

The Influence of Principal's Transformational Leadership and Quality of School Learning Environment on Students Academic Achievement

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Article Info

Article History:

Received: 12 December, 2020

Accepted: 24 December, 2020

Published: 29 December, 2020

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Malolos, Bulacan Philippines; Tel:
0917-8930118; DOI:
<https://doi.org/10.36266/JEBS/161>

Abstract

This study made use of descriptive correlational method of research that utilized standard questionnaires as primary data gathering tools, substantiated by extensive documentary analysis. The respondents of the study were teachers and principals of public secondary schools in the City Division of Malolos. The following null hypotheses were subjected for testing at .05 level of significance. "The transformational leadership of principals in the City Division of Malolos does not significantly affect students' academic achievement" "The quality of school learning environment in the City Division of Malolos does not significantly affect students' academic achievement". School principals who are good transformational leaders are contributors of best possible leadership outputs that facilitate more students learning and academic achievement, likewise would help teachers to become more productive in practicing their teaching professions as committed member of school organization. The very good quality of school learning environment in the City Division of Malolos can be a springboard to the achievement of 21st century classroom experience. Principals' transformational leadership significantly influences the academic achievement of students in English, Math, and Science. The quality of school learning environment significantly influences the academic achievement of students in English, Math, and Science. Implications drawn from the findings of the study are good insights that may be used in further improving the quality academic achievement of students in public secondary schools.

Keywords: Leadership and Quality; Management; Accounting

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Introduction

In this era of globalization and technological revolution, education is considered as the first step for every human activity. It plays a vital role in the development of human capital and is linked with an individual's well-being and opportunities for better living Battle & Lewis [1]. It ensures the acquisition of knowledge and skills that enable individuals to increase their productivity and improve their quality of life. This increase in productivity also leads to new sources of earning which enhances the economic growth of a country Saxton [2]. The quality of students' performance remains a top priority for educators. The students' performance (academic achievement) plays an important role in producing the best quality graduates who will become great leader and manpower for the country thus responsible for the country's economic and social development [3]. It is meant for making a difference locally, regionally, nationally and globally. Educators, trainers, and researchers have long been interested in exploring variables contributing effectively to the quality of performance of learners. Meanwhile, a productive learning environment must first be a place where students can feel safe, physically and emotionally. It must be a supportive community where kids-and teachers-of all backgrounds can focus on learning. To create a climate of safety, halls, and classrooms must be free of behavior like fighting, bullying, and harassment. To achieve a safe environment where kids are free to reach their potential academically, Thompson (2011) advocates for schools to focus on preventing

misbehavior by implementing school-wide "positive behavior interventions." According to Thompson, these interventions should stress social skills and emotional learning, to teach students' conflict resolution and cultural understanding. Moreover, learning environment encompasses learning resources and technology, means of teaching, modes of learning, and connections to societal and global contexts. This also includes human behavioral and cultural dimensions, including the vital role of emotion in education, and it requires administrators to examine and sometimes rethink the positions of teachers and students because of how they make use of spaces and bring broader societal influences into play animates and the educational enterprise. Besides, the focus on information technology in education is expanding from the enhancement of learning spaces to include factors beyond hardware, software, and the network. The learning environment is a composite of human practices and material systems, much as an ecology is the combination of living things and the physical environment [4]. Indeed, the classroom remains to be the primary learning environment in the schools although learning can take place in other venues. On this premise, it is imperative that educators strive to make the classroom the best site for students to attain their full potential in academic performance. The classroom climate influences student achievement, their self-esteem, and participation in the lesson. The most important aspect of the classroom climate is the relationship between teacher and students. There must be elements of caring, trust, and respect in the interpersonal relationships between teachers and students. An effective classroom climate is one in which the students accept the teachers' authority to

organize and manage the learning activities. There are mutual respect and a good rapport, and the atmosphere is one of purposefulness and confidence in learning. A key consideration is an extent to which the teacher can foster favorable perceptions towards learning among students, by establishing in students self-respect and self-esteem regarding themselves as learners [5]. According to Adediwura and Tayo 2007, academic achievement is designated by test and examination scores or marks assigned by the subject teachers. It could also be said to be an expression used to represent students' academic standing. Levin, Wasanga, and Somerset 2011 reported that the academic achievement of students at secondary school level is not only a pointer of the effectiveness of schools but also a significant determinant of the well-being of youths in particular and the nation in general. Yusuf and Adigun 2010; Lydiah and Nasongo 2009 noted that the performance of students in any academic task has always been of particular interest to the government, educators, parents, and society at large. Hence, this study evaluated the influence of principals' transformational leadership and learning environment of school on students' academic performance [6-8].

Methodology

Methods and Techniques. This study utilized the descriptive survey type of research because this method is concerned with the description of the present situation, current practices, characteristics of groups of individuals as well as their behavioral patterns, attitudes, and opinions. The analysis of the present conditions may lead to the identification of weakness or problems for which the researcher sought solutions. In addition, descriptive correlation was used in determining the influence of transformational leadership of principals and quality of school learning environment on the academic achievement of students. Standardized structured questionnaires on transformational leadership of principals and quality of school learning environment were used as primary data gathering tools. Documentary analysis was also done in analyzing the academic achievement of students. Respondents of the Study. The respondents of the study were the teachers and principals in select public secondary schools in the City Division of Malolos Bulacan. Table 1 shows that the respondents during the school year 2018-2019.

Table 1: Respondents of the Study.

Respondents	Teachers	
	F	%
A	50	25
B	50	25
C	50	25
D	50	25
Total	200	100

Instrument of the Study. This study utilized two standardized instruments that assessed the transformational leadership of principals and school's provision for learning environment. The first instrument on principal's transformational leadership level was described by using ten dimensions of the MLQ Bass, 2002. The full range of leadership as measured by the MLQ implies that every leader displays a frequency of both the

transactional and transformational factors, but each leader's profile involves more of one and less of the other Bass, 1999. The survey of 45 items uses a five response Likert scale ranging from frequently to not at all Avolio Bass, 2004. To test the construct validity of the MLQ the authors completed studies testing the present nine factor model against other models Hebert, 2011. Further, the nine factor model has been demonstrated as being superior with a goodness-of-fit of .91 for follower rating (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Also, external predictive validity of the MLQ has been established over the years as multiple studies have indicated that high MLQ transformational scores have been consistent (Hebert, 2011). Overall, the MLQ has been widely studied and has been found to exhibit internal consistency, rest-retest reliability, external predictive validity, and construct validity [9-12]. The second instrument was adopted from the study conducted by entitled "What Learning Environments Best Address 21st Century Students' Perceived Needs?" The instrument has a reliability index of 0.87 and published in SAGE journal. According to Lemley, 21st century learning environment includes the following elements: debriefing, flexible learning spaces, availability of a virtual environment, multimedia materials, and networking and collaboration opportunities. Students' satisfaction refers to how highly the student regards the education he or she received in the teachers' class based on competence, relatedness, and autonomy. This would mean that student satisfaction rating will measure how well the teacher educated 21st-century students. Finally, student-teacher relationship refers to how well the student felt "known" by the teacher. This further means involving the level of respect, trust, caring, and fairness that exists in the interactions between students and teachers. The strength of this relationship manifests in students who feel more valued and respected by the teacher being more committed to learning and better able to cope with adversity. Meanwhile, students' academic achievement served as the dependent variable of the study. Using documentary analysis, this was assessed in terms of the students' academic achievement in Math, English, and Science subjects, respectively [13-18].

Data Gathering Procedure. The mode of data gathering was the questionnaire method. Each of the respondents was given a structured set of questions. In gathering the data, the researcher carried out the following procedure:

- A letter was sent to the Division Superintendent to ask permission in the conduct of proposed study.
- With the approval of the Superintendent, the researcher commenced the distribution of the questionnaire to the respondents personally.
- The researcher collected the questionnaires from the respondents and checked whether all the questions are answered.

Data Processing and Statistical Treatment. The data collected were tabulated and processed using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). In order to analyze and interpret the data gathered, the following statistical measures were used:

- The transformational leadership and quality of school learning environment were quantified using the following scale:

Table 2: leadership and quality of school.

Rating Scale	Range	Analytical Description	Interpretation
5	4.50-5.00	Learning environment is very extensive and functioning excellently	Very Great Extent/ Outstanding
4	3.50-4.49	Learning environment is moderately extensive and functioning very well	Great Extent/Very Satisfactory
3	2.50-3.49	Learning environment is adequate and functioning well	Moderate Extent/ Highly Satisfactory
2	1.50-2.49	Learning environment is limited but functioning well	Least Extent/ Satisfactory
1	1.00-1.49	Learning environment is limited and functioning poorly	None at all/ Poor

Results and Discussion

Transformational Leadership of the Principals

According to Avolio, Waldman, & Yammarino leadership style that advocate significant positive changes in individuals, groups, teams, and organizations is the most influential and effective leadership style [19-22]. And this describes what transformational leaders usually contribute to their organization. Effective leaders are those who are capable of providing a clear vision and mission, which installed pride in what needs to be done and accomplished. Gaining respect and trust from leading with high moral and ethical standard make an idealized influence for transformational leaders. The transformational leadership of principals was very satisfactory in terms of idealized influence (4.14), inspirational motivation (4.13), intellectual stimulation (4.10), individual consideration (4.12), and contingent reward (4.14), management -by- exception (active (4.0) /passive (4.06), laissez-faire leadership (3.96), extra effort (4.10), effectiveness (4.09), and satisfaction (4.12) The transformational leadership of principals in terms of idealized influence was very satisfactory as shown by the average value of 4.14. This type of leadership was manifested when they talk about their most important values and beliefs, instill pride, specify the importance of having a strong sense of purpose, go beyond self-interest for the good of the group, act in ways that builds respect, consider the moral and ethical consequences of decisions, display a sense of power and confidence, and emphasize the Importance of having a collective sense of mission. This result is supported by Fullan 2008 when he opined that leaders occupy the most crucial role for establishing and maintaining connection between the new educational ideas and teachers existing passions and ideological framework. According to Bass 2002 transformative leaders in terms of inspirational motivation possessed qualities which made use of communicating high expectations, adding meaning to goals and undertakings, using symbols to focus efforts, expressing important purposes in simple ways and doing things to keep people motivated as possible. The transformational leadership in terms of inspirational motivation was very satisfactory as shown by the average value of 4.13. This leadership was shown in the following behaviors of principals namely talking optimistically about the future, talking enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished, articulating a compelling vision of the future, and expressing confidence that goals will be achieved. This result is supported by the views of Collins (2009) that outstanding principals are those who can create harmony among his academic staff and work with them congenially. The Pubtext Publishers | www.pubtextto.com

transformational leadership of principals in terms of intellectual stimulation was very satisfactory as shown by the average value of 4.10. This was indicated by the principals' provision of assistance in exchange for their efforts, seeking differing perspectives when solving, getting to look at the problems from many different angles, and suggesting new ways of looking at how to complete assignments. In this leadership style, transformative leaders are seen to possessed skills in encouraging new and better ways of doing things, fostering creativity, re-examining assumptions, as well as promoting intelligence, rationality, and problem solving for its among its subordinates (Bass, 2004). The principals' transformational leadership in terms of individual consideration was very satisfactory as indicated by the average value of 4.12. This was manifested in the ability of the principals to spend time teaching and coaching, treat others as individual rather than just as a member of a group, consider them having different needs, abilities, and aspiration from others, and help them to develop their strengths [23-28]. The findings of the study are supported by Hadi (2009) who speculates that the effectiveness of leadership styles like that in transformational leadership styles are considered determining factor in creating high performance organization. Wherein, academic staffs like teachers are capable of becoming creative and rational individual in performing their duties as role models to their students. The transformational leadership of principals in terms of contingent reward was also very satisfactory as shown by the average value of 4.14. This leadership was manifested by being able to provide assistance in exchange of their efforts, discuss in specific terms who is responsible for achieving performance targets, make clear what one can expect to receive when performance goals are achieved, and express satisfaction when they meet expectations. Moreover, this finding is supported by France and Cohen (2009) in their views about transformative leadership styles, which involve assessing teachers' motives, satisfying their needs and valuing them [29-32]. And this is evident in the result were teachers do believe that their principals possessed qualities that help them to become intellectually productive with respect to their individuality and efforts exerted are in turn rewarded. The transformational leadership of principals in terms of passive management-by-exception was also very satisfactory as shown by the average value of 4.0. This passive leadership was shown in the principals' behavior to wit: fail to interfere until problems become serious, wait for things to go wrong before taking action, show that they a firm believer in "If It is not broke, do not fix it", and demonstrate that problems must become chronic before taking action. Meanwhile, active leadership was also very satisfactory as shown by the average value of 4.06. The active indicators are as follows: focuses attention on irregularities, mistakes,

exceptions and deviations from standards; concentrates his/her full attention on dealing with mistakes, complaints and failures; keeps track of all mistakes; and direct attention toward failures to meet standards. According to Cohen (2009) that transformative leaders are those who are always flexible and capable to perform different functions at the same time. The transformational leadership of principals in terms of laissez-faire leadership was very satisfactory as evidenced by the average value of 3.96. This means that the principals avoid getting involved when important issues arise, absent when needed, avoid making decisions, and delay responding to urgent questions. The transformational leadership of principals in terms of extra effort was also very satisfactory as indicated by the average value of 4.10. This would mean that the principals get to do more than what they are expected to do, heighten others desire to succeed, and increase their willingness to try harder. Very satisfactory rating was recorded in the principal's transformational leadership in terms of effectiveness. This was indicated by their ability to become effective in meeting job-related needs, effective in representing other to higher authority, effective in meeting organizational requirements, and lead a group that is effective. According to Fullan (2008) principals' roles are the most crucial in terms of decision making, where there is always a room for chances and mistakes in order to come up with innovative approach. Meanwhile, the transformative leadership style in terms of satisfaction it is evident that teachers agreed that their principals are capable of providing them with leadership capabilities that capable to make use of method that are satisfying with highest weighted mean value of 4.15 or very satisfactory, and lowest weighted mean value of 4.08 for works in very satisfactory ways with teachers fairly often seen by teachers. Further analysis of the data from the above tables, it can be deduced that teachers are really resolute that principals are indeed possessing qualities that of transformative leaders that somehow made them satisfy and capable of performing their job related needs. However, sometimes inability of their school principals to come up with appropriate and timely decisions is possible maybe because they are so busy attending to other school functions. Moreover, the transformational leadership styles in terms of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, contingent reward, management-by-exception, laissez-faire, extra effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction fairly often seen by their teachers which range from 3.83 to 4.19 weighted mean values are also considered reaching the interpretative value of very satisfactory leadership practices among its teacher-subordinates [34].

Quality of School Learning Environment

Learning environment encompasses learning resources and technology, means of teaching, modes of learning, and connections to societal and global contexts. It also includes human behavioral and cultural dimensions, including the vital role of emotion in learning, and it requires us to examine and sometimes rethink the roles of teachers and students because the ways in which they make use of spaces and bring wider societal influences into play animates the educational enterprise. The focus on information technology in education is expanding from the enhancement of learning spaces to include factors beyond hardware, software, and the network. The learning environment is a composite of human practices and material systems, much as ecology is the combination of living things and the physical environment [35]. Similarly, Nair (2014) emphasized that there are two sides to a coin when it comes to

implementing technology; on one side, using technologies via the virtual learning environment that seems to be outdated with the digital needs of the students, and on the other side, while implementing technology learning environment the focus is primarily on the technology more than the learning process students undergo. Therefore, it is vital to evaluate the quality of school learning environment in public secondary schools in the City Division of Malolos. The secondary schools in the City Division of Malolos are offering very good quality of school learning environment as shown by the following top indicators: The teachers used what they know about the students in their teaching; The students felt comfortable talking with the teacher about problems that they had in class; The teacher respected and appreciated the students for who they are; The teacher made the students feel like they belong in the class; The teachers listened to what the students had to say; The students had a good relationship with the teachers; The teachers were available to talk with the students when they were having a problem in class or when something was bothering them; The teachers made the subject interesting; the students with were satisfied with the performance of the teachers; The students' grade in class reflects their efforts and the amount they learnt; and The teachers did a good job of educating the students in the class. Meanwhile, there are still areas for improvements noted in terms of the traditional method of lecturing all the time; students had to sit in a row; the teachers used limited presentation materials to only Powerpoint; and lessons that may be supported through a variety of media. Students today would want to study in an environment which supports technologies that they use for day-to-day activities as a part of their university curriculum because these technologies have become an 'integral part' of their lives (more so as part of their identity), rather than attending traditional lectures wherein they are switched off from their digital environment, giving them the sense of sitting in an airplane cockpit [36]. This digital disconnect (or divide) between students and university classroom expectations could be one of the reasons for less engagement in the classroom, lack of motivation, high level absenteeism and more. In order to reduce this and improve the learning or teaching experience of students/tutors respectively, it becomes quintessential to bridge the digital divide, even though arguably it cannot guarantee better performance, but some research (Monge-Lozano, 2012) cites that an effective integration of personalized technologies into the current teaching practices at educational establishments could lead to high level of motivation and student achievements [37]. Determine what learning environments best address the needs of 21st-century students at the secondary level. This study concluded that the presence of a positive 21st-century learning environment is related to student satisfaction and student teacher relationships. While the majority of the literature on 21st-century students concerns technology, this study found that students were not as concerned with technology as they were with autonomy, relevance, and connectedness. Although computer-based learning environments (CBLEs) are becoming more prevalent in the classroom, empirical research has demonstrated that some students have difficulty learning with these environments. The motivation construct of computer-self efficacy plays an integral role in learning with CBLEs. Likewise, Enriquez (2014) stated that utilizing Virtual Learning Environments as a supplementary tool for motivating and empowering independent learning and innovative teaching is becoming a crucial part of a 21st century education. Edmodo is one example of social learning site, which is now being used by professors and students.

Students' Academic Achievement

Academic achievement is one of the determinants of success in life. Students who achieve well academically have some advantages. Academic achievement serves as a key criterion in order to judge students' true potentials and capabilities. Identifying these potentials and capabilities are necessary to better hone them and find remedies where there are lacking. Also, academic achievement has been one of the most important goals of the educational process. It plays a significant role in assuring quality because without some sort of measure, what will be produced are mediocre graduates. That is why, it is but necessary to put a special emphasis on academic achievement. Majority of the students performed excellently in subject areas namely English (197), Math (215), and Science (209). There were 92 students who performed very satisfactory in English, 54 students in Math, and 68 students in Science, respectively. Meanwhile, only 11 students performed satisfactorily in English, 31 in Math, and 23 in Science. It may be deduced that the teachers are effective in motivating the students to learn and imparting knowledge to early childhood learners. Hence, the importance of school environment to students in schools today in particular cannot be overemphasized. This is because, school environment has tremendous influence on the quality of teaching students receives and the extent of attention they pay to lesson in school. This implies that schools that fail to provide the necessary learning facilities and create a conducive atmosphere for teaching and learning may hardly put in the best in their students especially in the area of academic achievement. This scenario has been among the reason for poor academic achievement of students in many primary schools.

Influence of Transformational Leadership of Principals on Students' Academic Performance

In conducting the study, it was hypothesized that transformational leadership of principals does not significantly influence the academic performance of students. To determine the extent of influence of transformational leadership on students' performance in English, Science, and Math, the data were subjected to regression analysis. Results of the regression revealed that transformational leadership in terms of individualized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, contingent reward, laissez-faire, leadership, and satisfaction produced Beta coefficient values of 23.659, 13.275, 15.25, 18.596, 4.4012, 453, 2.071, and 22.084 respectively with associated p-values less than the significance level set at 0.05. These findings indicate that for every unit increase in individualized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, contingent reward, laissez-faire, leadership, and satisfaction could generate a 1.68, .94, 1.077, 1.3, .298, .147, .115, and 1.551 improvements in students' academic achievement. The obtained Beta coefficients of 1.68, .94, 1.077, 1.3, .298, .147, .115, and 1.551 indicate that individualized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, contingent reward, laissez-faire, leadership, and satisfaction contribute almost the same significant effects on students' academic achievement. The factors "management by exception" and "extra effort" also contribute to students' academic achievement but not to a significant extent. The obtained F-value of 16.181 which was found significant at .05 alpha indicates that the dimensions of principals' transformational leadership formed a very significant set of predictors for students' academic

achievement. This result is further supported by the study conducted by Valintin and Prater (2011) about a quantitative study, which examined the relationship between principals' managerial and transformational leadership and student achievement in public high schools. In the results it showed that within the transformative leadership style the principals' ability to identify a vision and provide an appropriate model had the greatest relationship to students' achievement. Since, the respondents of the study are teachers who believed that their school principals are transformative leaders it is then expected that these principals are capable of producing increase students' performance.

Influence of Quality of School Learning Environment on Students' Academic Achievement

In conducting the study, it was hypothesized that the quality of school learning environment does not significantly affect students' academic achievement in English, Math, and Science. To determine the extent of influence of the quality of school learning environment on students' academic achievement, the data were subjected to regression analysis. Results of the regression revealed that the quality of school learning environment produced B coefficient of 2.088 with associated probability less than the significance level set at .05. The findings indicate that for every unit increase in the quality of school learning environment could generate a .747 increase in students' academic achievement in English, Mathematics, and Science. This means that students' performance will likewise increase if the following quality of school indicators are improved namely: The teachers used what they know about the students in their teaching; The students felt comfortable talking with the teacher about problems that they had in class; The teacher respected and appreciated the students for who they are; The teacher made the students feel like they belong in the class; The teachers listened to what the students had to say; The students had a good relationship with the teachers; The teachers were available to talk with the students when they were having a problem in class or when something was bothering them; The teachers made the subject interesting; the students with were satisfied with the performance of the teachers; The students' grade in class reflects their efforts and the amount they learnt; and The teachers did a good job of educating the students in the class. Conversely, academic achievement will decline if areas for improvements noted will not be given attention in terms of the traditional method of lecturing all the time; students had to sit in a row; the teachers used limited presentation materials to only Powerpoint; and lessons that may be supported through a variety of media. The obtained F-value of 376 which was found significant at .05 alpha indicates that the quality dimensions of school learning environment formed a very significant set of predictors for students' academic achievement in Mathematics, English, and Science, respectively. Likewise, Stewart (2008) examines the extent to which individual-level and school structural variables affect academic achievement among a sample of 10th grade students abstracted from the National Educational Longitudinal Study database. A secondary analysis of the data produced the following findings. The study results show that individual-level predictors, such as student effort, parent and child discussion, and associations with positive peers, play a substantial role in increasing students' achievement. Furthermore, the results also suggest that school climate in particular, the sense of school cohesion felt by students, teachers, and administrators is important to successful student outcomes. Given these results,

interventions aimed at improving academic achievement need take into consideration the impact of individual-level and school structural factors on students and their ability to succeed. Depending on the environment, schools can either open or close the doors that lead to academic performance suggest that school sector (public or private) and class size are two important structural components of the school. Private schools tend to have both better funding and smaller sizes than public schools. The additional funding for private schools leads to a better academic performance and more access to resources such as computers, which have been shown to enhance academic achievement [38].

Implications Drawn from the Findings of the Study

Based on the findings of the study, the following implications were drawn:

- Transformational leaders seek to inspire and empower members of the organization to focus on a common vision and to take ownership of the change process through a collaborative approach.
- The classroom still remains to be the main learning environment in the schools although learning can take place in other venues. On this premise, it is imperative that educators strive to make the classroom the best venue for students to attain their full potential in academic performance.
- The classroom climate influences the student achievement, their self-esteem and participation in the lesson. The most important aspect of classroom climate is the relationship between teacher and students. There must be elements of caring, trust and respect in the interpersonal relationships between teachers and students.
- An effective classroom climate is one in which the teachers' authority to organize and manage the learning activities are accepted by the students.
- Mutual respect and good rapport, and the atmosphere is one of purposefulness and confidence in learning. A key consideration is the extent to which the teacher is able to foster favorable perceptions towards learning among students, by establishing in students self-respect and self-esteem regarding themselves as learners.

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