Leadership Styles of School Heads and Teachers' Engagement of Selected Elementary School Teachers

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Abstract— This study investigates the significant impact of school principals' leadership styles on the engagement levels of elementary school teachers within the Isabela City Division, focusing on three distinct styles: Authoritarian, Democratic, and Laissez-Faire. The research captures teachers' perceptions of their principals' approaches and assesses the effects on various dimensions of teacher engagement, including cognitive, emotional, and social interactions. Utilizing a descriptive-quantitative research design, data was collected from 264 teachers across four districts through stratified random sampling. The findings reveal a neutral perception of Authoritarian Leadership (mean score: 3.44) and Laissez-Faire Leadership (mean score: 3.44), while Democratic Leadership received strong support (mean score: 4.28). Engagement metrics indicate high cognitive engagement (mean score: 4.02), strong emotional engagement (mean score: 4.40), and robust social engagement with students (mean score: 4.54) and colleagues (mean score: 4.38), leading to an overall positive engagement rating (mean score: 4.34). Statistical analysis using Pearson correlation demonstrates a strong positive relationship (r = 0.472, p < 0.01) between leadership styles and teacher engagement, suggesting that effective leadership can significantly enhance engagement levels among teachers. These results underscore the importance of adopting favorable leadership styles to cultivate an engaging educational environment.

Keywords— Leadership Styles, Teachers' Engagement, Elementary School Teachers, Isabela City Schools Division.

I. INTRODUCTION

The role of leadership in shaping organizational culture and employee engagement has garnered significant research attention over the past few decades. For instance, visionary style creates the highest level of employee engagement while affiliative style negatively influences employee engagement [23]. In the context of elementary schools, the leadership style adopted by school heads plays a pivotal part in determining teachers' motivation, commitment, and involvement in the school community. According to Sarwar, Tariq and Yong [20], school heads' leadership style had a positive impact on the performance of teachers.

Becker [5] outlined 11 prevalent leadership styles, including democratic, autocratic, laissez-faire, strategic, transformational, transactional, coaching, bureaucratic, visionary, pacesetting, and situational leadership. Furthermore, a comprehensive handbook on leadership styles expands this list to 17, introducing ethical, participative, servant, charismatic, authentic, spiritual, implicit and explicit, digital, cross-cultural, paternalistic, complexity, and resonant leadership. In the educational sector, the School of Education at American University highlights five key styles observed among school administrators: democratic, pacesetting, coaching, authoritative, and transformational leadership.

Research indicates that strong, supportive leadership can play a compensatory role in overcoming contextual disadvantages and enhancing teacher engagement [15]. Therefore, this study holds special relevance for understanding effective leadership strategies that school heads in Isabela City can adopt to promote teacher engagement, despite the challenges in the external environment.

According to Bartanen Husain, and Liebowitz [4], the actions of school administrators have an impact on various aspects of the educational institution, including school capacity, facility requirements, and student performance. According to Guarino, Santibanez, and Daley [10], it was also highlighted that a proficient educational leader has the ability to enhance a school's capability through the motivation of instructors, staff, and students. The pivotal figure in the establishment of prosperous schools is the school principal, that is, the presence of a qualified principal is essential for the sustained effectiveness of a school [11].

The leadership's role is frequently acknowledged as crucial factors in facilitating advancements, modernization, transformation, and innovative approaches in enhancing capacity building and teaching and learning methodologies [14]. It is also a driving change and achieving success and failure of any educational institution [6]. Leadership skills intricately connected to the effectiveness of aligning school mission and visions towards national educational goals [26], school's performance [11], academic performance of students [3,21], and personal and intellectual development of learners [7].

Likewise, numerous studies provide empirical and substantial evidence that the teacher's engagement significantly influence according to the type of leadership skills of the educational administrators [19]. In particular, school principals hold considerable sway over both the academic and non-instructional aspects of teachers' work, so exerting a direct influence on student progress [14]. According to Saleem [19], interventions such as setting directions, offering counselling services, giving mentorship and coaching, and facilitating faculty development are commonly seen as highly effective approaches for enhancing teacher engagement and performance, as well as supporting instructors in overcoming institutional difficulties. It is evident that effective leaders engage in the proactive preparation of their educators

for forthcoming difficulties and the cultivation of a visionary mindset [13].

Orphanos and Orr [18] found that a principal's leadership abilities significantly affect teacher engagement, as teachers' views on their principals' leadership styles influence not only their performance at school but also their professional growth, according to Augustine-Shaw and Liang [2]. In the United States, recent educational focuses include enhancing teacher leadership, professionalism, implementing innovative educational practices, and upgrading school facilities [12]. Silins [22] suggests that transformational leadership is an appropriate leadership style for principals aiming to lead educational institutions to success in the 21st century.

In the Philippines educational setting, Symaco [25] reports that there are more than fifteen thousand (15,000) private elementary and secondary schools in the Philippines on which many schools have less than five hundred (500) students. Gibbons and Silva [8] noted that parents choose the private institutions because of their superior performance. Moreover, Suraya and Yunus [24] found out that the leadership style of the principal has a significant impact on high academic achievement of students on standardized tests because teachers in private schools are more engage compared to those in public schools.

Studies have established a strong positive correlation between the leadership styles of college principals and teacher performance, highlighting the influence of leadership on teacher engagement [20]. Becker [5] has identified various leadership styles in education that can nurture talent and affect teacher engagement. Goh [9] also found that teachers' perceptions of leadership styles are crucial, with different styles impacting teacher engagement in varying ways. Despite the significant evidence showing the impact of leadership styles on teacher engagement, there is a gap in research specifically exploring this relationship within the local context. Many studies have assessed school heads' leadership styles without examining their effect on teacher engagement. This study aims to fill that gap by investigating how the leadership styles identified by Becker [5] influence teacher engagement. The findings offer a practical, evidence-based strategies for principals to enhance teacher engagement and facilitate school improvement.

II. THE PROBLEM

Within the domain of educational leadership, it is not solely the perspective of teachers that holds sway, but rather the approach employed by the school principal that exerts a substantial impact on teacher involvement. In light of this crucial phenomenon, the present study aims to investigate the influence of leadership styles exhibited by school heads on elementary school teachers' engagement within the Isabela City Division. Specifically, to determine the leadership styles of school heads as perceived by teachers in terms of Authoritarian Leadership Democratic Leadership, and Laissez-Faire Leadership. Also, to determine the level of teachers' engagement among elementary school teachers in Isabela City in terms of: Cognitive Engagement; Emotional Engagement; Student Social Engagement; and Colleagues Social Engagement.

III. METHODOLOGY

A descriptive-quantitative research design was used and samples were determine using stratified random sampling. The population includes all the teachers under the Isabela City Schools Division which comprises of four districts as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Distribution of population and sample for teacher-respondents

District	Population	Sample
District A	157	43
District B	184	113
District C	360	50
District D	135	58
TOTAL	**836**	**264**

Currently, various assessment tools are available to measure or assess the leadership styles of specific respondents. The most commonly used tool is the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. However, this questionnaire is intended for commercial use, and each administration of the instrument requires a corresponding payment. Moreover, in this paper, a leadership style assessment tool developed by Northouse [17] as adopted by Akparep et al. [1] was utilized to assess the leadership style of school heads as perceived by teachers in the Isabela City Schools Division. A five-point Likert Scale was employed, as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2: Likert Scale of Leadership Assessment

Score	Range	Qualitative Interpretation
1	1.00-1.49	Strongly Disagree (SD)
2	1.50-2.49	Disagree (D)
3	2.50-3.49	Neutral (N)
4	3.50-4.49	Agree (A)
5	4.50-5.00	Strongly Agree (SA)

Moreover, to measure teacher engagement, the Engaged Teachers Scale (ETS) developed by Klasses, et al. (2013) was used. A five-point Likert Scale was also used as shown in Table 2 above. The two adapted instrument undergone a validation test and further tested for reliability.

IV. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Leadership Styles

After administering the instruments to a sample of 264 teachers, the responses are shown in Tables 3 to 6.

The mean score for the area of Authoritarian Leadership is 3.44, suggesting a neutral perception among respondents. The standard deviation of 0.76 indicates a moderate level of variability in responses within this category. Specifically, for Item 1 (Makes all the major decisions), the mean score is 3.91, indicating agreement among respondents in this aspect, with a standard deviation of 1.06. On Item 2 (Gives rewards to motivate me in achieving organizational objectives), the mean score is 3.71, showing agreement, with a standard deviation of 1.05. On Item 3 (Believes that I feel insecure about my work and I need direction), the mean score is 3.11, indicating a neutral stance, with a standard deviation of 1.28. On Item 4

(Feel as the chief judge of the achievements of the team), the mean score is 3.60, showing agreement, with a standard deviation of 1.15. On Item 5 (Gives all the directions and we are expected to follow), the mean score is 3.83, indicating agreement, with a standard deviation of 1.08. On Item 6 (Does not get too involved with the team and does not have discussions with them often), the mean score is 2.48, showing disagreement, with a standard deviation of 1.29.

TABLE 3: Mean Distribution of Response Under the Authoritarian Leadership

Authoritarian Leadership	Mean	Qualitative Interpretation	SD
1. Makes all the major decision	3.91	Agree	1.06
2. Give rewards to motivates me in achieving organizational objectives	3.71	Agree	1.05
3. Believes that I feel insecure about my work and I need direction	3.11	Neutral	1.28
4. Feel as chief judge of the achievements of the team	3.60	Agree	1.15
5. Gives all the directions and we are expected to follow	3.83	Agree	1.08
6. Does not get too involved with the team and does not have discussions with them often	2.48	Disagree	1.29
Area Mean	3.44	**Neutral**	0.76

Table 4 presents the mean distribution of responses regarding Democratic Leadership.

Table 4: Mean Distribution of Response Under the Democratic Leadership

Democratic Leadership	Mean	Qualitative Interpretation	SD
7. I receive guidance from him/her on what to do and how	4.21	Agree	0.87
8. Encourage creativity and people are often highly engaged in projects and decision	4.20	Agree	0.82
9. Frequently and support communication to the rest of the employees	4.22	Agree	0.85
10. Makes the final decision but includes team members in the decision-making process	4.42	Agree	0.77
11. Encourages group discussion	4.34	Agree	0.85
12. Gives fair praise and restrains criticism as much as possible	4.26	Agree	0.85
Area Mean	4.28	**Agree**	0.72

The mean score for the area of Democratic Leadership is 4.28, suggesting agreement among respondents towards this leadership style. The standard deviation of 0.72 indicates a relatively low level of variability in responses within this category. Specifically, on Item 7 (I receive guidance from him/her on what to do and how), the mean score is 4.21, indicating agreement among respondents, with a standard deviation of 0.87. On Item 8 (Encourage creativity and people are often highly engaged in projects and decisions), the mean score is 4.20, showing agreement, with a standard deviation of 0.82. On Item 9 (Frequently and support communication to the rest of the employees), the mean score is 4.22, indicating agreement, with a standard deviation of 0.85. On Item 10 (Makes the final decision but includes team members in the decision-making process), the mean score is 4.42, showing

agreement, with a standard deviation of 0.77. On Item 11 (Encourages group discussion), the mean score is 4.34, indicating agreement, with a standard deviation of 0.85. On Item 12 (Gives fair praise and restrains criticism as much as possible), the mean score is 4.26, showing agreement, with a standard deviation of 0.85.

The table 5 presents the mean distribution of responses under the Laissez-Faire Leadership style.

TABLE 5: Mean Distribution of Response Under the Laissez-Faire Leadership

Laissez-Faire Leadership	Mean	Qualitative Interpretation	SD
13. Allows group members to make their own decisions even in complex situations	3.36	Neutral	1.09
14. Gives team members a lot of freedom in the way they do their own	3.62	Agree	1.05
15. Allow me to appraise our own work	3.61	Agree	0.98
16. Gives subordinates complete freedom to solve problems on their own	3.56	Agree	1.03
17. Very little authority over staff in the organization	2.98	Neutral	1.08
18. Trust me to make appropriate decisions on my own	3.53	Agree	0.99
Area Mean	3.44	**Neutral**	0.84

The mean score for the area of Laissez-Faire Leadership is 3.44, suggesting a neutral perception among respondents towards this leadership style. The standard deviation of 0.84 indicates a moderate level of variability in responses within this category. Specifically, on Item 13 (Allows group members to make their own decisions even in complex situations), the mean score is 3.36, indicating a neutral stance among respondents, with a standard deviation of 1.09. On Item 14 (Gives team members a lot of freedom in the way they do their own), the mean score is 3.62, showing agreement, with a standard deviation of 1.05. On Item 15 (Allow me to appraise our own work), the mean score is 3.61, indicating agreement, with a standard deviation of 0.98. On Item 16 (Gives subordinates complete freedom to solve problems on their own), the mean score is 3.56, showing agreement, with a standard deviation of 1.03. On Item 17 (Very little authority over staff in the organization), the mean score is 2.98, indicating a neutral perception, with a standard deviation of 1.08. On Item 18 (Trust me to make appropriate decisions on my own), the mean score is 3.53, showing agreement, with a standard deviation of 0.99.

The table 6 provides an overview of the mean distribution of responses on different leadership styles of school heads.

TABLE 6: Overall Mean Distribution of Response on Leadership Styles of School Heads

Leadership Styles	Mean	Qualitative Interpretation	SD
Authoritarian	3.44	Neutral	0.76
Democratic	4.28	Agree	0.72
Laissez-Faire	3.44	Neutral	0.84
Overall Mean	**3.72**	**Agree**	**0.51**

The overall mean score across all leadership styles is 3.72, indicating an agreement among respondents towards the leadership styles of school heads. The low standard deviation of 0.51 suggests a high level of consensus among participants. The mean score for Authoritarian Leadership is 3.44, indicating a neutral perception among respondents towards this leadership style. The standard deviation of 0.76 suggests a moderate level of variability in responses within this category. The mean score for Democratic Leadership is 4.28, showing agreement among respondents towards this leadership style. The low standard deviation of 0.72 indicates a relatively consistent response among participants. The mean score for Laissez-Faire Leadership is 3.44, suggesting a neutral perception among respondents towards this leadership style. The standard deviation of 0.84 implies a moderate level of variability in responses within this category. In summary, the data shows that respondents generally agree with Democratic Leadership, while holding neutral views towards Authoritarian and Laissez-Faire Leadership styles.

Teachers' Engagement

Tables 7 to 11 show the mean distribution of responses of teachers' engagement across all areas. The table 7 presents the mean distribution of responses under the category of Cognitive Engagement.

TABLE 7: Mean Distribution of Response Under the Cognitive Engagement

Cognitive Engagement	Mean	Qualitative Interpretation	SD
1. I try my hardest to perform well while teaching	4.59	Strongly Agree	0.54
2. While teaching, I really "throw" myself into my work	4.28	Agree	0.74
3. While teaching, I pay a lot of attention to my work	4.36	Agree	0.74
4. While teaching, I work with insanity	2.83	Neutral	1.49
Area Mean	4.02	**Agree**	0.65

The mean score for Cognitive Engagement is 4.02, indicating agreement among respondents towards cognitive engagement while teaching. The standard deviation of 0.65 suggests a moderate level of variability in responses within this category. Specifically, on Item 1 (I try my hardest to perform well while teaching), the high mean score of 4.59 indicates that respondents strongly agree that they try their hardest to perform well while teaching. The low standard deviation of 0.54 suggests a high level of agreement among participants in this aspect. On Item 2 (While teaching, I really 'throw' myself into my work), the mean score of 4.28 suggests that respondents agree that they immerse themselves into their work while teaching. The standard deviation of 0.74 indicates a moderate level of variability in responses for this statement. On Item 3 (While teaching, I pay a lot of attention to my work), the mean score of 4.36 reflects agreement among respondents that they pay a lot of attention to their work while teaching. The standard deviation of 0.74 implies a moderate level of variability in responses for this statement. On Item 4 (While teaching, I work with insanity), the mean score of 2.83 indicates a neutral stance among respondents regarding working with intensity while teaching. The high standard deviation of 1.49 suggests a significant level of variability in responses for this statement.

The table 8 presents the mean distribution of responses under the category of Emotional Engagement.

TABLE 8: Mean Distribution of Response Under the Emotional Engagement

Emotional Engagement	Mean	Qualitative Interpretation	SD
5. I am excited about teaching	4.34	Agree	0.69
6. I feel happy while teaching	4.45	Agree	0.65
7. I love teaching	4.48	Agree	0.70
8. I find teaching fun	4.34	Agree	0.77
Area Mean	4.40	**Agree**	0.64

The mean score for Emotional Engagement is 4.40, indicating agreement among respondents towards emotional engagement while teaching. The standard deviation of 0.64 shows the level of variability of responses in this category. Specifically, on Item 5 (I am excited about teaching), the mean score of 4.34 indicates that respondents agree that they are excited about teaching. The standard deviation of 0.69 indicates a moderate level of variation in responses to this statement. On Item 6 (I feel happy while teaching), the mean score of 4.45 suggests that respondents agree that they feel happy while teaching. The low standard deviation of 0.65 indicates a relatively consistent response among participants for this statement. On Item 7 (I love teaching), the mean score of 4.48 reflects agreement among respondents that they love teaching. The standard deviation of 0.70 implies a moderate level of variability in responses within this category. On Item 8 (I find teaching fun), the mean score of 4.34 indicates agreement among respondents that they find teaching fun. The standard deviation of 0.77 suggests a moderate level of variability in responses for this statement. In summary, respondents generally agree that they experience positive emotions such as excitement, happiness, love, and fun while teaching, as indicated by the high mean scores and the qualitative interpretation of "Agree" for each item in the Emotional Engagement category.

The table 9 presents the mean distribution of responses under the category of Student Social Engagement.

TABLE 9: Mean Distribution of Response Under the Student Social Engagement

Student Social Engagement	Mean	Qualitative Interpretation	SD
9. In class, I show warmth to my students	4.51	Strongly Agree	0.62
10. In class, I am aware of my students' feelings	4.75	Strongly Agree	3.16
11. In class, I care about the problems of my students	4.49	Agree	0.64
12. In class, I am empathetic towards my students	4.42	Agree	0.67
Area Mean	4.54	**Strongly Agree**	0.97

The mean score for Student Social Engagement is 4.54, indicating strong agreement among respondents towards engaging with students socially in class. The standard deviation of 0.97 suggests a moderate level of variability in responses within this category. Specifically, on Item 9 (In class, I show warmth to my students), the mean score of 4.51

indicates that respondents strongly agree that they show warmth to their students in class. The low standard deviation of 0.62 suggests a high level of agreement among participants for this statement. On Item 10 (In class, I am aware of my students' feelings), the mean score of 4.75 shows that respondents strongly agree that they are aware of their students' feelings in class. However, the high standard deviation of 3.16 indicates a significant level of variability in responses for this statement, which may require further investigation. On Item 11 (In class, I care about the problems of my students), the mean score of 4.49 suggests that respondents agree that they care about the problems of their students in class. The standard deviation of 0.64 implies a moderate level of variability in responses for this statement. On Item 12 (In class, I am empathetic towards my students), the mean score of 4.42 indicates agreement among respondents that they are empathetic towards their students in class. The standard deviation of 0.67 suggests a moderate level of variability in responses for this statement. In summary, the data shows that respondents strongly agree on showing warmth, being aware of students' feelings, and being empathetic towards students, while also agreeing on caring about students' problems in class, as indicated by the mean scores and qualitative interpretations in the Student Social Engagement category.

The table 10 presents the mean distribution of responses under the category of Colleagues Social Engagement.

TABLE 10: Mean Distribution of Response Under the Colleagues Social Engagement

Colleagues Social Engagement	Mean	Qualitative Interpretation	SD
13. At school, I connect well with my colleagues	4.47	Agree	0.61
14. At school, I am committed to helping my colleagues	4.41	Agree	0.64
15. At school, I value the relationships I build with my colleagues	4.55	Strongly Agree	0.61
16. At school, I care about the problems of my colleagues	4.10	Agree	0.77
Area Mean	4.38	**Agree**	0.56

The mean score for Colleagues Social Engagement is 4.38, indicating agreement among respondents towards engaging socially with colleagues at school. The low standard deviation of 0.56 suggests a high level of agreement and consistency in responses within this category. On Item 13 (At school, I connect well with my colleagues), the mean score of 4.47 indicates that respondents agree that they connect well with their colleagues at school. A low of 0.61 indicates a high level of agreement among participants on this statement. On Item 14 (At school, I am committed to helping my colleagues), the mean score of 4.41 suggests that respondents agree that they are committed to helping their colleagues at school. The standard deviation of 0.64 implies a moderate level of variability in responses for this statement. On Item 15 (At school, I value the relationships I build with my colleagues), the mean score of 4.55 reflects strong agreement among respondents that they value the relationships they build with their colleagues at school. The low standard deviation of 0.61

indicates a high level of agreement in this aspect. On Item 16 (At school, I care about the problems of my colleagues), the mean score of 4.10 indicates that respondents agree that they care about the problems of their colleagues at school. The standard deviation of 0.77 suggests a moderate level of variability in responses for this statement. In summary, respondents generally agree that they connect well with colleagues, are committed to helping them, value the relationships they build, and care about their problems at school, as indicated by the mean scores and qualitative interpretations in the Colleagues Social Engagement category.

The table 11 presents the overall mean distribution of responses on Teachers' Engagement across different dimensions.

TABLE 11: Overall Mean Distribution of Response on Teachers' Engagement

Teachers' Engagement	Mean	Qualitative Interpretation	SD
Cognitive	4.02	Agree	0.65
Emotional	4.40	Agree	0.64
Student Social	4.54	Strongly Agree	0.97
Colleagues Social	4.38	Agree	0.56
Overall Mean	**4.34**	**Agree**	**0.53**

The overall mean score for Teachers' Engagement is 4.34, indicating agreement among respondents across all dimensions of engagement. The low standard deviation of 0.53 suggests a high level of agreement and consistency in responses for overall teacher engagement. Generally, respondents agree on cognitive and emotional engagement, strongly agree on student social engagement, and agree on colleagues' social engagement. The overall mean score reflects agreement on teacher engagement across all dimensions, with a high level of consistency in responses.

Relationship Between Leadership Styles and Teachers' Engagement

The table 12 presents the inferential computations of the quantitative data using Pearson correlation coefficient (r) between Leadership Styles and Teachers' Engagement.

TABLE 12: Inferential computations of the quantitative data using Pearson-r

		Leadership Styles	Teachers' Engagement
Leadership Styles	Pearson Correlation	1	.472**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	263	263
Teachers' Engagement	Pearson Correlation	.472**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	263	264
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Pearson's correlation between leadership styles and teacher involvement is tested at a significance level of 0.05. The correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), denoted by **, indicating a strong positive relationship between Leadership Styles and Teachers' Engagement. The p-value associated with the correlation is 0.000, which is less than the significance level of 0.05, providing strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between Leadership Styles and Teachers' Engagement. The sample size for both Leadership Styles and Teachers'

Engagement is 264 and 264, respectively. In summary, the Pearson correlation analysis reveals a significant positive relationship ($r = 0.472$) between Leadership Styles and Teachers' Engagement. This indicates that as Leadership Styles increase, Teachers' Engagement also tends to increase. The strong correlation suggests that effective leadership styles may positively influence teachers' engagement levels within the context of the study.

V. CONCLUSION

The study reveals that elementary school teachers perceive leadership styles of school heads positively, with a particularly strong agreement towards Democratic Leadership. Teachers also exhibit high levels of engagement across various dimensions of teaching, indicating a strong commitment to their roles. Importantly, the analysis demonstrates a significant positive relationship between leadership styles and teachers' engagement, suggesting that effective leadership can enhance teachers' engagement levels. These findings underscore the importance of fostering supportive leadership practices to promote teacher engagement and ultimately improve educational outcomes in elementary schools.

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