



SCHOOL HEADS' LEADERSHIP PITFALLS IN SECTARIAN SCHOOL: BASES FOR PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to identify leadership pitfalls in sectarian schools in Iloilo City during the school year 2024-2025. A qualitative method was utilized to collect non-numerical data using a phenomenology design. Twenty (20) selected teachers participated, and a researcher-made interview schedule was used to gather the data for the study. The questionnaire underwent content validation by a panel of experts, and permits were obtained from advisers, Deans, and participants. Data was analyzed and interpreted using a thematic approach, focusing on leadership pitfalls in sectarian schools. The study revealed that teachers experienced a lack of communication, insufficient technical skills, improper time management, and lack of time for supervision of classes as leadership pitfalls. Based on the results, these leadership pitfalls they experienced from their school heads affect how they teach, their morale, and their performance. Teachers employed a positive mindset, creative and innovative strategies, patience and perseverance, and open communication to manage these school heads' leadership pitfalls.

Keywords: *School Heads, Leadership Pitfalls, Sectarian Schools, Program Recommendation*

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INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic educational landscape, effective leadership is crucial for the success of schools and their stakeholders and for creating a positive and productive learning environment. School leaders encounter numerous and various challenges, including issues related to stress management, communication breakdown, and decision-making dilemmas.

Any educational institution's success heavily relies upon its leadership's effectiveness. Being at the helm, school heads play a pivotal role in shaping their school's academic and administrative landscape.

They are the people in the organization being looked up by subordinates who mirror the organization's goals, demonstrate great intelligence, have exceptional discernment and judgment, especially in practical matters, have a strong ability to handle complaints and disputes with unfailing intelligence and good humor, learn and understand in dealing with problems, compose, have strong positive values and moral manifesting discipline as a way of influencing constituents in their quests to lead the organization by example, exemplifying integrity and accountability as imminent in the position they hold in the organization. But no matter how leaders are being pictured, people should bear in mind that there are "NO LEADERS WHO HAS NO FLAWS". Nielsen (2023), an author and leadership expert, emphasizes that great leaders are not flawless. People trust and respect leaders who openly acknowledge their

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weaknesses and mistakes. Authenticity matters more for it creates stronger connections than perceived perfection.

According to Maxwell (2024), a renowned leadership guru, even though having blind spots is a normal part of life, there's a choice that everyone has to make. Individuals have to acknowledge the areas that they need to grow in and take action, or they are going to continue to be unaware and stay where they are. He believes that leadership isn't about being perfect. It's about making mistakes and learning from them. Imperfections are part of growth and development.

It is worth noting that true leadership lies in vulnerability, learning, and embracing authenticity. Leadership pitfalls are potential problems, hazards, or dangers that are easily encountered but not immediately obvious.

Leadership pitfalls have different categories: personal, digital, organizational, environmental, and motivational. These different pitfalls produce various emotional injuries that plague school leaders. It is worth mentioning the importance of early sufficient and recognition of knowledge of leadership pitfalls that may lead to the achievement of the desired performance of the school leader in general and with the institution in particular.

With the multi-tasks placed on the shoulders of school leaders, being persons of so many roles, they are prone to pitfalls that if not managed may lead to their under-performance in particular the failure of the organization in general. Drucker (2024) a financial journalist and an investment analyst, a world-famous management consultant whose ideas transformed business leadership from reactive to proactive mentioned that leaders cannot manage other

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people unless they manage themselves first. In Drucker’s own words: Leadership is doing the right things.” it must start by managing yourself.

There are leadership pitfalls internationally and locally that delved towards school leaders.

This study aimed to explore the common pitfalls that school heads encounter in their leadership roles and provide a robust foundation for recommending programs that address these challenges.

Identifying and understanding these pitfalls are essential for growth, and success and allow leaders to address them proactively.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research method, research design, participants, data-gathering procedures, research instrument, and data analysis used in this study. The purpose of this study was to determine the school heads’ leadership pitfalls in sectarian schools as the basis for program recommendations in Iloilo City during the school year 2024-2025.

Research Method

The research method utilized in this study was qualitative research using in-depth interviews to gather data.

The descriptive method according to Fraenkel and Wallen (2007) is used to describe a given situation as fully and carefully as possible.

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It used a structured interview. The interview followed a predetermined set of questions, ensuring that all interviewees were asked the same questions in the same order. This method was useful for gathering comparable data across different participants.

The data collection process was done by preparing interview questions. In this type of interview, researchers prepare a list of questions or topics to be covered. Questions are open-ended to elicit detailed responses. Interviews were conducted face-to-face. The interviewer asked questions, probed for deeper insights, and recorded the responses. Interviews are usually recorded (with participant consent) and then transcribed for detailed analysis. Transcriptions are verbatim records of the conversation.

Research Design

The study used a descriptive qualitative research design using phenomenology. This type of research design was considered a philosophical approach to undertaking qualitative research. The goal of phenomenology was to understand how others view the world, and how this view may vary from commonly held views by focusing on a person's subjective interpretations of what she experiences. Phenomenology was done by interviewing the subjects to learn their impressions and is frequently used in such fields as psychology, sociology, and social work.

According to Smith (2013), phenomenology is the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the First-person point of view. The central structure of an experience is its intentionality, its being directed toward something, as it is an experience of or about some

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object. An experience is directed toward an object by its content or meaning (which represents the object) together with appropriate enabling conditions.

Participants of the Study

The study's participants were meticulously selected to ensure a comprehensive understanding of leadership pitfalls from various perspectives. Teachers are key stakeholders in the educational process, and teachers' perspectives on the leadership styles and decisions of school heads provide valuable insights into the impact of leadership pitfalls on the overall school environment.

By engaging these diverse groups of participants, the study ought to uncover the multifaceted nature of leadership pitfalls in sectarian schools and develop targeted recommendations for leadership programs. This comprehensive approach ensures that the findings and recommendations are well-rounded, addressing the needs and challenges of all stakeholders involved in the educational process participants were chosen based on their relevance to the research topic and are purposeful.

The total participants in the study were twenty (20) purposely selected teachers of the sectarian schools in Iloilo City, two of them came from each school of the 10 ten sectarian schools. These schools are Doanne Baptist Bible Institute Inc., Colegio del Sagrado Corazon de Jusus, Inc., Excellence Christian Education of LaPaz Inc., Central Philippine University, Seventh Day Adventist School, Mission Valley School Inc., LOV Children's Learning Centre Inc., St. Warren Academy, Hope Baptist Academy of Iloilo Inc., and Iloilo Baptist Learning Center.

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Sampling Design

A purposive sampling design was used in the study. This technique is used to select participants or data points that are most relevant to the specific goals of the study. Researchers select individuals that are particularly informative or have specific characteristics needed for the study. Since the selection is based on specific criteria, the information gathered. It allows researchers to focus on a smaller, more manageable group that provides the most pertinent data, saving time and resources.

This method was used to select participants who have expert knowledge or experience related to the topic, leading to deeper and more accurate insights.

It offers flexibility in research design, allowing for the inclusion of varied and specific cases that might not be possible with random sampling.

This approach often results in richer, more detailed data as participants are chosen for their unique perspectives and experiences.

Purposive sampling according to Nikolopoulou (2023) refers to a group of non-probability sampling techniques in which units are selected because they have characteristics that you need in your sample. In other words, units are selected "on purpose" in purposive sampling.

Also called judgmental sampling, this sampling method relies on the researcher's judgment when identifying and selecting the individuals, cases, or events that can provide the best information to achieve the study's objectives.

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Purposive sampling is common in qualitative research and mixed methods research. It is particularly useful if you need to find information-rich cases or make the most out of limited resources but are at high risk for research biases like observer bias.

Research Instrument

The research instrument utilized in the study was a researcher-made interview schedule.

The interview schedule had three (3) questions focusing on the purpose of the study.

Voice and video recorders were also used for data gathering and documentation depending upon the permission of the participants.

Validity of the Research Instrument

Before the determination of the validity of the interview schedule made by the researcher, the adviser, the Dean of the Graduate School then a panel of jurors who were considered for their expertise in the field of research, testing and assessment, and English, were requested to validate each question for review and modification.

Validity refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, correctness, and usefulness of inferences that a researcher makes. In content-related evidence of validity, the content and format must be consistent with the definition of variables and a sample of subjects to be measured and is also helpful in validating the items in the questionnaire (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2007).

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Comments, corrections, and suggestions of the panel of validators regarding the interview schedule were considered using the appropriate form of Good and Scates (Appendix B).

Data Gathering Procedures

Permits from the adviser, Dean of the Graduate School, Office of the Schools Division Superintendent, Office of the District Supervisors, school heads, and individual participants were obtained to allow the researcher to conduct the study. The researcher personally went to the schools/communities/places convenient on the part of the participants to conduct the interview.

The researcher interviewed the participants but before this, the researcher encouraged first the participants to sign a waiver or permission relative to the conduct of the study.

To capture the interviewee's words in the in-depth interviews, voice and video recorders were provided. The researcher consolidated all collected data after a series of interviews.

Data Analyses

The information gathered was analyzed using a thematic approach.

Thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data.

According to Maguire & Delahunt (2017), a thematic analysis aims to identify themes, such as patterns in the data that are important or interesting, and use these themes to address

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the research or say something about an issue. This is summarizing, analyzing, and interpreting the data gathered and making sense of it.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings of the study highlight the critical areas where school heads struggle, including communication, delegation, community engagement, and balancing administrative responsibilities. By examining these pitfalls, the study provides valuable insights into the underlying causes and potential solutions to enhance leadership practices in schools. The recommendations based on these findings are designed to support school heads in overcoming these challenges and fostering a more effective and positive educational environment. This chapter contains the summary of the study, the insights drawn from the findings, and the recommendations arrived at by the researcher.

Summary

The study aimed to identify leadership pitfalls in sectarian schools in Iloilo City during the school year 2024-2025. A qualitative method was used to collect non-numerical data. Twenty (20) selected teachers participated, and a researcher-made interview schedule was used. The questionnaire underwent content validation by a panel of experts, and permits were obtained from advisers, Deans, and participants. Data was gathered, analyzed, and interpreted using a thematic approach, focusing on leadership pitfalls in sectarian schools.

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The following are the findings of the study:

Based on the results of the in-depth interview with the participants, it was found that teachers experienced leadership pitfalls through the lack of communication, insufficient technical skills, improper time management, and lack of time for supervision of classes.

It was found in the study that school heads' leadership pitfalls affect teachers' way of teaching, their teachers' morale, and their performance.

To manage these school heads' leadership pitfalls, teachers should show and have a positive mindset, employ creative and innovative strategies, show patience and perseverance, and utilize open communication.

Insights

The following are the insights based on the findings of the study.

Lack of modern technology knowledge and strict behavior among school heads lead to conflicts and unclear decision-making in schools. Challenges in meeting deadlines and managing parental involvement could be hurdled by setting clear goals, managing teams, implementing a new curriculum, and avoiding negligence and forgetfulness.

A leader's pitfall can negatively impact the school and administration by affecting the teachers' way of teaching and imposing rules. Leaders should provide guidance, be models, and actively participate in school activities, and decision-making remains in the school's hands.

The practices and mindset of teachers underscore the importance of adaptability, collaboration, effective communication, and a commitment to professional development in

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fostering a positive and productive educational environment. These qualities not only enhance their teaching effectiveness but also contribute to the overall success of their learners and the school community.

Recommendations

Targeted Training Programs. Develop and implement training programs that focus on improving communication skills, delegation techniques, and community engagement strategies for school heads.

Mentorship and Support Systems. Establish mentorship programs and support systems where experienced school heads can guide and support newly appointed leaders.

Regular Evaluations and Feedback. Conduct regular evaluations and provide constructive feedback to help school heads identify and address their leadership challenges effectively.

Customized Solutions. Recognize that a one-size-fits-all approach may not be effective. Tailor programs to meet the specific needs and challenges of individual school heads.

In the light of the findings and insights arrived in this study, the following recommendations are forwarded:

Implement comprehensive professional development programs focused on modern technology and leadership skills. These programs should include training on digital tools that facilitate communication, data management, and decision-making processes. By enhancing

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the technological proficiency of school heads, conflicts arising from misunderstandings or lack of information can be minimized.

Leaders should establish a clear vision and set achievable goals for the school. By providing consistent guidance, they can help teachers understand expectations and align their teaching practices with the school's objectives. This clarity fosters a supportive environment where educators feel empowered to excel.

Schools should establish a culture that values continuous professional development. This can be achieved through regular workshops, training sessions, and access to online courses that focus on the latest teaching strategies and technologies. Encouraging teachers to pursue further education and certifications will enhance their skills and adaptability in the classroom.

This research delved and aimed to explore common leadership pitfalls that school leaders encounter and propose to minimize or avoid these pitfalls among school leaders. School leaders specifically the principals, are models of good governance and positive values in the hierarchy of management. They could greatly influence teachers' performance.

A copy of the proposed program recommendations must be given to the Schools Division Office, Regional Office, and Central Office for their comments, suggestions, and bases for their technical assistance.

A copy of this proposed program recommendation must also be given to school heads in sectarian schools for their implementation on a local arrangement basis only.

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A similar study is also encouraged to be conducted in the future and consider other variables not used nor mentioned in the study, and if possible, a quantitative study could be conducted focusing on the level of teachers' morale in sectarian schools.



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