

Leadership styles of school heads and master teachers and their influence on beginning teachers' performance

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International Journal of Science and Research Archive, 2026, 19(01), 1207-1214

Publication history: Received on 19 March 2026; revised on 26 April 2026; accepted on 28 April 2026

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/ijrsra.2026.19.1.0911>

Abstract

This study determined the leadership styles of school heads and master teachers and their influence on beginning teachers' performance in Vinzons District, Camarines Norte. Employing a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design, data were gathered from 63 beginning teachers with one to three years in service, composed of 49 elementary teachers and 14 secondary teachers, alongside the participation of school heads and master teachers through total enumeration. A structured survey questionnaire was used to measure the perceived leadership styles, namely democratic, autocratic, laissez-faire, transformational, and transactional, and their influence across four domains: content knowledge and pedagogy, learning environment and diversity of learners, curriculum and planning, and assessment and reporting. Descriptive statistics, particularly weighted mean, were used to describe the extent of leadership styles and level of influence, while Pearson product-moment correlation was applied to test the significant relationships between the variables. The findings revealed that democratic leadership emerged as the most practiced leadership style, while the leadership styles of school heads and master teachers were found to be very influential across all four domains. Furthermore, democratic, autocratic, transformational, and transactional leadership styles had significant positive relationships with the level of influence on beginning teachers, whereas laissez-faire leadership showed no significant relationship. Based on the results, the proposed Leadership Style-Responsive Coaching was developed to strengthen leadership support and improve beginning teachers' performance across the four domains.

Keywords: Leadership Styles; School Heads; Master Teachers; Beginning Teachers; Teacher Performance; Descriptive-Correlational

1. Introduction

Effective leadership is crucial in schools because it shapes the guidance, support, and working conditions that beginning teachers need to develop competence and sustain performance. School leadership is linked with teacher development, instructional quality, and school effectiveness; thus, examining leadership practices remains important in strengthening teaching and learning processes [1].

Leadership effects are also reflected in how teachers experience motivation, professional guidance, and workplace support. Leadership approaches that promote shared direction, professional growth, fairness, and supportive working relationships can strengthen teachers' instructional functioning and professional engagement. This is particularly important for beginning teachers, who are still developing confidence, classroom routines, and professional judgment.

In the Philippine context, teacher quality and accountability are reinforced through national standards and performance management policies. The Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) under DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017 provides structured expectations for teacher practice and professional development [2]. These policy directions

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underscore the need to understand how school-level leadership supports beginning teachers' competence-building and performance improvement within actual school settings.

Beginning teachers require deliberate leadership support to navigate early-career demands. They need coaching, feedback, supervision, and collegial assistance to manage instructional responsibilities and adapt to school expectations. However, context-specific evidence remains necessary to clarify which leadership styles are most evident and how these styles relate to beginning teachers' performance within specific school districts.

This study examined the leadership styles of school heads and master teachers in Vinzons District, Camarines Norte, and determined their influence on beginning teachers' performance. Specifically, it described leadership styles in terms of democratic, autocratic, laissez-faire, transformational, and transactional leadership; determined the level of influence across four domains, namely content knowledge and pedagogy, learning environment and diversity of learners, curriculum and planning, and assessment and reporting; and tested the significant relationship between leadership styles and the performance domains of beginning teachers.

2. Materials and Methods

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between the leadership styles of school heads and master teachers and their influence on beginning teachers' performance in Vinzons District, Camarines Norte. The respondents included 63 beginning teachers, composed of 49 elementary teachers and 14 secondary teachers, while total enumeration was applied to all school heads and master teachers in the district.

Data were gathered using an adapted survey questionnaire designed to assess leadership styles and their influence on beginning teachers across four domains: content knowledge and pedagogy, learning environment and diversity of learners, curriculum and planning, and assessment and reporting. Part I of the instrument, which measured democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles, was adapted from Northouse [3]. The transformational and transactional leadership items were based on Schermerhor et. al [4]. Part II was based on the PPST under DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017 [2].

Prior to data collection, the researcher secured approval from the Schools Division Superintendent of SDO Camarines Norte, the Public Schools District Supervisor, and the respective school heads in Vinzons District. Informed consent forms were distributed to the respondents, and the questionnaires were administered personally and through Google Forms. The accomplished questionnaires were retrieved, checked, coded, and prepared for analysis.

The instrument was subjected to content validation by three master teachers and three school principals. Their comments and suggestions were incorporated in revising the questionnaire. Thereafter, the instrument was pilot-tested and subjected to reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha through SPSS. The results showed acceptable to high internal consistency. For Part I, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients were 0.885 for democratic leadership, 0.776 for autocratic leadership, 0.772 for laissez-faire leadership, 0.728 for transformational leadership, and 0.867 for transactional leadership. For Part II, the coefficients were 0.729 for content knowledge and pedagogy, 0.719 for learning environment and diversity of learners, 0.762 for curriculum and planning, and 0.840 for assessment and reporting. Descriptive statistics, particularly weighted mean, were used to describe the extent of leadership styles and level of influence, while Pearson product-moment correlation was used to test the significant relationship between the variables. Data were processed using SPSS version 21. Ethical safeguards included voluntary participation, the right to withdraw, and strict confidentiality and anonymity in handling and reporting the data.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Leadership Styles of School Heads and Master Teachers

Democratic. Table 1 presents the extent to which school heads and master teachers manifest democratic leadership style as perceived by the respondents.

Table 1 Democratic Leadership Style of School Heads and Master Teachers

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
My school head/master teacher encourages teachers to be part of the decision-making process.	3.63	SA
My school head/master teacher provides guidance without exerting excessive pressure.	3.59	SA
My school head/master teacher ensures frequent and supportive communication with teachers.	3.70	SA
My school head/master teacher helps teachers take responsibility for their work.	3.66	SA
My school head/master teacher encourages teachers to discover and develop their strengths and passions.	3.63	SA
Overall Weighted Mean	3.64	SA

The overall weighted mean of 3.64 (Strongly Agree) indicates that democratic leadership behaviors are highly evident. The highest-rated indicator was ensuring frequent and supportive communication with teachers (WM = 3.70, Strongly Agree), while the lowest-rated indicator, though still strongly evident, was providing guidance without exerting excessive pressure (WM = 3.59, Strongly Agree). These findings suggest that leadership in the district is generally participatory, supportive, and communicative.

3.2. Leadership Styles of School Heads and Master Teachers

Autocratic. Table 2 presents the extent to which school heads and master teachers manifest autocratic leadership style as perceived by the respondents.

Table 2 Autocratic Leadership Style of School Heads and Master Teachers

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
My school head/master teacher believes that members need to be closely supervised to ensure work is completed.	3.59	SA
My school head/master teacher assumes that most teachers are unmotivated without external pressure.	3.53	SA
My school head/master teacher primarily uses rewards and consequences to drive performance.	3.11	A
My school head/master teacher provides strict guidance and direction, believing teachers need constant oversight.	3.16	A
My school head/master teacher makes the final judgment on all achievements and decisions.	3.48	SA
Overall Weighted Mean	3.38	SA

The overall weighted mean of 3.38 (Strongly Agree) indicates that autocratic leadership is also highly evident. The highest-rated indicator was close supervision to ensure work completion (WM = 3.59, Strongly Agree), while the lowest-rated indicator was the use of rewards and consequences to drive performance (WM = 3.11, Agree). This suggests that leaders are perceived as directive and supervisory, although less dependent on reward-and-sanction mechanisms.

3.3. Leadership Styles of School Heads and Master Teachers

Laissez-Faire. Table 3 presents the extent to which school heads and master teachers manifest laissez-faire leadership style as perceived by the respondents.

Table 3 Laissez Faire Leadership Style of School Heads and Master Teachers

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
My school head/master teacher allows teachers to work independently, even in complex situations.	3.22	A
My school head/master teacher minimizes direct involvement and lets teachers manage their own tasks.	3.36	SA
My school head/master teacher allows teachers to evaluate their own work.	3.31	SA
My school head/master teacher gives teachers full freedom to solve problems on their own.	3.23	A
My school head/master teacher rarely intervenes and prefers to let teachers handle their responsibilities independently.	3.20	A
Overall Weighted Mean	3.27	SA

The overall weighted mean of 3.27 (Strongly Agree) suggests that laissez-faire behaviors are evident. The highest-rated indicator was minimizing direct involvement and letting teachers manage their own tasks (WM = 3.36, Strongly Agree), while the lowest-rated indicator was rarely intervening and preferring teachers to handle responsibilities independently (WM = 3.20, Agree). This indicates that independence is allowed, although complete non-intervention is less strongly perceived.

3.4. Leadership Styles of School Heads and Master Teachers

Transformational. Table 4 presents the extent to which school heads and master teachers manifest transformational leadership style as perceived by the respondents.

Table 4 Transformational Leadership Style of School Heads and Master Teachers

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
My school head/master teacher encourages me to innovate and find new teaching strategies.	3.67	SA
My school head/master teacher motivates and inspires me to go beyond basic job expectations.	3.59	SA
My school head/master teacher provides guidance and mentorship to support my professional growth.	3.61	SA
My school head/master teacher challenges me to think critically and develop creative solutions.	3.52	SA
My school head/master teacher creates a positive and empowering environment that fosters my confidence and growth.	3.59	SA
Overall Weighted Mean	3.60	SA

The overall weighted mean of 3.60 (Strongly Agree) indicates that transformational leadership behaviors are highly evident. The highest-rated indicator was encouraging innovation and new teaching strategies (WM = 3.67, Strongly Agree), while the lowest-rated indicator was challenging teachers to think critically and develop creative solutions (WM = 3.52, Strongly Agree). This implies that leaders are generally viewed as motivating and growth-oriented.

3.5. Leadership Styles of School Heads and Master Teachers

Transactional. Table 5 presents the extent to which school heads and master teachers manifest transactional leadership style as perceived by the respondents.

Table 5 Transactional Leadership Style of School Heads and Master Teachers

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
My school head/master teacher sets clear expectations and rewards me for achieving set goals.	3.36	SA
My school head/master teacher monitors my performance and provides corrective actions when needed.	3.48	SA
My school head/master teacher relies on rules and structured processes to guide my teaching practices.	3.42	SA
My school head/master teacher emphasizes compliance with school policies and performance standards.	3.69	SA
My school head/master teacher provides feedback and reinforcement based on my ability to meet performance targets.	3.67	SA
Overall Weighted Mean	3.53	SA

The overall weighted mean of 3.53 (Strongly Agree) indicates that transactional leadership behaviors are highly evident. The highest-rated indicator was emphasizing compliance with school policies and performance standards (WM = 3.69, Strongly Agree), while the lowest-rated indicator was setting clear expectations and rewards for achieving goals (WM = 3.36, Strongly Agree). This suggests that leadership strongly emphasizes structure, monitoring, and accountability.

3.6. Level of Influence of the Leadership Style of School Heads and Master Teachers to Beginning Teachers

Content Knowledge and Pedagogy. Table 6 presents the level of influence of the leadership styles of school heads and master teachers on beginning teachers along Content Knowledge and Pedagogy.

Table 6 Level of Influence of the Leadership Style of School Heads and Master Teachers to Beginning Teachers along Content Knowledge and Pedagogy

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
My school head/master teacher encourages me to apply content knowledge across different subject areas.	4.08	VI
I am guided to use research-based teaching strategies.	3.80	VI
I am supported in using ICT effectively in teaching.	4.11	
I receive support in promoting literacy and numeracy in my lessons.	4.08	VI
I am influenced to enhance students' critical and creative thinking skills.	4.08	VI
Overall Weighted Mean	4.03	VI

The overall weighted mean of 4.03 (Very Influential) indicates that leadership is perceived to be very influential in strengthening beginning teachers' content knowledge and pedagogical practice. The highest-rated indicator was support in using ICT effectively in teaching (WM = 4.11, Very Influential), while the lowest-rated indicator was guidance in using research-based teaching strategies (WM = 3.80, Very Influential).

3.7. Level of Influence of the Leadership Style of School Heads and Master Teachers to Beginning Teachers.

Learning Environment and Diversity of Learners. Table 7 presents the level of influence of the leadership styles of school heads and master teachers on beginning teachers along Learning Environment and Diversity of Learners.

Table 7 Level of Influence of the Leadership Style of School Heads and Master Teachers to Beginning Teachers along Learning Environment and Diversity of Learners

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
I receive guidance on creating a safe and secure learning environment.	3.98	VI
I am supported in managing classroom activities and student behavior.	4.06	VI
My school head/master teacher helps me in planning activities for diverse learners.	3.89	VI
I am influenced to respect and respond to learners' diverse backgrounds.	4.06	VI
I am encouraged to promote learner participation and engagement.	4.13	VI
Overall Weighted Mean	4.03	VI

The overall weighted mean of 4.03 (Very Influential) indicates that leadership is perceived to be very influential in shaping classroom climate and responsiveness to learner diversity. The highest-rated indicator was encouragement to promote learner participation and engagement (WM = 4.13, Very Influential), while the lowest-rated indicator was help in planning activities for diverse learners (WM = 3.89, Very Influential).

3.8. Level of Influence of the Leadership Style of School Heads and Master Teachers to Beginning Teachers

Curriculum and Planning. Table 8 presents the level of influence of the leadership styles of school heads and master teachers on beginning teachers along Curriculum and Planning.

Table 8 Level of Influence of the Leadership Style of School Heads and Master Teachers to Beginning Teachers along Curriculum and Planning

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
I am supported in aligning learning outcomes with curriculum competencies.	4.14	VI
I am encouraged to use relevant and responsive learning programs.	4.13	VI
I receive guidance in planning effective lessons.	4.09	VI
I am encouraged to collaborate professionally with peers.	4.13	VI
I am supported in using teaching resources and ICT in lesson planning.	4.14	VI
Overall Weighted Mean	4.13	VI

The overall weighted mean of 4.13 (Very Influential) indicates that leadership is perceived to be very influential in curriculum alignment and instructional planning. The highest-rated indicators were support in aligning learning outcomes with curriculum competencies and support in using teaching resources and ICT in lesson planning (WM = 4.14, Very Influential), while the lowest-rated indicator was guidance in planning effective lessons (WM = 4.09, Very Influential).

3.9. Level of Influence of the Leadership Style of School Heads and Master Teachers to Beginning Teachers.

Assessment and Reporting. Table 9 presents the level of influence of the leadership styles of school heads and master teachers on beginning teachers along Assessment and Reporting.

The overall weighted mean of 4.17 (Very Influential) indicates that leadership is perceived to be very influential in shaping assessment and reporting practices. The highest-rated indicator was influence in monitoring and evaluating learner progress (WM = 4.27, Extremely Influential), while the lowest-rated indicator was guidance in selecting and using appropriate assessment tools (WM = 4.08, Very Influential).

Table 9 Level of Influence of the Leadership Style of School Heads and Master Teachers to Beginning Teachers along Assessment and Reporting

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
I am guided in selecting and using appropriate assessment tools.	4.08	VI
I am influenced to monitor and evaluate learner progress.	4.27	EI
I am encouraged to give feedback that improves learning.	4.16	VI
I am guided in communicating learner progress to stakeholders.	4.17	VI
I am influenced to use assessment data to improve teaching strategies.	4.19	VI
Overall Weighted Mean	4.17	VI

3.10. Significant Relationship between the Leadership Styles of School Heads and Master Teachers and the Level of Influence to Beginning Teachers.

Table 10 presents the test of significant relationship between the leadership styles of school heads and master teachers and the level of influence on beginning teachers across four domains.

Table 10 Test for Significant Relationship between the Leadership Styles of School Heads and Masters Teachers and the Level of Influence to Beginning Teachers

Leadership Styles	Level of Influence to Beginning Teachers							
	Content Knowledge and Pedagogy		Learning Environment and Diversity of Learners		Curriculum and Planning		Assessment and Reporting	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Democratic	0.337**	0.007	0.382**	0.002	0.371**	0.003	0.384**	0.002
Autocratic	0.456**	0.000	0.496**	0.000	0.430**	0.000	0.450**	0.000
Laissez Faire	0.217	0.088	0.202	0.113	0.085	0.507	0.141	0.269
Transformational	0.448**	0.000	0.547**	0.000	0.463**	0.000	0.487**	0.000
Transactional	0.478**	0.000	0.542**	0.000	0.487**	0.000	0.536**	0.000

*Correlation is significant @ 0.05 level (2-tailed); **Correlation is Significant @ 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The results show that democratic, autocratic, transformational, and transactional leadership styles have significant positive relationships with beginning teachers' perceived influence in content knowledge and pedagogy, learning environment and diversity of learners, curriculum and planning, and assessment and reporting ($p < 0.01$). The strongest observed relationship was between transformational leadership and learning environment and diversity of learners ($r = 0.547$, $p = 0.000$). In contrast, laissez-faire leadership showed no significant relationship across all domains ($p > 0.05$), with the weakest association found in curriculum and planning ($r = 0.085$, $p = 0.507$).

4. Conclusion

The study concludes that school heads and master teachers in Vinzons District manifest democratic, autocratic, laissez-faire, transformational, and transactional leadership styles, with democratic leadership emerging as the most evident. Their leadership is perceived as very influential in supporting beginning teachers across content knowledge and pedagogy, learning environment and diversity of learners, curriculum and planning, and assessment and reporting. The significant positive relationships found for democratic, autocratic, transformational, and transactional leadership styles indicate that leadership practices involving participation, direction, motivation, structure, monitoring, and professional support are associated with stronger perceived influence on beginning teachers' performance. Meanwhile, the non-significant results for laissez-faire leadership suggest that minimal intervention and excessive independence may not provide sufficient support for beginning teachers. These findings support the development of a Leadership Style-

Responsive Coaching intervention to strengthen leadership assistance, mentoring, and feedback mechanisms for beginning teachers

Compliance with ethical standards

Acknowledgments

The researcher expresses sincere gratitude to all individuals and institutions that contributed to the completion of this study. Appreciation is extended to Mabini Colleges Inc., the Schools Division Office of Camarines Norte, the Public Schools District Supervisor, the school heads, master teachers, and beginning teachers of Vinzons District for their support and cooperation throughout the conduct of the study.

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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