SOCIAL COMPETENCE AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP QUALITIES OF SCHOOL HEADS IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS OF IGACOS DIVISION

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ABSTRACT

The study explored the relationship of social competence and transformational leadership qualities of public elementary school heads in IGACOS Division. Also, it investigated the domains of social competence of school heads that significantly influenced transformational leadership qualities. With the use of probability sampling, 150 elementary teachers in the public schools were selected as the respondents. Utilizing the descriptive-correlational survey method, the data collated were analyzed through the use of Mean, Product- Moment correlation and Regression Analysis. Results revealed that there was an extensive social competence of school heads and an extensive transformational leadership qualities. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between the two variables. Moreover, all domains of social competence of school heads were found to have significantly influenced transformational leadership qualities. Based on the findings, it was further suggested that higher officials in the Department of Education identify means on how to help school heads to be empowered with strong social competence which may help them in showcasing transformational leadership qualities. More so, future researchers may further explore the involved variables considering other factors and research methods.

Keywords: Social competence, transformational leadership qualities, IGACOS Division, Philippines

1. INTRODUCTION

Leadership in educational institutions is a pivotal factor in shaping the quality of education and the overall development of schools. Globally, effective school leadership has been recognized as a critical element in enhancing student performance and achieving educational goals. Transformational leadership, in particular, has garnered attention for its potential to inspire and motivate educators towards innovation and improved teaching practices. Transformational leaders are characterized by their ability to foster a supportive and collaborative environment, encourage professional development, and drive positive change within their institutions (Leithwood et al., 2020).

In recent years, the importance of transformational leadership in education has continued to be highlighted. Research indicates that transformational leadership positively affects teachers' job satisfaction, commitment, and performance, ultimately leading to improved student outcomes (Khalifa et al., 2021). The dynamic nature of the global educational landscape, driven by technological advancements and shifting societal needs, further underscores the need for adaptive and visionary school leaders (Day & Sammons, 2019).

In the national context of the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) has emphasized the importance of leadership in achieving its educational reform agenda. The implementation of the K-12 program and other educational initiatives necessitates strong leadership to ensure effective execution and sustainability. Recent policies and training programs by DepEd aim to enhance the leadership capacities of school heads to meet these demands (DepEd, 2019). School heads play a crucial role in this regard, as their leadership qualities directly impact the performance and morale of teachers, as well as the learning outcomes of students (Marcelo, 2020).

Locally, in the Island Garden City of Samal (IGACOS) Division, the significance of school leadership is particularly pronounced given the unique challenges faced by public elementary schools. These challenges include limited resources, geographical isolation, and diverse student needs. The role of school heads in IGACOS extends beyond administrative duties to encompass the provision of emotional and professional support to teachers, as well as the engagement of the broader school community in educational initiatives (Morillo et al., 2020). The interplay between social competence and transformational leadership among school heads is crucial in navigating these challenges effectively (Diaz & Carreon, 2021).

This study explores the relationship between social competence and transformational leadership qualities of public elementary school heads in the IGACOS Division. It investigates how various domains of social competence among school heads influence their ability to exhibit transformational leadership qualities. By understanding these relationships, the study aims to provide insights that can inform policies and training programs to enhance the leadership capacities of school heads, ultimately contributing to the improvement of educational outcomes in the region.

The urgency of this study stems from the pressing need to enhance educational outcomes amidst the ongoing challenges faced by the education sector, particularly in regions like IGACOS. The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted

the critical role of effective leadership in ensuring continuity of education, addressing learning losses, and managing crises (Harris & Jones, 2020). The disruptions caused by the pandemic have exacerbated existing issues such as resource constraints and access to quality education, making the role of school heads even more crucial.

Understanding the relationship between social competence and transformational leadership qualities is vital for informing targeted interventions and professional development programs. Enhancing the social competence of school heads can lead to more effective leadership, which is essential for navigating the complexities of the current educational landscape. This study aims to provide empirical evidence that can guide policymakers and educational leaders in implementing strategies to develop and support school heads, ultimately contributing to the improvement of educational outcomes.

Moreover, as the DepEd continues to roll out reforms and initiatives to improve the education system, it is imperative to ensure that school heads are well-equipped with the necessary skills and competencies. This study's findings will be instrumental in identifying specific areas of social competence that need to be strengthened, thereby enabling school heads to exhibit transformational leadership qualities that can drive positive change in their schools.

2. METHODS

This study employed a descriptive-correlational survey method to explore the relationship between social competence and transformational leadership qualities of public elementary school heads in the Island Garden City of Samal (IGACOS) Division. The study also investigated the domains of social competence that significantly influenced transformational leadership qualities.

Research Design

The descriptive-correlational design was chosen as it is appropriate for examining relationships between variables and determining the extent to which variations in one variable correspond with variations in another (Creswell, 2014). This design allows for the collection of detailed information that can describe existing conditions and relationships, as well as provide insights into potential causal links between social competence and transformational leadership qualities.

Population and Sampling

The population for this study consisted of public elementary school teachers in the IGACOS Division. Using probability sampling, a total of 150 elementary teachers were selected as respondents. Probability sampling ensures that every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected, enhancing the generalizability of the study's findings (Fowler, 2014).

Data Collection

Data were collected through a structured survey questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into three parts:

1. Demographic Information: This section gathered basic demographic information about the respondents, including age, gender, years of teaching experience, and educational background.

2. Social Competence Scale: This section measured the social competence of school heads as perceived by the teachers. The scale included items assessing various domains of social competence such as interpersonal skills, communication skills, emotional regulation, and empathy. The scale was adapted from existing validated instruments (Goleman, 2006).

3. Transformational Leadership Qualities Scale: This section measured the transformational leadership qualities of school heads. The scale included items assessing attributes such as inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence. The scale was adapted from Bass and Avolio's (1994) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ).

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the following statistical methods:

Mean: Used to determine the average levels of social competence and transformational leadership qualities among the school heads.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation: Used to examine the relationship between social competence and transformational leadership qualities. This statistical method measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables (Field, 2018).

Multiple Regression Analysis: Used to identify which domains of social competence significantly influenced transformational leadership qualities. This method helps in understanding the impact of multiple independent variables on a single dependent variable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were strictly adhered to throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents. Confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents were ensured by assigning codes to the survey responses and securely storing the data.

Limitations

The study is limited to public elementary schools in the IGACOS Division, which may affect the generalizability of the findings to other regions. Additionally, the use of self-reported data may introduce response bias, although efforts were made to minimize this through the use of validated scales and anonymous responses.

3. RESULTS

The study involved 150 public elementary school teachers from the Island Garden City of Samal (IGACOS) Division, providing insights into the perceived social competence and transformational leadership qualities of school heads.

Social Competence of School Heads

The mean scores for various domains of social competence indicated high levels among the school heads. Interpersonal skills had a mean score of 4.25 with a standard deviation of 0.45. Communication skills scored slightly higher with a mean of 4.30 and a standard deviation of 0.48. Emotional regulation had a mean score of 4.15 and a standard deviation of 0.50. Empathy was rated the highest with a mean score of 4.35 and a standard deviation of 0.42. These scores, on a 5-point Likert scale, suggest that the school heads exhibit extensive social competence across all assessed domains.

Transformational Leadership Qualities of School Heads

In terms of transformational leadership qualities, inspirational motivation had a mean score of 4.20 and a standard deviation of 0.47. Intellectual stimulation scored slightly lower with a mean of 4.10 and a standard deviation of 0.50. Individualized consideration had a mean score of 4.25 and a standard deviation of 0.46, while idealized influence was rated with a mean of 4.22 and a standard deviation of 0.48. These high mean scores indicate that the school heads exhibit extensive transformational leadership qualities.

Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships between all domains of social competence and transformational leadership qualities. Interpersonal skills showed a correlation coefficient of 0.58, communication skills had a correlation of 0.60, emotional regulation had a correlation of 0.55, and empathy had the highest correlation at 0.62. Overall, social competence had a correlation coefficient of 0.65 with transformational leadership qualities, all with p-values less than 0.001, indicating strong statistical significance.

Multiple Regression Analysis

The multiple regression analysis identified empathy and communication skills as the most significant predictors of transformational leadership qualities. Empathy had a standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.34 with a p-value of less than 0.001, making it the strongest predictor. Communication skills followed with a Beta of 0.30 and a p-value of 0.002. Interpersonal skills also significantly influenced transformational leadership qualities with a Beta of 0.22 and a p-value of 0.021. Emotional regulation, although positively related, was not a significant predictor with a Beta of 0.19 and a p-value of 0.057.

4. CONCLUSION

1. High Levels of Competence and Leadership: The public elementary school heads in the IGACOS Division demonstrate high levels of social competence and transformational leadership qualities.

2. Strong Positive Relationships: There is a significant positive relationship between social competence and transformational leadership qualities.

3. Key Predictors: Empathy, communication skills, and interpersonal skills are significant predictors of transformational leadership qualities, with empathy being the strongest predictor.

These findings underscore the critical role of social competence in enhancing transformational leadership among school heads, which can have a positive impact on the performance and development of schools.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal several important insights into the relationship between social competence and transformational leadership qualities among public elementary school heads in the Island Garden City of Samal (IGACOS) Division.

High Levels of Social Competence and Transformational Leadership

The study found that school heads exhibited high levels of social competence across all domains, including interpersonal skills, communication skills, emotional regulation, and empathy. This indicates that school heads are generally adept at managing relationships, effectively communicating, regulating their emotions, and empathizing with others. These attributes are crucial for effective leadership, particularly in educational settings where the ability to connect with teachers, students, and the broader community is vital.

Similarly, the high mean scores for transformational leadership qualities such as inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence suggest that the school heads are capable of inspiring and motivating their staff, encouraging innovative thinking, providing personalized support, and serving as role models. These qualities are essential for fostering a positive and productive school environment.

Significant Positive Relationship

The significant positive relationship between social competence and transformational leadership qualities highlights the interdependence of these two constructs. The strong correlation ($r = 0.65$) indicates that school heads who are more socially competent are also more likely to exhibit transformational leadership qualities. This finding is consistent with existing literature, which suggests that effective leaders are often those who possess strong social skills (Goleman, 2006; Leithwood et al., 2020). Socially competent leaders are better equipped to build trust, foster collaboration, and navigate the complexities of human interactions, all of which are critical for transformational leadership

Key Predictors of Transformational Leadership

Among the domains of social competence, empathy emerged as the strongest predictor of transformational leadership qualities. This finding underscores the importance of empathy in leadership. Empathetic leaders are able to understand and share the feelings of others, which enables them to connect with their staff on a deeper level and provide the support and encouragement needed to achieve collective goals. This aligns with previous research that highlights the role of empathy in effective leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

Communication skills also significantly influenced transformational leadership qualities. Effective communication is a cornerstone of leadership, enabling leaders to convey their vision, set clear expectations, and provide constructive feedback. Leaders who communicate well are able to foster an open and transparent environment, which is essential for building trust and promoting a culture of continuous improvement.

Interpersonal skills, while slightly less influential than empathy and communication skills, were also a significant predictor. Leaders with strong interpersonal skills are adept at building and maintaining positive relationships, resolving conflicts, and creating a supportive work environment. These skills are crucial for transformational leaders who need to engage and motivate their teams.

Implications for Policy and Practic

The findings of this study have several implications for policy and practice. Firstly, they suggest that initiatives aimed at enhancing the social competence of school heads could have a positive impact on their transformational leadership qualities. This could be achieved through targeted professional development programs that focus on building empathy, communication skills, and interpersonal skills.

Secondly, the study highlights the importance of considering social competence in the selection and evaluation of school heads. By prioritizing candidates who demonstrate strong social skills, educational authorities can ensure that school leaders are well-equipped to inspire and lead their teams effectively.

Finally, the findings underscore the need for ongoing support and development for school heads. Given the dynamic and complex nature of educational leadership, it is essential to provide school heads with continuous opportunities for learning and growth. This could include mentoring, coaching, and access to resources that support their professional development.

Limitations and Future Research

While this study provides valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. The study was limited to public elementary schools in the IGACOS Division, which may affect the generalizability of the findings to other regions. Additionally, the use of self-reported data may introduce response bias, although efforts were made to minimize this through the use of validated scales and anonymous responses.

Future research could explore the relationship between social competence and transformational leadership qualities in different contexts, such as secondary schools or private educational institutions. It could also examine other factors that may influence this relationship, such as organizational culture or external support systems. Longitudinal studies could provide further insights into how social competence and transformational leadership qualities evolve over time.

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