

Leadership Qualities and Competencies of School Administrators: Investigating Their Interrelationships

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Abstract:

The role of effective school administration in shaping educational environments and outcomes cannot be overstated. It significantly influences organizational culture, teacher morale, student achievement, and overall school success. Administrators who demonstrate strong leadership, communication skills, vision, and the ability to foster collaboration among staff and stakeholders create a positive and productive school climate. This study examines the pivotal role of effective school administration in shaping educational environments and outcomes in Tanguib City. A descriptive analysis identifies and correlates desirable qualities of high school administrators with their leadership competence and operational management skills. Findings reveal demographic trends, key desirable attributes such as self-confidence and diplomacy, and exemplary leadership and organizational effectiveness performance. While no significant correlation was found between perceived qualities and actual competence, the study emphasizes the importance of training and supportive frameworks in enhancing administrative effectiveness and fostering positive school climates.

Keywords: Desirable Qualities, Leadership.

INTRODUCTION

Motivation at work plays a crucial role in influencing nurses' job performance, particularly through the Effective school administration shapes educational environments and outcomes, profoundly influencing organizational culture, teacher morale, student achievement, and overall school success. Administrators who exhibit strong leadership, communication skills, vision, and the ability to foster collaboration among staff and stakeholders create positive and productive school climates. They are instrumental in implementing policies and practices that support student learning and development, ensuring schools remain dynamic and responsive to community needs. Investing in effective school administration is crucial for promoting continuous improvement and achieving educational excellence.

The research underscores that successful school administrators possess a blend of personal qualities and professional competencies essential for navigating the complexities of educational settings (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). These qualities typically include visionary leadership, effective communication, emotional intelligence, and a dedication to ongoing improvement (Leithwood et al., 2012; Bush & Glover, 2014). Furthermore, effective administrators excel in instructional leadership, cultivating positive school climates and forging collaborative relationships with staff, students, parents, and the broader community. The link between these leadership qualities and organizational outcomes, such as student achievement and teacher retention, underscores the strategic importance of leadership in education (Leithwood et al., 2011). Administrators who embody these qualities inspire accountability and innovation, fostering a culture of continuous improvement within their schools (Onorato, 2013). Understanding how these competencies are developed and nurtured is critical for school leaders' professional growth and effectiveness (Day & Sammons, 2011).

Examining the interconnectedness of desirable qualities and leadership competencies with school outcomes is essential. While existing research on educational leadership is extensive, focused studies are needed to explore specific competencies and their nuanced effects on school administration. For instance, while emotional intelligence is recognized as crucial for effective leadership, further investigation is warranted to understand its specific impact on school leadership practices and organizational outcomes. Additionally, there is a call for deeper insights into how various leadership styles and competencies interact across diverse educational contexts (Onorato, 2013). By elucidating these connections, educators and policymakers can make informed decisions to effectively support and develop school administrators.

Ultimately, enhancing the preparation and continuous professional development of school leaders is vital for creating and sustaining high-performing educational institutions that meet the diverse needs of today's students. The role of school administrators extends beyond mere management to encompass transformative leadership that shapes the future of education. This study offers insights into the qualities and competencies defining effective school leadership, underscoring their significance in fostering educational excellence and positive school environments. Through a deeper understanding of these factors, stakeholders in education can better support and empower school leaders to enhance educational experiences and outcomes for all stakeholders involved.

METHODS

Research Design

This study used the descriptive method, which comprehensively analyzed the collected data. This method facilitated the researcher in thoroughly describing, analyzing, and evaluating the case under investigation. The sources of the data and information analyzed, evaluated, and interpreted were an integrated questionnaire and a scheduled interview. These tools were meticulously designed to gather relevant and detailed responses from the participants, providing a robust dataset for the study. Through this method, the researcher could gain in-depth insights and draw meaningful conclusions about the case under investigation, ensuring a thorough and systematic examination of the subject matter.

Research Setting

The study was conducted in the Division of Tangub City, Misamis Occidental, across 16 public high schools comprising 118 teachers and 17 administrators, with 2,000 students from Grades 1 to 6. Situated in both hinterland and lowland areas, the schools operate within a predominantly agricultural community where families depend on rice, corn, and root crops, with some engaged in small-scale businesses. This setting provided a relevant context for examining educational outcomes influenced by geographic and socioeconomic factors.

Research Respondents

The study included 16 elementary school administrators and 118 high school teachers from the North District of the Tangub City Division, using complete enumeration to ensure comprehensive representation. By involving both elementary and high school levels, the study captured diverse insights into educational leadership and teaching practices, enabling a nuanced analysis of administrative roles, instructional strategies, and their influence on student learning outcomes.

Research Instrument

The primary research instrument was a modified questionnaire developed from the works of Eballe (1992) and Goko Tano (1990), as well as insights gathered through interviews with teachers and administrators. The questionnaire used a Likert-type rating scale to assess three performance dimensions: professional proficiency (rated from 1–poor to 5–excellent), and operational management (rated from 1–never to 5–always). To measure emotional stress, the study utilized a quiz developed by Dr. Thomas Holmes and his team at the University of Washington, where respondents recorded life events experienced in the past 12 months and totaled their corresponding stress index scores for interpretation. Additionally, a Personal Data Sheet was used to collect demographic information such as sex, age, educational attainment, management units, work experience, and years of administrative service.

Instrument Validity

Instrument validation was conducted through a pilot study where the questionnaire was administered to a sample of potential respondents to assess clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness. Feedback from this phase guided revisions to ambiguous or unclear items, improved question phrasing, and ensured the questionnaire effectively measured leadership qualities and competencies. Adjustments were also made to response options and the overall structure to enhance usability and accuracy. This collaborative and iterative process, involving stakeholders from the Tangub City division, ensured the questionnaire's reliability and validity, strengthening the credibility of the study's findings by minimizing measurement errors.

Data-Gathering Procedure

Data were collected from high schools in the Tangub City division after securing permission to administer questionnaires to targeted respondents. Formal letters were sent to school administrators to acknowledge their role and request access. Administrators then distributed the questionnaires to teachers, who served as respondents. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative analyses to identify and evaluate the commendable characteristics of school administrators based on questionnaire responses.

Ethical Considerations

This study upheld ethical standards by securing informed consent from all participants, clearly explaining the research purpose, voluntary participation, and withdrawal rights (Bryman, 2016). Confidentiality was strictly maintained through secure data storage and anonymization to protect privacy (Govil, 2013). Transparency was ensured by accurately reporting findings, acknowledging questionnaire modifications, and addressing limitations and biases (Creswell, 2014). Integrity in data analysis was maintained by presenting results objectively and avoiding bias or selective reporting (Bryman, 2016). These practices safeguarded participant rights and enhanced the study's credibility and contribution to educational research.

Data Analysis

Simple percentage was used to show the proportion of aspects based on respondents' data. Weighted mean determined the average responses of the participants. Pearson's r Product Moment Correlation was applied to assess the significant relationship between the two variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 - Personal Profile of the School Administrators

Age	Male		Female		Single		No Significant problem		Mild life problem		F	%
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
51-55	0	0	2	11.76	0	0	2	12.50	0	0	2	11.76
46-50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
41-45	4	23.59	2	11.76	0	0	6	37.50	0	0	6	35.29
36-40	0	0	4	23.59	0	0	4	25.00	1	5.26	5	29.41
31-35	0	0	2	11.76	0	0	2	12.50	0	0	2	11.76
26-30	3	17.64	0	0	0	0	2	12.50	0	0	2	11.76
	7	41.23	10	58.77	0	0	16	94.00	1	6	17	100

Table 1 provides a comprehensive overview of the personal profiles of the seventeen high school administrators in the Tangub City division. This data, including age, sex, civil status, and emotional stress, is crucial in understanding the demographics and stress levels of these administrators. The majority of the respondents fall within the age bracket of 41-45 years old, with nine administrators being males and ten females. All seventeen administrators are married.

The table revealed that 80 percent of the administrators were in their forties and early fifties. This further implies that they had enough experience to work efficiently and effectively. Regardless of age, knowledge, and effectiveness, these administrators can develop. In this view, successful leadership depends more on

appropriate behavior, skills, and actions and less on personal traits. Administrators are usually the source of action and are highly involved and committed to making their input effective in specific situations.

In terms of emotional stress, among the seventeen public elementary school administrators. The data reveals that sixteen out of the seventeen administrators show no significant emotional stress problems. One of the administrators is emotionally turned to the performance level related to their job as administrators. Furthermore, in the follow-up interview, the administrators identified situations that led them to stress, such as coping with hectic schedules, meeting deadlines, and significant changes in responsibilities at work, like promotion and outstanding personal achievements. It is the responsibility of every person to be a well-adjusted individual. On the part of the school administrator, adjusting to physical and social needs is crucial. If efficient job performance is to be obtained, the school administrator must possess sound mental and physical stamina.

An administrator is in the organizational line-up vulnerable to several rule types, so they should define and understand their position. The administrator's job is strenuous and imposes various demands and pressures. An administrator free from emotional stress can function effectively in the school system's operation.

Table 2 - Professional Profile of the School Administrators

A. Educational Attainment	F	%
Doctorate Degree	0	
M.A. with Doctorate units	1	5.88%
Bachelor's Degree with M.A. units	1	5.88%
Bachelor' Degree	15	88.34%
B. In-Service Training Management Units	17	100%
1. Training hours		
35 above	0	0
31 – 35	3	17.65%
26 – 30	5	29.41%
21 – 25	3	17.65%
16 – 20	4	23.53%
10 – 15	2	11.76%
Total	17	100%
C. Management Units		
0		
6 – 10	6	35.29%
11 – 15	6	35.29%
16 – 20	3	17.65%
21 – 25	2	11.76%
26 – 30	0	0
35 above	0	0
Total	17	
D. Years Experience as Administrator		
25 above		
22 – 24	0	0
19 – 21	0	0
16 – 18	1	5.88%
13 – 15	5	29.41%
10 – 12	6	35.29%
7 – 9	5	29.41%
Total	17	

Table 2 presents the school administrators' professional profile data on educational attainment, in-service management training attended, and years of experience as administrators. In educational attainment, the table discloses that seventeen or 89.47 school administrators have bachelor's degrees with M.A. units; one is a full-fledged master's degree holder, and the other is a doctor of education. The seventeen administrators have both in-service training and management units. This implies that these administrators have the management skills to direct their teachers to achieve the school's objectives.

Furthermore, six school administrators have 10-12 years of experience as school administrators, five administrators for both 13 - 15 and 7- 9 years as school administrators, and one with 16-18 years of experience as school administrator. The data shows that sixteen school administrators have 7 - 15 years of experience. The administrators' educational background is a testament to their unwavering commitment to professional and intellectual growth. This commitment is a key factor in their competence, as it equips them with the academic and technical training necessary to handle the demanding responsibilities of an administrator.

The administrators' professional profile is considered excellent overall—their high professionalism and extensive experience guarantee effective management in an educational setting. Leadership, often considered an administrator's most valuable asset, can be the differentiating factor between effectiveness and ineffectiveness. Johnson, P. A. (2013) stated that leadership behavior significantly distinguished between effective and less effective administrators/principals. The study also highlighted the potential for increased effectiveness through professional education, making it crucial to examine the qualifications of school administrators and supervisors in the educational organization.

Table 3 - Common behavior/Qualities of the School Administrators as Perceived by the Teachers

Common Behaviors/Qualities	F	R
Self-confident	10	4 th
Persistent	7	8 th
Competent	15	3 rd
Aggressive	9	6 th
Diplomatic	6	9 th
Intelligent	17	2 nd
Ambitious	3	12 th
Articulate	4	11 th
Appearance	1	15 th
Credible	5	10 th
Flexible	3	12 th
Knowledgeable	18	1 st
Inspiring	2	14 th
Honest	9	5 th
Forward – looking	8	7 th
Total	118	

Table 3 presents the typical qualities of School Administrators as perceived by the teachers. The listed 15 common traits are ranked as being knowledgeable, which ranks first as a standard quality of the school administrators as perceived by teachers. Second, in rank is intelligent; third is competent; fourth is self-confident; honest is fifth; aggressive the sixth; forward-looking the seventh; persistent the eighth; ninth is diplomatic; tenth is credible; articulate is eleventh; being flexible and ambitious are the twelfth, inspiring is the fourteenth, and fifteenth is appearance.

The results were reinforced by Branch, G. F. et al. (2013) when their research findings indicated that leaders tend to have a wide range of desirable qualities, such as intelligence, self-confidence with a strong sense of themselves, hardly persistent, controlled, verbal diplomatic, and popular. Moreover, Sirisak, P. (2015) enumerated the six most important leadership traits: high personal drive, intelligence, knowledgeability, charisma, creativity, and flexibility.

The study revealed that the trait approach to leadership has proved influential. In other words, it is more beneficial to understand how a person behaves about subordinates. Leadership qualities are an administrator's valuable asset. For instance, mental ability is a crucial factor. An administrator must have equal or somewhat higher cognitive ability than his subordinates to function effectively. An administrator with below-average mental ability cannot function well as a competent school administrator. Also, an administrator must be skillful in understanding and using language. This proficiency is essential because he must depend on spoken and written language to operate the school effectively. These practical implications of the research findings are crucial for the effective functioning of school administrators.

Moreover, the school administrator must be able to act on the job within the framework of logical patterns of persona and institutional values. This underscores the significant role of the school administrator within institutional values. This role needs to be attended to with more significant concern, especially on matters related to their administrative function. Respect for institutional values is crucial to the school administrator's role.

Table 4 - Top Ten most Desirable Qualities of School Administrators as Perceived by Themselves

Ranking of the ten most Commendable Characteristics		WM	D
1.	Self-Confidence	4.58	E
2.	Forward-looking	4.29	E
3.	Diplomatic	4.25	E
4.	Competent	4.09	VS
5.	Intelligent	3.97	VS
6.	Creative	3.94	VS
7.	Knowledgeable	3.93	VS
8.	Credible	3.83	VS
9.	Aggressive	3.67	VS
10.	Honest	3.63	VS
Average		4.02	VS

Ranges: 4.21 - Excellent; 3.41-Very Satisfactory; 2.61- Satisfactory; 1.81 -Fair; 1.00 - Poor

Table 4 presents the top ten desirable qualities of school administrators as perceived by themselves. Self-confident is ranked number one, with a mean of 4.58, and is described as excellent. Forward-looking and diplomatic were ranked two and three, and the administrators rated them as excellent, with means of 4.29 and 4.25, respectively. This implies that administrators are looking forward to the development of the school following the educational system's standard. The rest of the school administrators' qualities were rated by them as very satisfactory. Competent, intelligent, creative, knowledgeable, credible, aggressive, and honest were ranked number ten. In total, the average mean of the ten desirable qualities of the administrators is 4.02, which falls on the very satisfactory level. This means that the administrators possessed these qualities as they managed the school.

Effective administrators' qualities are imbued with self-confidence, good planning, and creativity to achieve the desired goals. The core of effective leadership is developing personally enhancing and organizationally productive relationships. A laudable idea comes from Deosthali, K. V. (2012), who states that learning is a shared journey and is persuasive; leaders must model the ongoing learning and self-development they expect from employees/subordinates.

Table 5- Comparisons between the Ten Most Desirable Qualities of the School Administrators as Perceived by the Teachers and by the Administrators

Ranks	Teacher's Perception	Administrators Perceptions
1	Knowledgeable	Self-confident
2	Intelligent	Forward-looking
3	Competent	Diplomatic
4	Self-confident	Competent
5	Honest	Intelligent
6	Aggressive	Creative
7	Forward-looking	Knowledgeable
8	Persistent	Credible
9	Diplomatic	Aggressive
10	Credible	Honest

Table 5 shows the desirable qualities of the school administrators as perceived by the teachers and the administrators themselves. The above data show that the first five desirable qualities identified in the teachers' perceptions are also identified in the administrators' perceptions. The teachers' perceptions identified knowledge as number one, whereas the administrators ranked self-confidence as number one. Competency is the desirable quality in the top five, ranked 3rd by the teachers and fourth by the administrators. Being credible and aggressive are found in the 6-10 ranks. Persistence was a trait not found in the administrators' perceptions but identified by the administrators, which were not found in the teachers' perceptions.

The study shows that administrators have a wide range of desirable qualities. Their innate characteristics, classified as individual variables, are salient factors influencing their job performance related to managerial and leadership functions, which refer to the process. Somehow, it is not just their abilities and traits that make them leaders but how these are demonstrated and converted to employees. Followers are not passive recipients but continually assess and react to their leaders. Administrators must make workers and subordinates feel more comfortable and worthwhile in their organizational settings.

As revealed by the answers in the questionnaire, teachers demand their administrators to be persistent, as it ranked eighth in their answers. In contrast, this trait was not identified in the administrator's perception. Furthermore, this implies that their administrator is pressured to accomplish the group's function as he tries to see that the organization's objectives are achieved. With this, the administrator inhibits his subordinates from exerting pressure. This finding in the table revealed that teachers found persistent administrators to be good since they perceived it as one of the top ten desirable qualities of school administrators.

On the other hand, administrators perceived being creative as one of a school administrator's ten most desirable qualities, but the teachers did not perceive this. This means that administrators emphasize creativity proficiency as a salient factor in administration. Creative thoughts must be directed toward educational research, curriculum, human relations, teaching methods, school facilities, and other aspects of school life. Above all, administrators must be dedicated to their duty and maximize their talents in providing effective leadership.

Table 6 - Teachers' Perceptions of the Administrators Leadership Competence

Competence Skills	Average Value	Weighted	Description
A. Professional Skills			
Academic Excellence	4.07		VS
Organizational Ability	4.89		O
Leadership	4.90		O
Vision	4.89		O
External Services and Community Relations	4.86		O
Totality	4.72		O

B. Personal Skills		
Interpersonal Skills	4.15	VS
Integrity	3.85	VS
Work Habits and Attitudes	4.61	O
Totality	4.20	VS
Overall	4.53	O

Legend: 4.21-5.00-O; 3.41-4.20-VS; 2.61-3.20-S; 1.81-2.60-F; 1.00-1.80-F

Table 6 presents the teachers' perception of their administrators' leadership competency skills in terms of professional and personal skills. The total number of respondents is 118 from the 16 public high schools in the Tangub City division.

In terms of professional skills, such as academic excellence, organizational ability, leadership, vision, external services, and community relations, the nineteen school administrators have implemented innovations. They are active in carrying out policies and doing their job well through implementation. They are professionally skilled as school administrators. The 16 school administrators have a very satisfactory performance in personal skills, interpersonal skills, integrity, work habits, and attitudes.

The above data show that the administrators have overall outstanding competency skills. They often exhibited their expertise in performing their jobs and were found to be effective administrators who maintain definite performance standards. To manage and administer the school, an administrator should display his leadership and managerial style to cope with his school management. Here, professionalism and competence will play a role. The findings shown in the table revealed that the administrators were prepared professionally as essential to the administrative process. They have the "know-how" in different areas and aspects of educational administration. They noted that the administrators have outstanding professional skills, whereas they have very satisfactory performance in personal skills. This implies that personal qualities comprise the vital ingredients of the personality of the school administrator. They evaluate personal skills in complicated and subjective rather than objective ways. School administration and supervision is a rigorous and demanding profession. It calls for the performance of various administrative and technical skills. An effective school administrator can only be described by configuring many attributes.

Table 7 - Teachers' Perception of the Five Aspects of the Administrators Operational Management

Aspects	Average Weighted Value	Description
Planning	4.75	O
Organizing	4.75	O
Controlling	4.82	O
Instructing	4.87	O
Average Weighted Mean	4.63	O

Legend:

4.21 – 5.00 – Outstanding (O)

3.41 – 4.20 – Very Satisfactory (VS)

2.61 – 3.40 – Satisfactory (S)

1.81 – 2.60 – (F)

1.00 – 1.80 – fair Poor (P)

Table 7 shows the teachers' perceptions of their administrators' operational management in five aspects: planning, organizing, directing, controlling, and instructing. The data show that the teachers' perception of the five aspects of their administrator's operational management was generally outstanding. This implies that the school administrators performed their job as administrators operationally. They showed effective leadership and were very good. They showed effective leadership and management practices, as demonstrated in the five aspects mentioned, as the teachers perceived them to have four outstanding ratings and one very satisfactory performance level in the five aspects.

The study implies that an effective school administrator will find it necessary to plan for his work carefully. Operational proficiency has reference to administrative performance or ways of working. It pertains to the various administrative processes such as planning, resolving conflict, instituting change, directing the work of others, evaluating performance, and community operations. Conflict between individuals and groups is possible in all aspects of school operations. The school administrator is a critical figure in resolving disputes by being a mediating force. More importantly, he must have the ability to approach the task of resolving conflict with firmness and objectivity. Directing the work of others is another essential function of the school's adaptability and understanding administrator. The school administrator is required to show patience and fair play when giving directions.

Furthermore, controlling, as an aspect of administrators' operational management, is a crucial dimension of educational administration. A school official with integrity will never use his authority to abuse, humiliate, and degrade his subordinates. Finally, instructing is the foremost aspect or function of the school administrator's operational management. This pertains to the administrators' ability to help teachers and students improve teaching and learning in the classroom. The administrator will also have to provide avenues for instructional improvement in the classroom, such as facilities, sending teachers to seminar workshops, and even encouraging the teachers to demonstrate a lesson in the presence of the administrator and other teachers.

Table 8 - Relationship between Desirable Qualities, Leadership Competence and Operational Management Skills of School Administrators

Variables	Mean	SD	Computed r	Table Value
Desirable Qualities and Leadership Competence	4.02	2.72	0.183	0.24
	4.53	3.01		
Operational Management	4.02	2.72	0.189	

Table 8 presents the relationship between school administrators' desirable qualities, leadership competence, and operational management skills. It can be seen in the said table that the values of 0.183 and 0.189, respectively, of the two variables did not exceed the tabled value of 0.24. Therefore, the hypothesis of no significant relationship between administrators' desirable qualities, leadership competence, and operational management skills is not rejected.

The result of the computation implies that the qualities of the administrators are not a guarantee of being competent in their managerial posts. Though operational management and leadership skills require a lot of desirable behaviors for them to become influential leaders, in this treatise, the desirable qualities of the administrators have no bearing on their leadership competence and operational management skills.

Leadership competence follows a process by which people are induced to move towards goals. On the other hand, operational management pertains to the "hows" of directing functions, which include planning, organizing, controlling, and instructing the contents and job requirements. Administrators are forced to do the task even if it is against their will or inner faculties. At the outset, their desirable qualities did not affect the administrators' leadership competence and operational management. Each variable is independent from one another. One does not affect another. Aydin, A., et. Al (2013) concluded that administrators' leadership styles affect their school management behaviors. He concluded that the better the administrators' behavior, the better their leadership style will be. Dick, G. P. (2011) corroborated this finding, revealing that the administrators' characteristics had some bearing on their managerial skills. Their managerial skills were dependent on their characteristics. The better their characteristics, the better their performance.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that the school administrators are qualified to manage schools due to their adequate training in management. Although they have encountered personal and social challenges, they have shown resilience by demonstrating desirable qualities that help them overcome such difficulties. These administrators possess strong leadership competence and effective operational

management skills, making them capable and efficient in their roles. Their personal characteristics and professional performance indicate that they are influential and well-suited for leadership. An outstanding administrator is defined both by personal qualities such as personality, competence, and values, and by professional performance demonstrated through leadership behavior and effectiveness in fulfilling responsibilities.

Recommendation

In light of the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed. First, school administrators should attend seminars on resource management to improve their ability to manage resources effectively. Second, they should actively pursue professional and management development opportunities to enhance their job proficiency and expand their understanding of administrative responsibilities. Continuous improvement should be embraced as a necessary part of leadership. Lastly, in selecting individuals for administrative roles, it is important to consider not only intellectual capacity but also personality traits, interests, work values, and educational qualifications, as these factors significantly contribute to effective school leadership and overall performance.

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