CORRELATION BETWEEN LEADERSHIP AUTHENTICITY AND TRUST AMONG THE SCHOOL HEADS

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Abstract: This study aimed to determine which domain of leadership authenticity best influences trust among the school heads. This study utilized the non-experimental quantitative research design using descriptive technique involving teachers in Sarangani District, Davao Occidental Division, Philippines. The study was conducted on the second semester of school year 2020-2021. Research instruments on teacher leadership authenticity and trust were used as sources of data. Using mean, pearson-r, and regression as statistical tool to treat the data, the study showed the following results: level of leadership authenticity of school head is high, level of trust among the school heads is very high, there is a relationship between leadership authenticity and trust among the school heads, and internalized moral perspective as domain of leadership authenticity best influences trust among the school heads.

Keywords: Leadership Authenticity, Trust, Educational Management

1. Introduction

The school heads are the prime movers of every school. They are the driving force that sets the success and progress of the school in terms of both curriculum instruction and managerial aspects. As a leader, school heads need to manifest a desirable sense of leadership that will attract trust among the teachers. However, there are teachers that have trust issues on their school heads. These issues stem from leadership incompetence to poor fiscal management (Brewer, 2008).

On the other hand, leadership authenticity is one attribute of the school heads that enables them to gain trust among their teachers. School heads who have a well-established leadership authenticity creates a sound working environment. These school heads can maintain balance in terms of work relationship and service delivery of job functions. Hence, educational leaders advocate to strengthen leadership authenticity (Blackmore, 2010).

Meanwhile, incompetence to navigate curricular program implementation is among the reasons why teachers have trust issues with their school heads. These teachers noted that their school heads lack grasp of the curriculum and instruction that they cannot provide the much-needed technical assistance for their professional advancement. More so, their trust to their school heads diminishes especially when they observed that they lack the competence to perform the job functions (Esposito, 2012).

In the similar manner, the teacher's trust issue with their school heads increases when they observe that they lack integrity. Teachers become more reluctant when they observe that their school heads are unreliable with their actions or with their statements. As such, these teachers develop trust issue which becomes irreversible at times (Gardner and Schermerhorn, 2004).

In the local context, there are several trust issues that school heads are become a subject. These issues are those have been observed by teachers in terms of the poor instructional leadership of their school heads as manifested by lack of skills to demonstrate deeper understanding of the curriculum. Similarly, these school heads are often found in trouble with teachers and other stakeholders due to poor relationship management, not being able to show transparency, playing favoritism, and financial issues, among others.

The problem-situations stipulated prompts the researcher to conduct this study. More so, it attempts to address the knowledge gap in terms of finding relevant evidences in the local context regarding relationship between leadership authenticity and trust among the school heads as the researcher has rarely come across with the same study on the same topic in the local setting.

Research Objectives

This study aims to find out which domain of leadership authenticity best influences trust among the school heads. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following objectives:

1.   To describe the level of leadership authenticity in terms of:
1.1.   self-awareness;
1.2.   internalized moral perspective;
1.3.   balanced processing, and
1.4.   relational transparency.
2.   To ascertain the level of trust of the school heads in terms of:
2.1   perceived ability;
2.2   perceived benevolence, and
2.3   perceived integrity.
3.   To determine the significant relationship between leadership authenticity and trust among the school heads.
4.   To determine which domains of leadership authenticity of school heads significantly influence trust.

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis will be treated at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There no significant relationship between leadership authenticity and trust among the school heads.
2. No domains of authentic leadership authenticity significantly influence trust among the school heads.

2. Methods

This study employed the non-experimental quantitative research design utilizing correlational technique. A substantial proportion of quantitative educational research is non-experimental because many important variables of interest are not manipulable. Because non-experimental research is an important methodology employed by many researchers, it is important to use a classification system of non-experimental methods highly descriptive of what we do and which also allows us to communicate effectively in an interdisciplinary research environment. Correlational research designs evaluate the nature and degree of association between two naturally occurring variables.

3. Results

Level of Leadership Authenticity of School Heads

Presented in Table 1 is the level of leadership authenticity of school heads with the overall mean of 4.39 with a descriptive equivalent of *high* indicating that all enumerated indicators were always observed.

The overall mean was the results obtained from the mean of the indicators for the specific items from the questionnaire intended for this particular indicator which is appended in this study. Among the enumerated indicators, *Self-Awareness* obtained the highest mean of 4.33 with a descriptive level of *very high*. The strands of this indicator as presented in the appended included: can list his/her three greatest weaknesses, can list his/her three greatest strengths, seeks feedback as a way of understanding who they really are as a person, accepts the feelings they have about themselves.

Balanced Processing also obtained a mean score of 4.27 with a descriptive rating of very high. As depicted in the appended table, the very high rating of this indicator suggests that seeks others' opinions before making up his/her own mind, listens closely to the ideas of those who disagree with him/her, does not emphasize his/her own point of view at the expense of others, listens very carefully to the ideas of others before making decisions.

Relational Transparency had a mean score of 4.12 or high. As illustrated in the table, the high rating of this indicator suggests that the school heads openly share his/her feelings with others, lets others know who they truly are as a person, rarely presents a "false" front to others, admits his/her mistakes.

Internalized Moral Perspective had a mean score of 4.12 or high. As displayed in the appended the table, the high rating of this indicator suggests that school heads actions reflect his/her core values, does not allow group pressure to control him/her, knows where to stand on controversial issues, morals guide what they do as a leader.

The very high level of leadership authenticity of school head is due to the high level of rating given by the respondents to the indicators Self-Awareness, Balanced Processing and Relational Transparency. These school heads can list his/her three greatest weaknesses, can list his/her three greatest strengths, seeks feedback as a way of understanding who they really are as a person, accepts the feelings they have about themselves.

Also, these school heads seek others' opinions before making up his/her own mind, listens closely to the ideas of those who disagree with him/her, does not emphasize his/her own point of view at the expense of others, listens very carefully to the ideas of others before making decisions. Similarly, the school heads openly share his/her feelings with others, lets others know who they true are as a person, rarely presents a "false" front to others, admits his/her mistakes to others.

Table 1. Level of Leadership Authenticity of School Heads

Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptive Levels
Self-Awareness	0.529	4.33	Very High
Internalized Moral Perspective	0.613	4.12	High
Balanced Processing	0.576	4.27	Very High
Relational Transparency	0.571	4.23	Very High
Overall	**0.638**	**4.23**	**Very High**

The above practices of school heads are expected to increase the trust among them as they are congruent with the views of various authors (Epstein (1973) who pronounced that leadership authenticity clearly depicts a higher level of moral reasoning and capacity to make judgments among the leaders and this is manifested in serving the collective interests of the group, making them more credible. These leaders go through life continually revisiting their theory of the self that represents the beliefs, views, and evaluations they hold about themselves. This self-awareness and revision process allows them to determine how they can be better making these leaders credibility esteemed.

Education expert Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) also added that authentic leadership is leading from the core theory of oneself that is tied to high moral values and beliefs. Developing an understanding of those core values is a central component of authentic leadership, and then over time, elevating them as new circumstances and challenges are confronted, constitutes the practice and development of authentic leadership. Leaders who have a high sense of authentic leadership oftentimes exude a good credibility both in the workplace.

Level of Trust

Presented in Table 2 is the level of *trust*. Computations revealed an overall mean score of 4.14 or *high,* indicating that the said respondents gave a high level of trust among the school heads. The score was derived from the mean scores of 4.28 or *high* for *Perceived Integrity*, 4.12 or *high* for *Perceived Benevolence*, 4.03 or *high* for *Perceived Ability.*

Table 2. Level of Trust

Indicator	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Perceived Ability	0.535	4.03	High
Perceived Benevolence	0.621	4.12	High
Perceived Integrity	0.703	4.28	High
Overall	**0.030**	**4.14**	**High**

The indicator *Perceived Integrity* got the highest rating with a mean score of 4.12. The *high* level for this indicator was taken from the following items in the questionnaire: is very capable of performing his/her job, has much knowledge about the work that needs to be done, has specialized capabilities that can increase our team performance, is very well qualified.

On the other hand, the mean rating of 4.12 for *Perceived Benevolence* with a descriptive rating of *high* was manifested among the respondents. The descriptors in the questionnaire were: will go out of his/her way to help us, really looks out for what is important to us, is very concerned about our welfare.

Meanwhile, *Perceived Ability* obtained a mean score of 4.03 or *high*. The *high* level for this indicator was taken from the following items in the questionnaire which are as follows: is very capable of performing his/her job, has much knowledge about the work that needs to be done, has specialized capabilities that can increase our team performance, is very well qualified.

The high level of trust among the school head is due to the very high level of rating given by the respondents to the indicators Perceived Ability, Perceived Benevolence, and Perceived Integrity. These practices are expected to increase the trust among the school heads as it aligns to the views of authors (Dunn, 2009; Fullan, 2010; Greenfield, 2010) who stated that leadership authenticity helps build an ideal identity of a school head who manifests desirable skills essential to making the school resonate with positive descriptions, not just to members of the school-community but even to the stake holders. When a school principal exudes a good sense of authentic leadership, his credibility is strengthened, making the teachers and the stakeholders give their unwavering support knowing that the school head is working towards the school's development.

Significance on the Relationship between Leadership Authenticity and Trust on the School Heads

Illustrated in Table 3 were the results of the test of relationship between the variables involved in the study. The overall correlation had a computed r-value of 0.408 with a p p<0.01 which is significant at 0.05 alpha level. Doing an in-depth analysis, it could be gleaned that the indicators of leadership authenticity of school heads and trust among the school heads revealed a computed r-values ranging from .196 to .354 with p<0.01 which is lesser than .05 level of significance.

This implies that the higher the leadership authenticity of school heads is, the higher the trust among the school heads there is. Hence, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between leadership authenticity of school heads and trust among the school heads is rejected.

There is a significant relationship between leadership authenticity and trust among the school heads. The correlation between these two variables is supported by the statement of these authors (Harter, 2010; Janson et al. 2008; Lennick and Kiel, 2008) who emphasized that genuine leadership goes hand in hand with trust.

Establishing trust as a leader is not something that happens instantly. It is a process that involves time, effort, and patience. The sense of trust positions leaders as a highly dependable source of expertise, information, and decision making. Authentic leaders are credible leaders and leaders with established credibility are respected and trusted. Internalized moral perspective is the domain of leadership authenticity that best influences trust on the school heads.

Table 3. Significance on the Relationship between Leadership Authenticity of School Heads and Trust on the School Heads

Leadership Authenticity	Trust among the School Heads			
	Perceived Ability	Perceived Benevolence	Perceived Integrity	Overall
Self-Awareness	.250* (.002)	.302* (.000)	.220* (.007)	.354* (.000)
Internalized Moral Perspective	.154 (.060)	.224* (.006)	.100 (.223)	.217* (.008)
Balanced Processing	.153 (.062)	.295* (.000)	-.004 (.964)	.196* (.016)
Relational Transparency	.173* (.034)	.194* (.017)	.251* (.002)	.291* (.000)
Overall	.297* (.000)	.430* (.000)	.173* (.034)	.408* (.000)

*Significant at 0.05 significance level.

Significance of the Influence of Leadership Authenticity of School Heads on Trust on the School Heads

Table 4 presents the regression analysis showing the predictive ability of leadership authenticity of school heads on trust among the school heads. The analysis shows that when trust on the school heads was regressed on leadership authenticity of school heads, it generated an F-value of 6.837 with Sig .000ᵃ. The anova value of this regression is 6.837 at 0.05. It can be stated that leadership authenticity of school heads significantly influence trust

on the school heads. The R² indicated that 22.3% of the variance of trust on the school heads was attributed to the variance of leadership authenticity of school heads. This means that 77.7% of the variation can be attributed to other variables not covered in this study. Internalized moral perspective is the domain of leadership authenticity that best influences trust on the school heads.

Table 4. Regression Analysis of the Influence of Leadership Authenticity of School Heads on Trust on the School Heads

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Self-Awareness	9	5	94	6
Internalized Moral Perspective	59	51	30	6
Balanced Processing	51	27	574	8
Relational Transparency	2	26	32	4

R	72
R²	23
F	37
p	.001

Conclusion

With considerations on the findings of the study, conclusions are drawn in this section. The level of leadership authenticity of school head is high, level of trust among the school heads is very high, there is a relationship between leadership authenticity and trust among the school heads, and internalized moral perspective as domain of leadership authenticity best influences trust among the school heads.

Recommendations

The results of this study revealed that leadership authenticity of school head is high. The researcher recommends that the Schools Division Office of Davao Occidental may conduct training that will help improve the aspects of Self-Awareness, Balanced Processing, Relational Transparency among the school heads to improve on these aspects.

Meanwhile, the study revealed a very high level of trust among the school heads. The researcher recommends that the district office may provide discussions on the topic Perceived Integrity to help school heads improve in this indicator.

The study found a significant relationship between leadership authenticity and trust among the school heads. The researcher therefore recommends that the Department of Education may consider the provision of trainings or activities relative to the variables under study to help the school heads improve their present practice.

The study found that internalized moral perspective as domain of leadership authenticity best influences trust among the school heads. The researcher recommends that school heads may have self-directed learning or immerse on the facets of internalized moral perspective for enhancement.

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