

School Head's Good Leadership Qualities: Teachers' Perspective

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Abstract: *This qualitative study examines the leadership good qualities of the head teacher as a delegated instructional supervisor in the school. Data were collected from the 10 teacher-participants using in person interviews and questionnaires. Thematic analysis revealed eleven themes from the participants' responses to the five questions- (1) staff development, (2) curriculum development, (3) instruction development, (4) personal qualities, (5) professional qualities, (6) social qualities, (7) motivator, (8) morale upliftment, (9) work optimism, (10) work commitment, (11) personal empowerment. Themes 1 to 3 are from the responses of the participants on how they are being supervised by the head teacher. Themes 4 to 6 deal with the good leadership qualities of the head teacher. Themes 7 to 9 show about how the head teacher inspired the teachers to improve their work performance. Themes 10 to 11 categories of participants' responses to their realizations on the good leadership qualities of the head teacher. Results show that a good head teacher oversees the three areas to be developed namely staff, curriculum, and instruction. Moreover, an inspiring head teacher possesses the personal, professional, and social qualities of a good leader. A good head teacher motivates and empowers subordinates through building morale and positivity.*

Keywords: *Leadership style, head teacher qualities, supervision, instructional supervisor*

Introduction

Supervision is the scaffold of effective teaching and learning process. It is the key element for the academic success of the school (Ngole et al., 2021). Research shows that there is a positive correlation between the quality of supervision and teachers' teaching quality (Susanti et al., 2020). The quality of teaching force depends on the type of supervision given to individual teacher. The effectiveness of the supervision is measured through the teaching performance of the teachers. The improvement of the teacher's teaching behavior is manifested in the quality of students' learning. Research findings reveal that high students' academic success is the result of effective supervision (Masao, 2017).

Supervision aimed to improve the quality of instruction (Salmon, 1975). Teachers' pedagogical skills are strengthened in the process of supervising to directly contribute to the development and improvement of instruction (Manzano, 2011). Good quality instruction results in better students' learning experiences. A student's quality of learning determines the academic success of a school. If the students have learned effectively, then the school has successfully implemented good and effective supervision.

The supervisor is the key player in supervision. He has multiple and varied roles to play. He acts as consultant, coordinator, evaluator, and a role model (Hasnadi, 2021). Given these responsibilities, he must cultivate personal qualities which sustain him to unceasingly play those vital roles in supervision. He has to be honest, cooperative, patient, and a good role model (Hasnadi, 2021). Supervisees preferred supervisors who recognize their achievements and abilities, and give sincere feedback and assistance (Gordon, 2019).

The school head as the immediate teachers' supervisor has a significant influence on the improvement of instruction. He is the key player of instructional development and improvement in school (Ngole et al., 2021). Teachers' teaching skills would be developed through the school head's effective leadership in supervision (Sasanti, 2020). Moreover, School head with desirable management qualities motivates the subordinates to work hard for the common good of the school (Dargantes, 2020) especially in the area of instruction development and improvement. Some of the excellent qualities of an effective school head are the following: (1) adaptability (Marianito, 2020), (2) knowledgeable especially about organizational behavior and leadership, (3) skilled specifically on management, (4) committed to professional development, (5) excellent communicator, (6) confident, (7) understanding, (8) with integrity, (9) Sympathetic, (10) loving, (11) loyal, (12) devoted (Salfi et al., 2014). These desirable qualities of school heads can be broadly categorized into professional, personal, and social qualities (Salfi et al., 2014).

Given the vitality of the school head's role in supervision and the high standard of qualities to effectively carry out his role as supervisor, I want to study the leadership style of one of the public school head teachers. This study focuses on the positive leadership qualities.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to identify the good leadership qualities of the head teacher as an instruction supervisor. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How long have been the participants under the supervision of the head teacher?
2. How are they being supervised by the head teacher?
3. What qualities of the head teacher made them like her?
4. How do these qualities inspire them to improve their work performance?
5. What do they realize about the leadership style and good qualities of the head teacher that inspired them to perform well in teaching?

Methodology

Research Design

This study is qualitative. It is a systematic inquiry (Shank, 2002) of identifying the leadership qualities of a school head. It makes sense of the teachers experiences with the actual daily encounter with the school head (Rahman, 2016) through an interpretative and naturalistic approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Research participants

This study gathers data from 10 science teachers under the supervision of the head teacher in one of the public schools in Pagadian City. The participants are 2 males and 8 females. Seven are classroom advisers and three are science subject teachers. Five of the participants are teaching grade 8 students while the 3 and 2 teachers are teaching grades 7 and 9 respectively. The participants' range of teaching experience under the supervision of the head teacher is from 1-5 years.

Data gathering Procedure

The Head teacher, as the focus of the study, was properly notified and oriented on the scope and purpose of the study. She was assured that negative results that might have bad implications to her personal and professional life would not be disclosed without her permission. Data were gathered using questionnaires and face to face interviews. Participants were given questionnaires with five interview guide questions. A follow up interview was conducted to clarify and elaborate their responses.

Results and Discussion

This part of the study presents and discusses the perspectives of teachers on the good leadership qualities of their head teachers.

Responses on Q1 revealed that the participants have been supervised by the head teacher ranging from 1 to 5 years. 1 teacher was under her leadership for 1 year, 1 teacher for 2 years, and 8 teachers for 5 years. The head teacher is now serving her 6th year as instructional leader.

Three Themes were identified from the participants' responses to Q2. The responses were grouped under staff development, curriculum development, and instruction development.

Staff Development

" She assigns us topics to research and discuss during LAC. This boost my morale. "- P1

" She encourages me to participate in trainings and conferences "-P3

"She empowers us to work to the best of our abilities "-P6

" She supports my professional development by sending me to trainings. "-P7

Curriculum Development

" She checks lesson plans. "- P1,P3,P4,P5,P7

" She requires us to pass our activity sheets and Test Papers. "-P2,P3,P5

"Asks for the MPS report every quarter. "-P3,P6,P9,P10

Instruction Development

“Conducted classroom observations.”-P1,P3,P7

“She held pre and post conference to coach and give feedback.”-P3,P7,P10

“Gave performance evaluation.”-P3,P4,P7,P9

“Monitored our attendance in the classroom.”-P4,P8,P10

The head teacher has done her job as a supervisor in three areas namely in staff development, curriculum development, and instruction development. It is evident in the responses of the research participants that the head teacher has initiated activities that foster teachers' professional and personal development. This attribute, when reflected in the leadership style of a head teacher becomes one of the ingredients for her effectiveness as instruction supervisor. Staff development through training and seminars is necessary for boosting their morale which is necessary for achieving the institution's goals (Rodriguez & Walters, 2017).

The head teacher keeps the routine in checking the quality of the learning materials of the teachers to ensure the correctness of the contents and the effectiveness of the teaching delivery of the lessons. She is evidenced-based curriculum supervisor. She based all the decisions pertaining to the curriculum on the teaching materials and outputs of the teachers. The checking of the lesson plans provides opportunities for content and delivery improvement. The scrutinization of the test questions improves the suitability and alignment of the questions to the topics. The emphasis on the MPS guides the teachers to evaluate their quarterly performance and to improve their teaching performance in the next quarter. The head teacher has evidently played the role of curriculum supervisor very satisfactorily as manifested by the responses of the participants. The head teacher as delegated by the school principal to supervise instruction has an important role in curriculum and instruction development (Amelia et al., 2022).

The head teacher monitors the implementation of the curriculum. She conducts observations and conferences both pre classroom observation conferences and post classroom observations conferences. The pre-con allows the head teacher to check the lesson plan and give feedback. It is the time for the head teacher and the teacher to agree on what area of the teaching performance and what teaching behavior to be observed. The classroom observation allows the head teacher to see how effective the teacher is in executing the agreed teaching behavior. The post-con is the opportunity for given feedback. Together, this sequence of behaviors and activities contributes to the instruction development of our school. The teachers been well managed when it comes to this area of development.

in the Q3 responses, 3 themes were also identified: Personal Qualities, Professional Qualities, and Social Qualities.

Personal Qualities

“She empathizes with our struggles and problems.”-P1,P5,P6, P7

“She is considerate and understanding.”-P1,P2,P4

“She is supportive and approachable.”-P3,P4, P7,P10

“She is fair and just.”-P2,P3,P8

“She is resilient, flexible, and consistent.”-P2,P3,P4

Professional Qualities

“She has skills in making decisions for our department.”-P7,P9

“She can work under pressure and be able to cope with deadlines.”-P2,P6,P7

“She has skills in communicating us.”-P4,P7,P9

“Provides positive feedbacks.”-P4,P5,P8,P10

“We feel respected and supported by her.”-P3,P6,P9

Social Qualities

“She solicits ideas from us if needed.”-P1

“She is a good communicator and approachable.”-P3,P4

"She is a pro-teacher."-P7, P9

"Her good qualities foster collaboration and a sense of community."-P1,P7

The head teacher has embodied 3 sets of leadership qualities which are proven by the subordinate teachers to be inspiring and motivating. These qualities are categorized under personal qualities, professional qualities, and social qualities. A good leader should possess good personal qualities (Salfi et al., 2014). One of the leading personal qualities found by respondents to our subject head teacher is being sympathetic to the subordinates. Most of the teachers have experienced the sympathy of the head teacher. A good head teacher should be sympathetic to her subordinates (Salfi et al., 2014). The head teacher is also considerate, understanding, approachable, supportive, fair, consistent, flexible, and resilient. All these personal qualities are part of the list of qualities of good and inspiring leaders (Salfi et al., 2014).

The second category of good qualities of a head teacher is professional qualities. Professional qualities may refer to the technical knowledge and skills necessary to live out her functions as a professional head teacher (Salfi et al.,2023). The responses revealed that the subject head teacher is highly knowledgeable and skillful in executing her functions as head teacher professionally. She has skills in making good decisions. She deals with the followers with utmost respect and professionalism. She employs a professional way of communicating work demands and feedback.

The head teacher also possesses social qualities. She includes the teachers, parents, and students in decision making if necessary. She discussed problems with the teachers to arrive with a solution based on the participation of the subordinates. This is one of the social qualities of a good leader. A good head teacher should always discuss educational problems and solve them with their cooperation (Salfi et al.,2023). She always implicitly manifests the importance of collaboration among teachers. A good leader seeks collaboration among subordinates (Salfi.,2023).

The Q4 gives us the responses which can be categorized into "motivator", "morale upliftment", and "work optimism".

Motivator

"When we are asked for any suggestions in any activities in school, it makes us feel have a sense of ownership. And when we do, we are more motivated to do our job well."-P1

" Her diligence in work and in teaching motivates me to work harder too and work efficiently even under pressure."-P2

"Boost my motivation to continuously seek ways to improve my performance."-P3

" There where times I have not submitted reports because of unavoidable circumstances but she understood me. This made me do my best to work hard on my reports and pass them on time and even ahead of the deadline."-P5

" Her positive feedback inspires me to work hard to better my performance."-P4

Morale Upliftment

"Boost my morale to continuously seek ways to improve my work performance."-P3

"Boost my morale and job satisfaction."-P7

"Inspire me to work harder even under pressure."-P2

" encourages me to compose myself in stressful situations and handle it head on."-P6

Work Optimism

"Inspire me to look at the brighter side of the teaching endeavor."-P6

" help me embrace the teaching job wholeheartedly."-P9

" give me the positive feeling of my job."- P8

The good qualities of the head teacher impacted the teachers in three broad ways namely as motivator, to uplift their morale as teachers, and to have positive view and feeling about their job as teachers. The desirable leadership qualities of the head teacher motivated the follower teachers to do their assigned tasks to the best of their ability and even seek ways to improve their work

performance. Research finding shows that School head with desirable management qualities motivates the subordinates to work hard for the common good of the school (Marianito, 2020).

The inspiring leadership qualities of the head teacher also boost the morale of the teachers. Teachers feel the significance of what they are doing and pursue on improving their performance even amid struggles and disappointments. A supportive and trusting head teacher increases the morale of the teachers (Gadson, 2018).

Another impact of the good leadership qualities of the head teacher to the follower teachers is optimism in their line of work. Several teachers in the public school in the Philippines have negative attitude and perception toward the educational system. The good qualities of the head teacher change this negativity to positivity. Teachers find enthusiasm in what they are doing. They strive to improve their work performance because they feel not alone. They find worth in teaching.

The Q5 elicits responses which can be grouped under two themes: the “work commitment” and “Personal empowerment”.

Work Commitment

“When teachers feel respected and supported by their HT, they are more likely to be committed to their profession”-P3

“ Her good qualities inspired me to perform well the tasks given to me.”-P5

Personal Empowerment

“Good qualities of a head teacher can inspire us to perform better.”-P4

“Having a good leader or head teacher inspired me to do my best as a teacher.”P5

“Good leader or head teacher empowers her members.”-P6

The good qualities of the head teacher have improved the commitment of the teachers toward their job. They become more dedicated to finishing the tasks assigned to them knowing that the head teacher trusted and supported them. The respect and support they experienced from the head teacher made them realize their worth as part of the community of educators. They feel empowered. They can perform well even amid pressure. Research findings claim that good qualities of a leader or head teacher empower the follower teachers. Teachers would be more likely to be psychologically healthy if the head teacher possessed empowering leadership qualities (Suleman et al., 2021).

Conclusion

A good head teacher oversees the three areas -the staff, curriculum, and instruction for development in school. Being a good leader and supervisor, she embodies the personal, professional, and social qualities to motivate teachers, to uplift their morale, and to give them a positive view and feeling on the job. Her good qualities as a leader empower teachers to be innovative to excel in the teaching job and to keep motivated amidst challenges and disappointments.

Recommendations

School head and head teacher should have understanding on the importance of staff, curriculum, and instruction development as the key areas for their supervisory work.

School head and head teacher should possess or acquire good leadership qualities either through studying research or observing other effective leaders. Assessment tools for school head and head teachers’ good leadership qualities should be developed. There should be a developmental program for school head and head teachers. Further research on the leadership qualities of school heads should be undertaken to improve and enrich the knowledge of supervising education.

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