4.9
Hours of Relevant Trainings		

5 hours and below	10	24.4
6-10 Hours	7	17.1
11-15 Hours	8	19.5
16-20 Hours	9	22
More Than 20 Hours	7	17.1
Length of Service (Years)		
4 Years and Below	9	22
5-8 Years	13	31.7
9-12 Years	4	9.8
Category	Descriptive	
	N	%
13-16 Years	5	12.2
More than 16 Years	10	24.4

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents, categorized by age, gender, educational attainment, hours of relevant training, and length of service. The descriptive analysis revealed that the largest proportion of respondents belonged to the age group of 46 years and above (29.3%). In terms of gender distribution, female respondents (58.5%) outnumbered their male counterparts (41.5%). Additionally, the majority of respondents held undergraduate degrees in BEEd and BSEd (58.5%). Regarding hours of relevant training, 24.4% of respondents accumulated five hours or less. Furthermore, most respondents had been in the teaching profession for five to eight years (31.7%).

**Table 2 - Behavioral Traits of Administrators**

Indicators	Descriptive		
	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Communicating with Coworkers.	3.86	.93	High
2. Coordinating Work Activities	3.77	.86	High
3. Active Listening	3.93	.88	High
4. Attention to Detail	3.73	.93	High
5. Facilitating Discussion	3.65	.77	High
6. Decision Making	3.27	.82	Moderate
7. Social Orientation	3.56	.79	High
8. Designing Work Systems	2.57	.69	Low
9. Social Perceptiveness	3.13	.76	Moderate
10. Managing Materials and Facilities	3.85	.88	High
11. Nurturing Relationships	3.29	.96	Moderate
12. Managing Information Resources	3.56	.79	High
13. Reinforcing Success	4.47	.68	Very High
14. Performing Administrative Activities	2.59	.88	Low
15. Developing and Building Teams	3.67	.89	High
16. Maintaining Quality	2.56	.75	Low
17. Assessing others	3.33	.85	Moderate
18. Personnel Decision Making	4.12	.75	High
19. Coaching, developing, instructing	3.94	.83	High
20. Maintaining safety	3.18	.73	Moderate
21. Cooperating	3.85	.77	High
22. Eliminating Barriers to Performance	3.26	.94	Moderate
23. Strategic Task Management	4.23	.84	Very High

24.	Persuading	3.53	.72	High
25.	Taking Charge	3.63	.79	High
26.	Resolving Conflicts	3.97	.83	High
27.	Orienting others	4.19	.97	High
28.	Empowering	2.85	.88	Moderate
29.	Setting goals for others	3.01	.73	Moderate
30.	Inspiring	2.87	.84	Moderate
31.	Interpreting the meaning of information	3.79	.87	High

Table 2 presents the descriptive analysis of school administrators' behavioral traits. As indicated, 17 indicators were read as "high"; two indicators were read as "very high"; nine indicators were read as "moderate"; and three indicators were read verbally as "low". To the surprise, the indicator "reinforcing success" had the highest mean ( $M=4.47$ ,  $SD=0.68$ ). This is because of the high value among school administrators on the importance of providing support system to any form of success in the school setting. As unveiled by Tarabini et al. (2019), success reinforcement facilitates positive behavioral traits formation which could be translated to a good work performance. Furthermore, success reinforcement plays a crucial role towards the increase and decrease of appropriate work behaviors (Denrell & Liu, 2021).

Upon overall analysis, general mean of variable "behavioral traits" was interpreted as "high" ( $M=3.52$ ,  $SD=0.51$ ). Thus, perception of the respondents indicates a predominantly high attribute on the part of administrators towards their behavioral traits. Shaturaey and Bekimbetova (2021) emphasized the role of personality traits (behavioral traits) of school administration because it is one of the elements to success or failure of an organization. And behavioral traits is an indicator of effective performance of school administrators and staff (Frieder et al., 2018). In connection to the challenges on the part of administrators to their behavioral traits, work system design was the lowest mean ( $M=2.57$ ,  $SD=.69$ ). This was corroborated by Arshad and Ahmed (2021) which indicated that work system is difficult to establish due to many factors needing to be examined prior to the design per se. Thus, aside from the observable positive side among the view of school administrators towards their behavioral traits, they still grapple with the challenges on their part specifically with the design and implementation of work systems.

Moreover, the findings indicate a moderate characteristic of administrators towards their organizational characteristics ( $M=3.22$ ;  $SD=0.83$ ). Tompkins (2023) argued that administrators need to have generic knowledge of organizational behavior so that they can be in a position to apply effective plans without stopping supervision or guidance from other external agencies. Furthermore, as revealed through these findings, setting priority goals received an average grade ( $M=3.18$ ;  $SD = 0.95$ ) when it comes to articulating the benefits of being a school administrator with some behavioral and personality characteristics associated with it. The respondents admit that the effective management of some priorities was emphasized by Gimin et al., (2024) who concluded that clear set goals for decision-making frames outcomes triumphs ambiguity when resolving disagreements among colleagues in collaborative projects in educational organizations.

**Table 3 - Concurrence of School Administrators on School Management**

Constructs	Descriptive		
	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Continuous School Improvement	4.27	0.87	Very High
Better Learning Outcomes Achieved by Improved Teacher Standards	3.67	0.76	High
Desired Learning Outcomes Enhanced by National Learning Strategies, Multi-Sector Coordination and Quality Assurance	3.53	0.69	High

Improved Impact on Outcomes Resulting from Complementary Enhanced Child Education, Alternative Learning System and Private Sector Participation	3.87	0.73	High
Institutional Culture Change in DepEd to Facilitate School Initiatives and Assuring Quality	3.47	0.77	High

Table 3 indicates the concurrence of school administrators to school management. As the descriptive analysis revealed, the variable was predominantly interpreted as "high" ( $M=3.76$ ). A closer analysis of the school management constructs reveals that "continuous school improvement" was interpreted as very high ( $M=4.27$ ,  $SD=.87$ ). This indicates that school administrators anticipate continuous improvement in their respective schools. This was evidenced by Peurach et al. (2018) who found that continuous improvement was the most prized variable by school administrators. Naidoo (2019) wrote that continuous improvement allows schools to create innovative methods towards school management, thus ushering in desirable consequences the success of the school/organization.

Moreover, school administration analysis indicates that "opportunities for faculty growth" have also been rated highly by administrators. This has made time and money available to be used in providing training programs concerning administration. Its importance was also highlighted in Benevene et al. (2020) study where teachers were found to be more satisfied with the workplace environment following the provision of more professional development opportunities.

**Table 4 - Difference between means of Behavioral Traits as to Gender**

		Statistic	df	p
Behavioral Traits	Student's t	-0.985	39.0	0.160
	Mann-Whitney U	151		

Table 4 indicates the difference between respondents' behavioral characteristics when divided by gender. The researcher used a non-parametric test because the data violates the Assumption check for Shapiro-Wilk's test of normality. Hence, the appropriate non-parametric counterpart when comparing two independent groups is the Mann-Whitney U test. As indicated in Table 5, there is no significant difference between respondents' behavioral characteristics when divided by gender  $U(39) = 151, p=.16$ . Hence, there is no sufficient sample evidence to conclude that respondents' behavioral characteristics vary when divided by gender.

This would mean that the respondent's behavior could be determined by other variables, aside from gender. Thus, there is a need for researchers to investigate other types of variables aside from gender in a quest to study respondents' behavioral characteristics. In a quest to comprehend the results more, individual measurements should be done for each respective item per given categories. Additionally, investigating the response time difference would also be effective in establishing some of the perception and reaction time differences between the two genders.

**Table 5 - Difference between Behavioral Traits when Classified According to Demographics**

	$\chi^2$	Df	P
Length of Service	3.77	4	0.438
Educational Attainment	9.93	4	0.042
Number of Hours of Training	7.97	4	0.093

In contrasting the difference among the respondents' perceptions of Length of Service, Educational Attainment, and Number of Hours of Training, the non-parametric test was utilized due to the violation of the assumptions for Shapiro Wilk's Normality test and Levene's Homogeneity of Variance test. Therefore, the most suitable non-parametric analogue for contrasting three or more independent samples is the Kruskal-Wallis test. As reported in Table 5.2, there is no difference in the respondents' behavioral characteristics when grouped according to length of service  $X^2(4) = 3.77, p=.44$  and number of hours of training  $X^2$

(4)=7.97,  $p=.09$ . Compared by educational attainment, it was observed that there is a difference among the respondents' perceptions of behavioral characteristics  $\chi^2(4)=7.97, p<.05$ . Therefore, there is adequate sample evidence to declare that the respondents' behavioral characteristics differ according to educational attainment. This observation was attested to by the work of Kim et al. (2018) who asserted that teachers' behavioral characteristics differ in accordance with educational attainment. Teachers' behavioral characteristics continue to grow in quality as they pursue a higher career education.

The findings elaborated in this research can be a significant lead in decision-making. The result of this research can also be used by schools to make decisions about suitable education for prospective and existing teachers. Policymakers can also be guided by these findings while formulating policies with the goal of improving teacher development and motivation. It can then be argued that there is a need for ongoing development activities where teachers must join to enhance their skills on an ongoing basis and suitable classroom strategies.

**Table 6 - Relationship between Behavioral Traits and Level of Concurrence of School Management**

Variable	R-value	p-value	Strength of Association
Behavioral Traits and School Management	0.57	$p<0.001$	Strong Positive Correlation

Table 6 illustrates the bivariate correlation between the independent and dependent variables. Behavioral traits and concurrence of school management were positively correlated,  $r(49)=0.57, p<.05$ . The result is statistically significant at  $\alpha=0.05$ . Overall, there was a high correlation between the variables. Behavioral Traits were positively correlated with the concurrence of school management.

The results indicate that the more positive the behavior, the greater the level of agreement that there will be among school administrators and teachers in decision-making that affects students. This is a very important correlation in having an effective learning environment in which policies are supported by everyone in staff. It also means that there needs to be attention given to fostering positive behaviors among administrators and teachers in attempting to close any gaps that may be present in a school community. Finally, further research should attempt to investigate other variables that could affect this correlation in an attempt to better understand its dynamics.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusion

The findings of the study identify significant implications for school administration with a significant focus on the role of the behavioral characteristics of administrators in successful school administration. Importantly, as administrators strive for continuous improvement, they have a hard time Developing Work Systems. Thus, training in work system development and implementation is necessary. Building these skills will ensure the achievement of school administration goals always. With effective administrators, schools can anticipate improved goal achievement and improved student performance standards. Furthermore, such interventions will improve resources and opportunities in the education sector, leading to ongoing growth and learning through effective administrative practices.

### Recommendation

Based on the delimitations and importance of the study, future researchers are encouraged to investigate the causal impact of the independent and dependent variables with demographic variables as moderators. A larger sample size is also recommended to facilitate parametric analysis. The descriptive and inferential findings of the study can also serve as a reference for school-based intervention programs to improve administrators' behavioral traits and to enhance school administration.

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