

From Values to Practices: A Study of School Leadership Dynamics in DepEd

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Abstract

Introduction: This study examined the relationship between interpersonal values and supervisory practices among school leaders in the DepEd Division of Zamboanga del Sur, Philippines. It compared principal-led and head teacher-led teacher groups to identify role-specific differences in how values translate into practices.

Objectives: The research had three objectives: (1) to describe the core constructs of interpersonal values (community-oriented, nationalistic, ownership, independence, camaraderie, unity) and supervisory practices (teacher meetings, teaching-learning improvement, demonstration teaching, morale-building, decision-making, achievements); (2) to compare these constructs between leadership groups; and (3) to analyze their correlations.

Methods: Using an analytic descriptive-survey design, the study surveyed 549 teachers (292 principal-led, 257 head teacher-led) across 15 districts. Validated 6-point Likert scale questionnaires ($\alpha=0.85-0.88$) measured both constructs. Data analysis employed descriptive statistics, t-tests, and Pearson correlation.

Results: The study's analysis of 549 teachers revealed three main findings. First, while both principal-led ($M=5.18$) and head teacher-led ($M=5.06$) groups showed strong interpersonal values, there was no significant difference between them ($p=0.114$). Second, head teachers demonstrated slightly but significantly better implementation of supervisory practices overall ($M=5.33$ vs 5.25 , $p<0.05$), particularly in classroom-focused areas. Third, a weak but statistically significant correlation emerged between values and practices across all participants ($r=0.12$, $p=0.006$).

Conclusions: The study concludes that while Zamboanga del Sur's school leaders share strong foundational values, their supervisory approaches vary by organizational role. Recommendations include developing role-specific training programs, creating peer mentoring systems, and implementing values-practice alignment tools. These findings contribute to understanding how distributed leadership operates in Philippine public schools and offer practical strategies for enhancing leadership effectiveness through values-based, context-sensitive approaches.

Keywords: interpersonal values, supervisory practices, principal-led teachers, headteacher-led teachers, descriptive survey

1. Introduction

Educational leadership fundamentally operates through the dynamic interplay between leaders' interpersonal values and their supervisory practices. This study, conducted across 15 school districts of the DepEd Division of Zamboanga del Sur with teachers ($n=549$) as participants, examines how these two core constructs—interpersonal values (community-oriented, nationalistic, ownership, independence, camaraderie, unity) and supervisory practices (teacher meetings, improving teaching-learning processes, demonstration teaching, building teacher morale, decision-making, achievements)—interact to shape effective school environments. The relationship between what

leaders value and how they supervise represents a critical but understudied dimension of educational leadership (Hallinger, 2011), particularly in the context of Philippine public schools.

At the heart of this investigation lies the premise that interpersonal values serve as the foundation for supervisory approaches. In Zamboanga del Sur's diverse school districts, values like community-oriented perspectives likely influence collaborative practices such as teacher meetings and morale-building, while nationalistic values may shape decision-making processes aligned with DepEd's broader policies (Bush, 2020). Similarly, the value of ownership presumably affects how school leaders approach instructional improvements, whereas

camaraderie naturally manifests in peer-driven practices like demonstration teaching (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). These intrinsic connections between values and practices form the primary focus of this study, grounded in the real-world context of Philippine public education.

The DepEd Zamboanga del Sur setting offers a compelling backdrop for this inquiry. As a division with both urban and rural school districts, it encapsulates the challenges and opportunities of leadership in varied socio-cultural environments. The collectivist nature of Filipino educational culture (Hofstede, 2011) suggests that values like unity and community-orientedness may play pivotal roles in mediating supervisory effectiveness. However, how these values translate into specific practices such as teacher meetings that align with school goals or decision-making that balances top-down policies with teacher autonomy remains underexplored in localized studies (Suprayogi et al., 2017).

While the core of this study focuses on the fundamental relationships between interpersonal values and supervisory practices, it adopts a two-phase analytical approach to deepen insights:

Comparative analysis: The present analysis investigates how leadership proximity influences value-practice within educational settings. It posits that head teachers, being closer to classroom environments, emphasize camaraderie and demonstration teaching, while principals may prioritize nationalistic values and formal meetings. This analysis examines how leadership positionality affects supervisory methodologies in Philippine public schools, particularly whether head teachers' closer engagement with classrooms leads to greater emphasis on camaraderie and demonstration teaching.

Correlational analysis: The study will examine relationships between interpersonal values and supervisory practices by combining data from both groups. Pearson correlation coefficients will determine the strength and direction of associations between specific values and practices, and whether particular values show consistently strong linkages across the entire sample. This analysis will reveal which value-practice pairs

demonstrate statistically significant correlations in Zamboanga del Sur's school districts, providing actionable insights for leadership development programs.

This research contributes to theory by advancing a values-driven model of educational leadership tailored to Philippine public schools. Practically, it will inform DepEd's leadership training programs, helping tailor interventions to the distinct needs of principals and head teachers in Zamboanga del Sur and similar divisions. By anchoring the study in local data while engaging global scholarship, it bridges the gap between universal leadership theories and context-specific applications.

2. Objectives

This study endeavours to fulfil three primary objectives. Firstly, it aims to provide a comprehensive description of the two principal constructs under investigation: (1) interpersonal values, encompassing the subdomains of community orientation, nationalism, ownership, independence, camaraderie, and unity; and (2) supervisory practices, which include teacher meetings, enhancement of teaching-learning processes, demonstration teaching, fostering teacher morale, decision-making, and achievements.

Secondly, the study will investigate the differential manifestation of these constructs between principal-led and head teacher-led teacher groups within the DepEd Division of Zamboanga del Sur. Thirdly, the research will analyze the correlations between interpersonal values and supervisory practices across the combined dataset to identify significant relationships. These objectives aim to provide both a foundational understanding of these leadership dimensions in Philippine public schools and practical insights for enhancing supervisory approaches.

3. Methods

The present study utilized an analytical descriptive-survey research design to systematically investigate the interpersonal values and supervisory practices among educators within the DepEd Division of Zamboanga del Sur. The research sample comprised 549 teachers from 15 school districts within the division, including 292 principal-led and

257 head teacher-led groups, selected through purposive sampling to ensure participants possessed direct experience with the supervisory systems under examination. Data collection was conducted using two validated researcher-developed instruments: a 6-point Likert scale Interpersonal Values Questionnaire, which assessed dimensions of community orientation, nationalism, ownership, independence, camaraderie, and unity ($\alpha = 0.83$), and a corresponding Supervisory Practices Questionnaire, which evaluated teacher meetings, teaching-learning improvement, demonstration teaching, morale-building, decision-making, and achievements ($\alpha = 0.87$). Following ethical approvals from DepEd authorities, the questionnaires were administered with assurances of respondent anonymity. Data analysis was conducted in three phases: descriptive statistics were used to profile the core constructs, independent samples t-tests were employed to compare principal-led and head teacher-led groups, and Pearson correlation analysis was utilized to examine the relationships between values and practices across the combined dataset. This methodological approach ensured both a comprehensive description of the target constructs and a rigorous examination of their interrelationships within the educational context of Zamboanga del Sur.

4. Results and Discussions

This study examines interpersonal values and supervisory practices of school leaders in the DepEd Division of Zamboanga del Sur, comparing principal-led and head teacher-led groups. The analysis shows how leadership roles prioritize values like community orientation and unity, and their translation into supervisory approaches. The study aims to understand educational leadership dynamics in Philippine public schools while providing recommendations for leadership training. Results highlight differences between the two leadership groups, supported by theoretical frameworks and research.

The analysis between principal-led and head teacher-led groups (see Table 1) reveals patterns in interpersonal values and supervisory practices. Both groups showed high emphasis on

interpersonal values, with principals scoring higher in community-oriented ($M=5.11$ vs 4.88), independence ($M=5.22$ vs 5.10), and unity ($M=5.10$ vs 4.98) values. This aligns with Bush's (2020) view that principals emphasize system-wide values. Ownership values remained similar between groups ($M=5.26$ vs 5.30), supporting Hallinger's (2011) assertion about accountability across leadership levels.

Table 1 *Descriptive levels of teachers' interpersonal values and supervisory practices*

Variables		Principal-led teachers (n=292)		Head teacher – led teachers (n=257)	
		M	SD	M	SD
Interpersonal Values					
1	Community-oriented	5.11	1.023	4.876	1.311
2	Nationalistic	5.18	0.986	5.129	1.132
3	Ownership	5.26	0.951	5.30	0.946
4	Independence	5.22	0.927	5.104	0.972
5	Camaraderie	5.10	1.07	4.972	1.206
6	Unity	5.10	1.091	4.983	1.162
Supervisory Practices					
1	Teacher Meeting	5.204	0.993	5.111	1.067
2	Improving Teaching-Learning Process	5.126	1.032	5.006	1.181
3	Demonstration Teaching	5.265	0.856	5.142	0.979
4	Building Teachers Morale	5.383	0.807	5.325	0.873
5	Decision-Making	5.265	0.916	5.263	1.052
6	Achievements	5.155	0.995	5.208	1.068

Note: M = mean, SD = Standard deviation: 1.00 – 1.83 = Never Manifested, 1.84 – 2.67 = Rarely Manifested, 2.68 – 3.50 = Sometimes Manifested, 3.51 – 4.33 = Often Manifested, 4.34 – 5.16 = Almost Always Manifested, 5.17 – 6.00 = Always Manifested

In supervisory practices, principals showed higher implementation of teacher meetings (M=5.20 vs 5.11) and demonstration teaching (M=5.27 vs 5.14), matching Harris and Jones' (2019) observations. Similar decision-making scores (M=5.265 vs 5.263) support the distributed leadership framework. Building teacher morale received highest scores (M=5.38 and 5.33), highlighting its importance in Filipino school culture (Kuhn, 2007). Minimal standard deviations (<1.18) indicate strong group consensus.

These findings support Kuhn's (2007) contingency theory and reflect the professional culture in Zamboanga del Sur schools. Leadership programs should build on principals' system-oriented values while enhancing classroom practices, while head teachers need support in broadening achievement-oriented approaches. The shared focus on teacher morale suggests its continued importance in DepEd's development initiatives.

The independent samples t-test (see Table 2) indicated no statistically significant difference in interpersonal values between groups led by principals and those led by head teachers ($t(524) = 1.583, p = 0.114$). Although principals exhibited marginally higher mean scores (M = 5.18, SD = 0.12) compared to head teachers (M = 5.06, SD = 0.15), this difference did not reach significance at the conventional $\alpha = 0.05$ level. This outcome suggests that both leadership groups possess similar fundamental values in their professional practice, supporting the notion that core interpersonal values transcend formal leadership positions in educational settings (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). The non-significant result ($p > 0.05$) implies that the previously observed descriptive differences in specific value subdomains (Table 1) may represent practical rather than statistical distinctions. This finding aligns with the distributed leadership theory, which posits that shared values form the foundation for collaborative school leadership regardless of formal roles (Harris & Jones, 2019). The small standard deviations (0.12-0.15) across

groups further reinforce the consistency of value implementation within Zamboanga del Sur's school system.

Table 2 *Test of significant difference of interpersonal values between two groups*

Groups	n	M	SD	t	df	p-value
Principal – led teachers	292	5.18	0.12	1.583	524	0.114
Head Teacher – led teachers	257	5.06	0.15			

A statistically significant difference was observed in supervisory practices between groups led by principals and those led by head teachers ($t(524) = 25.33, p < 0.05$) (see Table 3). The head teachers exhibited slightly higher mean scores (M = 5.33, SD = 0.02) compared to the principals (M = 5.25, SD = 0.05), indicating that head teachers may implement supervisory practices with marginally greater consistency. This finding is consistent with the research of Harris and Jones (2019) which suggests that middle leaders, such as head teachers, often excel in classroom-focused supervision due to their closer engagement with daily teaching activities. The extremely small standard deviations (SD = 0.02–0.05) reflect remarkable consistency in the implementation of supervisory practices by both groups. However, the statistically significant t -value underscores that even subtle differences can be meaningful in large samples. This supports the distributed leadership theory, which posits that different leadership tiers contribute uniquely to school effectiveness.

Table 3 *Test of significant difference of supervisory practices between two groups*

Groups	n	M	SD	t	df	p-value
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Principal led teachers	–	292	5.25	0.05	25.33	524	< 0.05
Head Teacher led teachers	–	257	5.33	0.02			

The analysis revealed a statistically significant but weak positive correlation between interpersonal values and supervisory practices ($r = 0.12, p = 0.006$) (see Table 4). While the relationship is significant at $p < 0.05$ level, the small correlation coefficient suggests that interpersonal values explain only about 1.4% of the variance in supervisory practices ($r^2 = 0.014$). This finding indicates that while shared values among school leaders are related to their supervisory approaches, other unmeasured factors likely play a more substantial role in shaping these practices.

The high mean scores for both constructs (Interpersonal Values: $M = 5.11$; Supervisory Practices: $M = 5.20$ on a 6-point scale) demonstrate strong overall implementation across Zamboanga del Sur schools. The small standard deviations ($SD = 0.11-0.12$) further suggest consistency in how leaders across the division embody these professional qualities.

Table 4 *Correlation between interpersonal values and supervisory practices (n=549)*

Variables	M	SD	r	p-value
Interpersonal Values	5.11	0.12	0.12	0.006
Supervisory Practices	5.20	0.11		

The collective findings of this study provide nuanced insights into educational leadership within the school system of Zamboanga del Sur. Three principal patterns emerge from the data: First, although principal-led and head teacher-led groups exhibit fundamentally similar interpersonal values (Table 2), they employ supervisory practices with statistically distinct methodologies (Table 3). This paradox suggests that organizational roles mediate

the translation of shared values into action, thereby supporting the distributed leadership theory while underscoring the contextual nature of leadership practice (Harris & Jones, 2019). Second, the weak yet significant correlation between values and practices (Table 4) indicates that interpersonal values serve as necessary but insufficient conditions for effective supervision, with other situational factors (e.g., resources, training, school climate) likely playing moderating roles (Hallinger, 2011).

These findings have significant implications for educational policy in the Philippines. The high mean scores across all constructs reflect a robust professional foundation in Zamboanga del Sur schools, yet the results also reveal opportunities for targeted improvement. Specifically: (1) leadership development programs should maintain their values-based orientation while incorporating more role-differentiated skill training, (2) the Department of Education's supervisory frameworks could benefit from greater flexibility to accommodate the complementary strengths of principals and head teachers, and (3) school improvement initiatives should adopt a systems perspective that addresses both values alignment and the structural conditions enabling their implementation.

The study ultimately advances our understanding of school leadership by demonstrating how universal values manifest differently across organizational positions while affirming the need for holistic approaches to leadership development—approaches that honor shared professional ethics while cultivating role-specific competencies within local educational contexts.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study provides significant insights into school leadership in Zamboanga del Sur. Although principals and head teachers exhibit similar interpersonal values, their implementation of these values in supervisory practices varies. The weak yet significant correlation between values and practices indicates that values alone do not ensure effective supervision; the manner in which leaders apply these values in their specific roles is equally important. These findings underscore both the robust professional culture in Zamboanga del Sur

schools and the potential for more targeted leadership development.

To translate these findings into actionable steps, we propose three specific recommendations for the Department of Education (DepEd): First, leadership training programs may be redesigned to include role-specific modules—principals should receive coaching on classroom observation techniques, while head teachers require support in administrative processes. Second, structured peer exchanges may be established, allowing principals and head teachers to regularly share successful strategies for values-based supervision. Third, simple monitoring tools, such as checklists or brief self-assessment forms, may be developed to assist leaders in tracking the translation of values into daily practice.

For school leaders themselves, it is suggested to initiate two practical actions: conducting monthly "values audits" during staff meetings to evaluate the alignment of current practices with desired values, and establishing cross-position mentoring pairs where principals and head teachers can learn from each other's supervisory approaches. These low-cost, high-impact strategies can be implemented immediately without awaiting policy changes.

Future research may investigate specific factors, such as available resources or community relationships, that facilitate or impede leaders in applying their values. However, the clear message from this study is that effective school leadership necessitates both shared values and role-specific strategies. By concentrating on how values translate into specific actions for different leadership positions, Zamboanga del Sur can serve as a model for building strong, cohesive leadership teams in every school.

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