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EXPERIENCES OF FACULTY MEMBERS ON LEADERSHIP STYLES OF THEIR PROGRAM HEADS: BASIS FOR INTERVENTION PROGRAM

MARY JANE ENCARNACION PAGUNTALAN
Teacher
University of Iloilo
mpaguntalan60@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study investigated faculty members' lived experiences with the leadership styles of their program heads and the resulting impact on motivation and teaching strategies. The study's results helped shape an intervention program and showed that program heads used different leadership styles, such as Authoritative, Democratic, Supportive, and Transformational. In terms of faculty motivation, three dominant themes emerged: building trust and granting autonomy, recognizing efforts and fostering a sense of value, and providing support to create a positive work environment. Four primary influences on teaching strategies were identified: encouraging autonomy and professional judgment; modeling and acknowledging effective practices; offering guidance and support in instructional planning; and setting high standards to promote professional growth. These insights emphasize the importance of leadership in shaping faculty engagement and instructional practices, stressing the vital role of targeted interventions to strengthen leadership effectiveness and faculty development.

Keywords: *Faculty Members, Leadership Styles, Program Heads, Intervention Program*

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership within academic institutions plays a pivotal role in shaping faculty members' professional experiences and performance. In higher education, the leadership style adopted by program heads directly influences how teachers engage with their work, interact with students, and contribute to the overall academic environment. At PHINMA University of Iloilo, effective leadership is vital in ensuring that faculty members are guided, motivated, and supported in achieving the institution's mission of academic excellence and student-centered learning.

Several leadership styles, such as authoritarian, transformational, democratic, transactional, and servant leadership, influence how faculty members define their roles, fulfill their responsibilities, and maintain their motivation.

Transformational leadership, for instance, encourages innovation and commitment by inspiring subordinates through shared vision, trust, and personal development (Widodo et al., 2021). Transactional leadership, on the other hand, focuses on structured supervision and clear expectations (Zhang et al., 2021). Meanwhile, servant leadership prioritizes empathy, collaboration, and service to others, emphasizing the growth and well-being of followers as a pathway to institutional success (Eva et al., 2020). These styles, when practiced effectively, shape the work climate and directly influence teacher satisfaction, collaboration, and productivity.

Within academic institutions, leadership exceeds administrative duties and functions as a relational and cultural force that shapes institutional norms and nurtures professional

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connections. Effective leadership nurtures a supportive organizational climate that encourages faculty engagement, stimulates creativity, and promotes mutual respect within the academic community. Conversely, ineffective or rigid leadership may lead to disengagement, low morale, and limited professional growth (Arokiasamy et al., 2022). Studies have shown that when academic leaders demonstrate fairness, inclusivity, and clear communication, faculty members tend to perform better and exhibit greater professional commitment (Hassan et al., 2023).

This study arises from the need to understand how leadership styles influence the professional lives of faculty members at PHINMA University of Iloilo. Faculty members work closely with program heads who oversee teaching performance, curriculum implementation, and departmental initiatives. Therefore, the leadership approaches adopted by these heads significantly affect faculty motivation, collegiality, and professional development.

By exploring the experiences of faculty members who have worked under specific program heads for at least one year, this study seeks to uncover how leadership practices manifest in daily academic life — particularly in areas such as communication, mentorship, decision-making, and feedback. The study includes four program heads from different departments, along with two faculty members from each, to gather rich qualitative insights into how leadership styles influence teaching practices, collaboration, and faculty satisfaction.

Ultimately, the goal of this study is to enrich the discourse about leadership in education by centering on the lived experiences of PHINMA University of Iloilo faculty members. Their perspectives provide valuable insights into what constitutes effective

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leadership within academic departments. The results of this research will serve as a foundation for designing an intervention program that enhances leadership competencies, strengthens professional relationships, and promotes a supportive organizational culture within the university.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology

This part of the study outlined the methodology, design, participants, data collection procedures, instruments, and analytical techniques used. The goal is to examine the lived experiences of PHINMA University of Iloilo faculty members in relation to the leadership styles of their program heads, and to provide perceptions that could inform leadership development and faculty engagement strategies within the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) and the College of Education (COED) during the academic year 2025–2026.

Research Method

To investigate the Experiences of PHINMA University of Iloilo Faculty on the Leadership Styles of Their Program Heads, the study adopted a qualitative descriptive research design, a method increasingly recognized since 2020 for its effectiveness in capturing rich, contextualized insights into leadership and organizational behavior. An interview schedule was employed to collect data, providing faculty members the opportunity to articulate their perspectives and share their experiences in their own words. This approach was consistent

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with current qualitative research best practices, emphasizing participant voice, depth of understanding, and flexibility in data gathering.

According to Research Prospect (2023), qualitative questionnaires were ideal for exploring complex social phenomena, such as leadership, because they encourage open-ended responses that reveal underlying motivations, perceptions, and emotions. Springer (2024) further supported this method, noting that leadership studies benefited from qualitative designs that prioritized authenticity and contextual relevance over rigid measurement.

Research Design

The study adopted a phenomenological research design. As a philosophical foundation of qualitative inquiry, phenomenology seeks to capture how individuals perceive and interpret their world, highlighting variations from commonly accepted perspectives by emphasizing participants' subjective experiences. The approach was implemented through in-depth interviews to obtain participants' thoughts and is widely utilized in fields such as psychology, sociology, and social work.

Phenomenology is the study of consciousness as viewed and experienced firsthand. The central aim of phenomenology was to investigate and describe phenomena as they were consciously experienced, without resorting to causal theories or being influenced by unexamined preconceptions, as emphasized by Biemel and Spiegelberg (2024).

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Participants of the Study

Twelve (12) individuals from PHINMA University of Iloilo, representing the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) and the College of Education (COED), were employed as participants of this research. Of the total participants, six (6) were from CAS and six (2) were from COED.

The participants consisted of four (4) program heads, each with two (2) faculty members assigned. The faculty participants had worked under their respective program heads for at least one (1) year, ensuring sufficient interaction and familiarity with the leadership styles being examined.

All participants were currently employed in their respective departments and were directly involved in academic instruction and program management. Their selection allowed the study to obtain informed and meaningful insights into leadership practices and the lived experiences of faculty members within the educational setting.

Sampling Design

This study employed a purposive sampling design. According to Nikolopoulou (2023), purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which units are selected because they possess characteristics relevant to the objectives of the study.

This method, also called judgmental sampling, relies on the researcher's judgment to discover and select persons capable of providing the most relevant and informative data. Purposive sampling was commonly used in qualitative and mixed-methods research and was particularly useful in studies with limited resources. However, it was also acknowledged to carry a higher risk of research bias, such as observer bias.

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Purposive sampling is widely employed in qualitative and mixed-methods studies, especially when the goal is to identify information-rich cases or optimize limited resources. However, it carries a considerable risk of bias, including observer bias.

Research Instrument

The research tool was an interview schedule designed to gather in-depth qualitative data from selected faculty members. The interview included open-ended questions that allowed participants to share their personal experiences, perceptions, and insights into their program directors' leadership styles. This style is appropriate for gaining a deeper understanding of how leadership affected faculty motivation, teaching practices, and overall performance.

The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to allow exploration of emerging themes while ensuring that all key areas of the study were addressed. The responses were transcribed verbatim and analyzed thematically to identify common patterns and significant insights relevant to the research objectives.

Validity of the Research Instrument

Prior to data collection, the interview schedule was evaluated to ensure its clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study's objectives. The instrument was examined by the thesis adviser, the Graduate School Dean, and a panel of experts in research technique, evaluation, and the English language.

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Validity refers to how well an instrument assesses the intended notions. As emphasized by Taherdoost (2022) and Kaur (2021), content validity ensured that the items adequately represented the concept being measured and were appropriate for the target population.

To establish content-related validity evidence, the validation panel used a standardized validation form adapted from Good and Scates (Appendix A). The experts' feedback and recommendations were systematically incorporated into the final version of the interview schedule to ensure the instrument effectively captured faculty experiences with their program heads' leadership styles.

Data Gathering Procedures

To carry out the study, the researcher first asked for approval from the dean and program heads of the relevant departments at PHINMA University of Iloilo. After permission was granted, the researcher collected the data. The participants were faculty members who had worked under their respective program heads for at least 1 academic year, ensuring they had sufficient experience to provide meaningful insights.

Data were gathered using an interview schedule, which allowed respondents to describe their experiences and perceptions in narrative form. Upon completion, all responses were compiled, transcribed, and reviewed in print for analysis. This procedure ensured confidentiality, consistency, and a comprehensive understanding of the faculty's lived experiences with their program heads' leadership styles.

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Data Analyses

Thematic analysis, a qualitative method for identifying and interpreting repeating patterns and themes in narrative accounts, was used to assess data collected through the interview schedule. This method enabled the researcher to examine the lived experiences of faculty members at PHINMA University of Iloilo, particularly their perceptions of their program heads' leadership styles.

Written answers were prudently studied and coded to determine themes related to leadership behavior, communication, decision-making, motivation, and support. These themes were then grouped into broader leadership dimensions, including transformational, transactional, and democratic leadership styles.

As noted by Braun and Clarke (2021), thematic analysis provided a flexible yet rigorous framework for qualitative research. Similarly, Nowell et al. (2021) emphasized its role in ensuring systematic coding, transparency, and credibility in qualitative studies, making it particularly suitable for educational research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study explored faculty members' experiences with their program heads' leadership styles, providing the foundation for an intervention program to be implemented in School Year 2024–2025.

This study used a qualitative approach, employing in-depth interviews within a phenomenological design, and analyzed them thematically.

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The participants consisted of eight faculty members from different academic programs, all of whom had been under the supervision of their respective program heads for over a year.

A researcher-made interview questionnaire, content-validated by the Panel of Experts, was used to collect responses from participants. Permits were secured, and consent letters were given to the participants.

An in-depth one-on-one interview with each participant. With their consent, a voice recorder and field notes were utilized to collect data and document relevant photos.

Following the interview sessions, all data were consolidated, with the narratives transcribed, analyzed, and interpreted through thematic analysis.

The following are the results of the study:

From the in-depth interviews with participants, the Description of Program Head's Leadership Styles includes Authoritative, Democratic, Supportive, and Transformational Leadership.

The participants' responses revealed three dominant themes: Building Trust and Granting Autonomy, Recognizing Efforts and Making Faculty Feel Valued, and Providing Support and Creating a Positive Work Environment. These themes reflect the participants' shared experiences regarding how leadership practices shape their motivation and commitment to teaching.

It was also found that the Ways to Influence teaching Strategies revealed four dominant themes: Encouraging Autonomy and Professional Judgment, Modeling and Recognizing Effective Practices, Providing Guidance and Support in Instructional Planning, and

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Setting High Standards and Promoting Professional Growth. These themes reflect faculty members' experiences in responding to leadership practices that shape their instructional decision-making and professional development.

An intervention program is recommended to enhance leadership practices, faculty motivation, and instructional strategies, ultimately strengthening teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The findings show that program heads use a flexible, multifaceted leadership approach that blends authoritative, democratic, supportive, and transformational styles. This adaptability allows them to respond effectively to faculty needs and academic demands, balancing structure and high expectations with collaboration, support, and inspiration. Such context-sensitive leadership fosters a positive departmental climate that encourages motivation, engagement, innovation, autonomy, and shared responsibility.

Faculty motivation is strongly shaped by leadership practices grounded in trust, recognition, and support. Granting autonomy empowers teachers to innovate, while acknowledging efforts and achievements strengthens their sense of value and purpose. Clear guidance, expectations, and a supportive environment further enhance confidence, reduce stress, and increase engagement, leading to higher satisfaction and professional commitment.

Program heads influence teaching strategies by promoting autonomy, recognizing good practice, providing guidance, and maintaining high standards. These combined practices

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enhance instructional quality, support continuous professional development, encourage

reflective practice, and cultivate a culture of excellence within the department.

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