School Heads' New Normal Leadership and Its Influence on Collaborative School Culture

Semuel R. Olayvar

Okinawa Amicus International, Japan
semuelolayvar@gmail.com

Abstract: *The main aim of this study was to evaluate the effects of school heads' new normal leadership on collaborative school culture. To achieve this aim, the researcher conducted a survey to a number of school principals and teachers in Fukuoka and Hiroshima Prefectures during the school year 2020-2021. The data were collected and processed using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences. Results indicated that the three (3) variables of new normal leadership of school heads affect the collaborative school culture in varying extent as shown by the obtained B Coefficients 1.170 (adaptability), 1.132 (decision-making), 0.430 (planning and implementation). This means that for every unit improvement in the new normal leadership mentioned could generate a 1.170, 1.132, 0.430 increase on collaborative school culture. A closer look at the obtained Beta Coefficients, one could infer that of the 3 variables of school new normal leadership, it was the 'adaptability' that exert a greatest influence (Beta=1.170) on the collaborative school culture. The R able to denote multiple correlation coefficient between the different variables as a predictor of the dependent variable. It could be noted that the R is .895 which indicated a level of prediction while R2 figure is a statistical measure on closeness of the data in regression line as the coefficient of determination or simply the coefficient of multiple determination for multiple regression. It can be indicated that the explanatory powers of the dependent variable of 0.698 implies that 69.8% or 70% of the variation in new normal leadership is accounted by changes in the collaborative school culture. Furthermore, results of analysis of variance revealed an F ratio equal to 1.642 with an associated probability equal to .000. Since the p value is lower than the significance level set at 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. It may be safely concluded that the new normal leadership of school heads produce significant combined effects on collaborative school culture.*

Keywords: new normal leadership, collaborative school culture, descriptive-correlational design

1. INTRODUCTION

The Corona Virus Disease-19 pandemic has indeed brought anxiety and vulnerability to people, a problem to the community and the government, and it has affected the educational system not only in the Philippines, but worldwide. Amidst the dilemma our country is facing, the people are bound to live in the so-called "new normal" where our routines are changing as our lives are modified by the changes brought by COVID-19.

People started to embrace the new normal in education amid the situation. Yet there are many things to consider making sure its effectiveness such as the readiness and diversity of the students and teachers, computer or device availability, and the internet connection. Moreover, it is agreeable that teaching and learning will not stop amidst COVID-19 and being receptive to the new ways would be a great help to be efficient to the new normal era. People are already living in a digital age, so the use of technology is something not new to everybody. It has been part of us, as it makes our lives easier and faster. Click and learn, this is the new normal in education – The Flexible Learning. The teachers want the students to learn and be safe at the same time. It makes the learners free from constraint of time and place because this new approach provides learners with choices about where, when, and how learning occurs.

According to Hignasari (2020), not all students were able to adapt to this new method of education especially elementary school students. Children who were at the level of education were very vulnerable in the case of not getting the same study material, if there was no good cooperation between the teacher and the parents. In this era of new normal, teachers and parents were required to familiarize themselves with the technology to seek information and communicate, when students had to do learning from home (Wijoyo & Indrawan, 2020).

Lots of articles about the impact of COVID-19 pandemic can be found in any published material but lacking on the new normal leadership. However, Francisco and his colleagues, Sagcal and Nuqui (2020) has just published an article about the new normal leadership and they actually propositioned that there is a kind of situational leadership in this COVID-19 pandemic called New Normal Leadership which stretched the ability of the principals to adapt, to make great decisions, and to plan and implement.

The dilemma of COVID-19 situation does not only apply to the students but also to the principals and teachers that causes them to make more adjustments and feel stress to the new normal era. Countless research had been studied about stress but had a difficulty to understand because individuals tend to react and experience it differently.

Through these ideas found in related studies and the relevance of the topic boarding on the influence of new normal leadership and collaborative school culture, the researcher purports to evaluate the influence new normal leadership of principal on the collaborative school culture.

2. RELATED WORKS

It becomes clearer that what is needed during these pandemic situations of extreme change is an emphasis on identification with the leader in building trust where subordinates balance respect for hierarchy with adapting to a disaster requiring collaboration, hereby emphasizing responsiveness to the leader's direction. A caveat is that change acceptance can be low because leaders tend to underestimate the importance of people's emotional experiences as leaders often operate from implicit mental models that emphasize focus on the organizational aspects and the rational and logical activities of change, without dealing with the emotions unfolding around them on an individual level.

A recent study defined new normal leadership in terms of a focus on people, human resources, mentoring, learning, healing emotions; a leader who is a facilitator, never top down, conscious of leadership development; a healthy working environment, respect, exchange of ideas, a creative class; trust through sharing, teams, embracing equality, diversity, slack, tolerance; vision, and commitment to the vision, through talent, technology, storytelling; and a dynamic interplay between all stakeholders, employees, customers, investors, shareholders (Fleming and Millar, 2019).

With more than 5 million people sick and 300 thousand dead, the global economy has experienced an economic shock more severe than the financial crisis of 2008. The sudden emergence of COVID-19 as a global threat came at a time when a significant percentage of businesses are divided in their degree of digital maturity. The pandemic forced organizations to make digitalization and digital transformation a rapid strategic focus. One of the most important aspects of this transformation has been providing remote infrastructure that can support an entirely digital workforce.

Besides this urgent need of digital technology, the situation has resulted in a need of leaders who might need very different competencies and behaviors than leaders needed a couple of years ago. The lack of literature on digital leadership in crisis and empirical research describing the impact of digital transformation on leadership called the authors for further exploration. Thus, it was investigated the adaptation of managers to the rapid digitalization of their day to day assignments caused by the outbreak of COVID-19 as it was believed that a new normal leader is or challenged to adjust towards becoming a digital leader (Murashkin, and Tyrväinen, 2020).

It is without a doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic has surprised the world in numerous ways. The society has faced drastic shifts in its usual way of life even in the simplest form: social distancing, mask wearing, frequent hand washing, among others. The race towards the development of COVID-19 vaccine may be underway, and as of press time, people are still banking on what has been known in the past, and what are currently experiencing in the present in visualizing the "new normal". The pandemic's significance remains undefined, as "new normal" surfaces and starts to transpose ways and processes that people previously held (Ancho, 2020). Hence, the need for transformational leadership style among school principals are needed (Francisco, 2019).

The current health crisis brings effects that are "beyond measures". Since the advent of the pandemic, education institutions around the world have been aggressive in response to the challenges of home quarantine, infrastructure limitations for learning, and even internet connectivity. As schools close, virus spread could be reduced, along with surge of new cases. Embracing digital technology in relation to teaching and learning has been the talk of the town in the early months of 2020. Schools are expected to offer provision so it becomes central to "development, learning, and achievement of the children and youth for whom they are responsible" (Asio and Jimenez, 2020: Francisco and Barcelona, 2020).

Whether offered as a temporary or permanent solution, virtual learning is now posed as a solution so teaching and learning will still pursue amidst lockdown and restricted physical interaction. It is also crucial to note how some institutions have struggled and faced resistance from students, teachers, parents and other stakeholders as new forms of teaching and learning are introduced. The success of organization initiatives can be greatly attributed to leadership mind-set that create, implement, enhance, and strengthen proactive notions in relation to our experiences before, during and even after the pandemic. A scholar postulates, "crises are poignant reminders" of the significance of critical leadership role in strengthening communities amid the challenge (Osland et al, 2020).

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The major problem of this study was, "How may be the influence of principals' new normal leadership on collaborative school culture be determined?" Specifically, the study sought answers to the following questions:

1. How may the new normal leadership of principals be described in terms of the following indicators:
    1.1. adaptability;
    1.2. decision-making; and,
    1.3. planning and implementation?

2. What is the level of the collaborative school culture in terms of:
    2.1. collaborative leadership;
    2.2. teacher collaboration;
    2.3. professional development;
    2.4. unity of purpose;
    2.5. collegial support; and,
    2.6. learning partnership?

3. Does the school principals' new normal leadership significantly influence collaborative school culture?

4. What management implications can be drawn from the findings of the study?

4. METHODOLOGY

To conduct the study, researchers used a descriptive-correlational study quantitative research design. It identifies

the causes and the interconnections that come directly between or among them. As cited by a study, it is a correlational study design which requires data collection to assess if there are impacts between two or more independent variables and dependent variable and to what degree.

The primary data gathering tools used in the study were a standardized questionnaires on determining new normal leadership and collaborative school culture.

To gather necessary information for this study, the researcher adopted the Normal Leadership Competency Scale (NLCS-15) by Francisco, Sagcal and Nuqui (2020) to describe the new normal leadership of principals while the School Culture Survey which was developed by Gruenert and Valentine (1998) in the Middle Level Leadership Center at the University of Missouri, and the Organizational Trust Inventory by Bromiley and Cummings (1995).

The New Normal Leadership Competency Scale consisted of 15-items which focuses on the principals' ability in terms of adaptability, decision making, planning and implementation. It is highly reliable as evidenced by .87 Cronbach's alpha.

The School Culture Survey consists of (6) factors. It is composed of 35 items which sought to gather responses on collaborative school culture in terms of: (1) collaborative leadership; (2) teacher collaboration; (3) professional development; (4) unity of purpose; (5) collegial support; and (6) learning partnerships. This questionnaire is also highly reliable as shown by the Cronbach's alpha of .81.

This research considered the ethical standards set by the generic research ethics. In so doing, the participants were informed about all the steps that will be taken in this research. The participants were more important than the study, and therefore always respected. They were informed that the study is completely voluntary and would not affect their lives as students and as persons, even their families, in any way. Confidentiality will be provided, as the participants' identifying information would not be sought. The data collection material was kept and destroyed upon completion of the study.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

New Normal Leadership of School Heads

Findings showed, first, that the new normal leadership of school heads in terms of adaptability was exercised to a very great extent as shown by the mean percentage score of 3.57. This was demonstrated by the ability of the school heads to adapt to changes especially when necessary (3.51), do not just stick on traditions but also applies new ideas/strategies in managing the school (3.50), embrace new challenges as part of organizational growth and advancements (3.53), listen to young instructional leaders while keeping important personal values and the essence of the school culture (3.52), and even though he or she is less advanced in the utilization of technology, is trying his or her best to learn and to cope up with this trend and necessity (3.78)

Secondly, the new normal leadership of school heads in terms of decision-making was exercised to a very great extent

as shown by the mean percentage score of 3.64. This reveals that: school heads decide based on factual data (3.50), carefully discuss matters with his or her instructional leaders (3.79), take responsibility on all his or her decisions (3.51), always decide on what is best for the teachers and learners and not for himself or herself (3.66), and scrutinize every factor to consider before making decisions (3.78).

Thirdly, the new normal leadership of school heads in terms of planning and implementation was exercised to a very great extent as shown by the mean percentage score of 3.59. Specifically, this was displayed by the behavior of school heads to stick on the plan until it is being fully implemented (3.50), has a sense of flexibility to make contingency plans before failing (3.67), a visionary and at the same time practical and innovative (3.59), think of concrete plans that are not yet thought by other leaders (3.66), and give credits on people behind successful plans and excellent outcomes of implementations (3.50).

Collaborative School Culture

Analysis of data showed: first, that the collaborative school culture in terms of collaborative leadership was exercised to a very great extent as shown by the mean percentage score of 3.60. This was manifested by school leaders through the following indicators: leaders value teachers' ideas (3.50), leaders in this school trust the professional judgments of teachers (3.79), leaders take time to praise teachers that perform well (3.51), teachers are involved in the decision-making process (3.66), leaders in our school facilitate teachers working together (3.78), teachers are kept informed on current issues in the school (3.50), the involvement of teachers in policy or decision making is taken seriously (3.67), teachers are rewarded for experimenting with new ideas and techniques (3.59), leaders support risk-taking and innovation in teaching (3.66), administrators protect instruction and planning time (3.50), and teachers are encouraged to share ideas (3.50).

Secondly, the collaborative school culture in terms of teacher collaboration was exercised to a very great extent as shown by the mean percentage score of 3.56. This implies that teachers have opportunities for dialogue and planning across grades and subjects (3.51), they spend considerable time planning together (3.50), take time to observe each other teaching (3.53), generally aware of what other teachers are teaching (3.52), work together to develop and evaluate programs and projects (3.78), and teaching practice disagreements are voiced openly and discussed (3.53).

Thirdly, one could also deduce that the collaborative school culture in terms of professional development was performed to a very great extent as shown by the mean percentage score of 3.57. This was shown in the sense that teachers utilize professional networks to obtain information and resources for classroom instruction (3.53), they regularly seek ideas from seminars, colleagues, and conferences (3.52), professional

development is valued by the faculty (3.78), teachers maintain a current knowledge base about the learning process (3.53), and the faculty values school improvement (3.50).

Fourth, the collaborative school culture in terms of unity of purpose was revealed to a very great extent as shown by the mean percentage score of 3.61. This was displayed by the following: the school mission provides a clear sense of direction for teachers (3.51), teachers understand the mission of the school (3.66), the school mission statement reflects the values of the community (3.78), and teaching performance reflects the mission of the school (3.50).

Fifth, the collaborative school culture in terms of collegial support was revealed to a very great extent as shown by the mean percentage score of 3.77. This was displayed by the following behaviors of the teachers: teachers trust each other (3.78), teachers are willing to help out whenever there is a problem (3.66), teachers' ideas are valued by other teacher (3.77), and teachers work cooperatively in groups (3.87).

Lastly, the data revealed that the collaborative school culture in terms of learning partnership was revealed to a very great extent as shown by the mean percentage score of 3.63. This was displayed by the following parameters: teachers and parents have common expectations for student performance (3.66), parents trust teachers' professional judgments (3.78), teachers and parents communicate frequently about student performance (3.50), and students generally accept responsibility for their schooling, for example they engage mentally in class and complete homework assignments (3.60).

Effects of School Heads' New Normal Leadership on Collaborative School Culture

In this study, it was hypothesized that the school heads' new normal leadership do not significantly affect collaborative school culture. To determine the effects of school heads' new normal leadership on collaborative school culture, the data gathered were processed using multiple correlation and regression analysis.

Table 1. Regression Analysis of School Heads' New Normal Leadership on Collaborative School Culture

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	7.689	0.292		26.344	0
Adaptability	1.170	0.022	0.50	0.757	0.045
Decision-making	1.132	0.068	0.120	0.185	0.015
Planning and Implementation	0.430	0.024	0.220	1.834	0.038
R-squared = .698					
R=.895					
F-value = 1.643					
p-value = .000					
alpha = 0.05					

Regression analysis revealed that the three (3) variables of new normal leadership of school heads affect the collaborative school culture in varying extent as shown by the obtained B Coefficients 1.170 (adaptability), 1.132 (decision-making), 0.430 (planning and implementation). This means that for every unit improvement in the new normal leadership mentioned could generate a 1.170, 1.132, 0.430 increase on collaborative school culture.

A closer look at the obtained Beta Coefficients, one could infer that of the 3 variables of school new normal leadership, it was the 'adaptability' that exert a greatest influence (Beta=1.170) on the collaborative school culture.

The R able to denote multiple correlation coefficient between the different variables as a predictor of the dependent variable. It could be noted that the R is .895 which indicated a level of prediction while R2 figure is a statistical measure on closeness of the data in regression line as the coefficient of determination or simply the coefficient of multiple determination for multiple regression. It can be indicated that the explanatory powers of the dependent variable of 0.698 implies that 69.8% or 70% of the variation in new normal leadership is accounted by changes in the collaborative school culture.

Furthermore, results of analysis of variance revealed an F ratio equal to 1.642 with an associated probability equal to .000. Since the p value is lower than the significance level set at 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. It may be safely conclude that the new normal leadership of school heads produce significant combined effects on collaborative school culture.

Management Implications drawn from the Findings of the Study

Based from the findings of the study, the following implications were drawn: (1) the principals were mostly concerned with the leadership needed for school improvement. The need for professional development to meet various expectations in performing their roles as schools' head/ principals was the main highlighted result of the study; (2) the more realistic views of the school heads having to use the adaptability most of the time would be tantamount to consider that that these school heads as respondents of the study are more of educational leaders whose always looking forward to the holistic development of the entire school through adaptations of changes especially in this new normal; and (3) the school heads are challenged to be more adaptive, a good decision-maker, and a profound planner and implementer so that despite pandemic, the school has an assurance of producing quality basic education to learners.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the aforementioned findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn: first, the new normal leadership in terms of decision-making got the highest managerial style used by the school heads. Other decision-making styles, such as adaptability, and planning and implementation were also evident; secondly, the collaborative school culture in terms of collegial support got the highest score of 3.77 - indicative of the fact that there was an alignment between the decision-making and collegial support from the school heads and teachers; third, the three (3) variables of new normal leadership significantly affect the collaborative school culture in varying extent. But the adaptability appeared to be the best predictor of collaborative school culture; lastly, management implications were developed by the researcher to further enhance the new normal leadership competencies of school heads and collaborative school culture.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based from the findings, and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were hereby offered: first, school heads should not only rely their competencies based on their ability to adapt, decide, plan, and implement. Rather, they should base their decisions on what is legal and what is right (morality). They must equip themselves with enough knowledge on policies and guidelines and eventually make proper discernment; secondly, teachers should be given opportunities in decision-making of school heads as it greatly affects their morale, their satisfaction, and their submissive prowess with their school heads and the organization; third, adaptability provides significant contribution to the development of the organizational trust of teachers. This means that when there is a adaptation that is brought about by the critical thinking, facts, correct information and data, teachers eventually collaborate with their leaders more and more. School heads are challenged to maintain these practices by promoting participative decision-making among their

respective schools; lastly, significant insights can be learned from the management implications drawn from the study. It appears imperative that closer attention and consideration may be extended in the interest of further improvement and development of school management system especially in the area of new normal leadership and collaborative school culture.

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