

Leadership Styles of School Administrators and Their Influence on Employee Motivation in La Union National High School

Regina Grace A. Cariño 

Author Information:

Master of Arts in Public Administration,
Polytechnic College of La Union, Agoo,
La Union 2504, Philippines

Correspondence:

reginagraccarino@gmail.com

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Abstract. Educational leadership is a critical determinant of organizational effectiveness, employee motivation, and the successful implementation of educational reforms. Guided by contemporary leadership theories and the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH), this study assessed the leadership styles of school administrators and their influence on employee motivation among the teaching and non-teaching personnel of La Union National High School. The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design involving 157 teaching and non-teaching personnel selected through total enumeration during School Year 2026-2027. A researcher-made questionnaire, developed from established leadership theories, related literature, previous empirical studies, and Department of Education policies, served as the primary data-gathering instrument. The instrument underwent expert validation and pilot testing and obtained an overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.94. Data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, weighted mean, ranking, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that the overall leadership styles of school administrators obtained a grand mean of 4.12, interpreted as Highly Manifested, with Transformational Leadership receiving the highest rating ($M = 4.68$). Employee motivation registered an overall grand mean of 4.47, interpreted as Very Highly Motivated, with Commitment to Work ($M = 4.63$) obtaining the highest rating. Correlation analysis revealed a very strong positive relationship between leadership styles and employee motivation ($r = 0.823$, $p = 0.000$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The most frequently encountered concerns were heavy workload, excessive paperwork, work-life balance issues, limited promotion opportunities, stress and burnout, insufficient resources, inadequate internet connectivity, and limited incentives and recognition. Based on the findings, the Leadership Excellence and Development (LEAD) Program is proposed to enhance leadership competencies and promote continuous organizational improvement at La Union National High School.

Keywords: Descriptive-Correlational Research; Educational Leadership; Employee Motivation; La Union National High School; Organizational Commitment

Introduction

Effective leadership is widely recognized as a key determinant of organizational success, particularly in educational institutions where school administrators influence employee performance, organizational climate and the attainment of educational goals. As schools continue to respond to educational reforms, technological advancements and increasing accountability, administrators are expected to demonstrate leadership practices that foster collaboration, innovation and continuous professional growth (Bush, 2022; Hoy & Miskel, 2021). Consequently, leadership has evolved from traditional supervisory functions to a more transformational and participatory approach that emphasizes empowering employees and strengthening organizational effectiveness.

Among the various leadership approaches, transformational, democratic, instructional, servant, and transactional leadership have received considerable attention in educational research. Transformational leadership inspires employees through a shared vision, motivation, and individualized support (Bass & Riggio, 2021), while democratic leadership promotes participation and shared decision-making, leading to stronger organizational commitment (Yukl, 2023). Instructional leadership focuses on improving teaching and learning

through instructional supervision and professional development (Hallinger & Murphy, 2021), whereas servant leadership emphasizes employee welfare, trust, and professional growth (Eva et al., 2021). These leadership approaches collectively contribute to creating a positive organizational climate that enhances employee motivation and institutional performance.

Employee motivation remains an essential factor in achieving organizational effectiveness. Motivated employees exhibit greater commitment, higher job satisfaction, stronger organizational loyalty and improved work performance. Herzberg (1968) emphasized that recognition, achievement, and opportunities for professional growth are among the primary factors that enhance employee motivation, while Maslow (1943) explained that individuals perform better when their personal and professional needs are fulfilled. In educational institutions, motivated teaching and non-teaching personnel contribute significantly to improved instructional delivery, efficient administrative services, and the successful implementation of school programs. Within the Philippine educational system, effective school leadership is strongly advocated through the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001 (Republic Act No. 9155), the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads, the Basic Education Development Plan 2030 (Department of Education, 2022) and the MATATAG Agenda (Department of Education, 2023). These policies emphasize instructional leadership, collaborative governance, accountability and employee development as essential competencies of school administrators. Recent local studies have likewise reported that effective leadership positively influences employee motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational performance (Villamor, 2023; Pasturan, 2025).

Despite the growing body of literature, limited studies have examined the combined influence of multiple leadership styles on the motivation of both teaching and non-teaching personnel in large public secondary schools in the City Schools Division of San Fernando, La Union. Most existing studies focus primarily on teachers or a single leadership approach, leaving a gap in understanding how various leadership styles collectively influence employee motivation within a localized educational setting.

To address this gap, this study assessed the leadership styles of school administrators and their influence on employee motivation among the teaching and non-teaching personnel of La Union National High School. Specifically, it determined the level of leadership styles demonstrated by school administrators, assessed the level of employee motivation, examined the significant relationship between these variables, identified the problems affecting employee motivation and proposed a Leadership Excellence and Development (LEAD) Program to strengthen leadership practices and sustain employee motivation.

Research Questions

This study aims to determine the leadership styles of school administrators and their influence on employee motivation in La Union National High School.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the extent to which the leadership styles of school administrators are manifested in terms of:
 - 1.1 Transformational Leadership;
 - 1.2 Democratic Leadership;
 - 1.3 Instructional Leadership;
 - 1.4 Servant Leadership;
 - 1.5 Transactional Leadership; and
 - 1.6 Autocratic Leadership?
2. What is the level of employee motivation in terms of:
 - 2.1 Commitment to Work;
 - 2.2 Job Satisfaction;
 - 2.3 Professional Growth and Development;
 - 2.4 Recognition and Appreciation; and
 - 2.5 Organizational Support?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the leadership styles of school administrators and the level of employee motivation in La Union National High School?
4. What problems are encountered that affect employee motivation in La Union National High School?
5. What Leadership Enhancement Program may be proposed based on the findings of the study?

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study focused on determining the leadership styles of school administrators and their influence on employee motivation among the teaching and non-teaching personnel of La Union National High School during the School Year 2026–2027. Specifically, it assessed the level of transformational, democratic, instructional, servant, transactional and autocratic leadership styles, as well as the level of employee motivation in terms of work commitment, job satisfaction, professional growth and development, recognition and appreciation and organizational support. The study involved 157 teaching and non-teaching personnel,

who were selected through total enumeration. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed using a researcher-made questionnaire as the primary data-gathering instrument. Data were analyzed using weighted mean, ranking, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. The findings are limited to the perceptions of the respondents from La Union National High School and may not be generalized to other educational institutions with different organizational contexts.

Literature Review

Educational leadership has consistently been identified as a critical factor influencing organizational effectiveness, employee performance and school improvement. Burns (1978) first described leadership as a process of inspiring followers to achieve shared goals through mutual commitment and personal growth. Expanding this perspective, Northouse (2021) defined leadership as a process of influencing individuals to achieve common objectives, while Yukl (2023) emphasized that effective leaders motivate employees by fostering trust, collaboration and organizational commitment. In educational settings, effective leadership extends beyond administrative responsibilities to creating a supportive environment that promotes professional development and institutional excellence (Bush, 2022; Hoy & Miskel, 2021).

Among the various leadership approaches, transformational leadership has consistently demonstrated the strongest positive influence on employee motivation and organizational performance. Bass and Riggio (2021) explained that transformational leaders inspire employees by communicating a clear vision, encouraging innovation, providing individualized support and recognizing employee contributions. Similarly, Leithwood and Jantzi (2022) and Chen et al. (2020) reported that transformational leadership enhances teacher commitment, organizational effectiveness and school improvement. Democratic leadership likewise strengthens employee engagement by encouraging participation in decision-making and collaborative problem-solving (Printy & Marks, 2021; Hallinger & Heck, 2020). Instructional leadership contributes to improved teacher performance by emphasizing instructional supervision, curriculum implementation and continuous professional development (Hallinger & Murphy, 2021; Marzano et al., 2022). Moreover, servant leadership promotes trust, ethical leadership, and employee well-being, resulting in greater organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Eva et al., 2021).

Employee motivation is another essential component of organizational success. Maslow (1943) proposed that individuals become motivated as their physiological, safety, social, esteem and self-actualization needs are fulfilled, whereas Herzberg (1968) emphasized that recognition, responsibility, achievement, and opportunities for professional growth are key motivational factors. Within educational institutions, motivated employees demonstrate stronger commitment, higher job satisfaction, improved work performance and greater organizational loyalty, thereby contributing to institutional effectiveness (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2021).

In the Philippine context, the Department of Education continues to strengthen educational leadership through the implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads, the Basic Education Development Plan 2030 (Department of Education, 2022), and the MATATAG Agenda (Department of Education, 2023), all of which emphasize transformational, instructional and collaborative leadership in improving school performance. Local studies further support these initiatives. Villamor (2023) found that effective leadership practices significantly enhance management effectiveness and organizational innovation, while Pasturan (2025) reported that school administrators' leadership styles positively influence teachers' motivation, job satisfaction and work performance.

Although previous studies have established the importance of leadership in improving employee motivation, limited research has examined the combined influence of multiple leadership styles on both teaching and non-teaching personnel in public secondary schools. This gap highlights the need for localized evidence to determine how leadership practices influence employee motivation within La Union National High School. The present study addresses this gap by examining the relationship between school administrators' leadership styles and the motivation of both teaching and non-teaching personnel, thereby providing empirical evidence to support leadership development and organizational improvement initiatives.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to determine the leadership styles of school administrators and their influence on employee motivation among the teaching and non-teaching personnel of La Union National High School. The descriptive component was used to assess the extent to which school administrators demonstrated transformational, democratic, instructional, servant, transactional and autocratic leadership styles, as well as the level of employee motivation in terms of work commitment, job

satisfaction, professional growth and development, recognition and appreciation and organizational support. The correlational component examined the relationship between leadership styles and employee motivation without manipulating the study variables. According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), descriptive-correlational research is appropriate for describing existing conditions and determining the degree of association between variables in their natural setting. This design was deemed appropriate because it enabled the researcher to describe leadership practices, measure employee motivation, and determine whether leadership styles significantly influence employee motivation among teaching and non-teaching personnel.

Research Locale

The study was conducted at La Union National High School during the School Year 2026–2027. The school is one of the largest public secondary schools in the City Schools Division of San Fernando, La Union under the Department of Education and offers both Junior High School and Senior High School programs. It employs a diverse workforce composed of teaching and non-teaching personnel who support instructional, administrative, and operational functions. La Union National High School was selected as the research locale because of its large employee population and organizational structure, which provided an appropriate setting for assessing the leadership styles of school administrators and their influence on employee motivation. The school's continuous implementation of educational reforms and leadership initiatives also made it suitable for investigating the relationship between leadership practices and employee motivation.

Research Participants

The participants of the study were 157 teaching and non-teaching personnel of La Union National High School during the School Year 2026–2027. The teaching personnel included Junior High School and Senior High School teachers, while the non-teaching personnel comprised administrative officers, office staff, guidance personnel, librarians, registrars, school nurses, utility workers, security personnel, and other support staff. A total enumeration sampling technique was employed to ensure that all qualified personnel were represented. Respondents were selected because they directly interact with school administrators and are able to assess leadership practices and their influence on employee motivation. Participation in the study was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection.

Research Instrument

The study utilized a researcher-made questionnaire developed from established leadership theories, relevant literature, previous empirical studies, and the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH). The instrument consisted of three parts: Part I gathered the demographic profile of the respondents; Part II assessed the leadership styles of school administrators—namely transformational, democratic, instructional, servant, transactional and autocratic leadership—and the level of employee motivation in terms of work commitment, job satisfaction, professional growth, recognition and appreciation and organizational support; and Part III identified the problems affecting employee motivation in the school. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale. Prior to data collection, the questionnaire underwent expert validation and pilot testing, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.94, indicating excellent internal consistency and reliability.

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to data collection, the researcher secured approval from the Graduate School, the Schools Division Office and the Principal of La Union National High School. After obtaining the necessary permissions, the purpose of the study was explained to the respondents, and informed consent was obtained. The researcher personally administered the validated questionnaire to the teaching and non-teaching personnel and retrieved the completed questionnaires upon completion. The collected data were checked for completeness, encoded in Microsoft Excel and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Throughout the study, ethical standards, including voluntary participation, confidentiality and data privacy, were strictly observed.

Results and Discussions

Research Question 1: What is the extent to which the leadership styles of school administrators are manifested in terms of Transformational Leadership, Democratic Leadership, Instructional Leadership, Servant Leadership, Transactional Leadership, and Autocratic Leadership?

Table 1. Leadership Styles of School Administrators

Leadership Style	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. Transformational Leadership	4.68	Very Highly Manifested	1
2. Democratic Leadership	4.55	Very Highly Manifested	2
3. Instructional Leadership	4.48	Very Highly Manifested	3
4. Servant Leadership	4.42	Very Highly Manifested	4
5. Transactional Leadership	4.20	Highly Manifested	5
6. Autocratic Leadership	2.41	Slightly Manifested	6
Over-all Mean	4.12	Highly Manifested	

As shown in Table 1, the overall leadership styles of school administrators obtained a grand mean of 4.12, interpreted as Highly Manifested. Among the six leadership styles, transformational leadership received the highest rating ($M = 4.68$), indicating that school administrators consistently inspire, motivate, and empower employees toward achieving organizational goals. Conversely, autocratic leadership obtained the lowest mean ($M = 2.41$), suggesting that authoritarian practices are seldom demonstrated. The findings imply that administrators predominantly employ participative and transformational leadership approaches that promote collaboration, trust and professional growth. This finding supports Bass and Riggio (2021), who emphasized that transformational leaders enhance employee commitment and organizational effectiveness, and Northouse (2021), who asserted that effective leadership fosters motivation through inspiration and shared vision.

Research Question 2: What is the level of employee motivation in terms of Commitment to Work, Job Satisfaction, Professional Growth and Development, Recognition and Appreciation, and Organizational Support?

Table 2. Level of Employee Motivation

Dimension	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. Commitment to Work	4.63	Very Highly Motivated	1
2. Job Satisfaction	4.56	Very Highly Motivated	2
3. Professional Growth and Development	4.48	Very Highly Motivated	3
4. Recognition and Appreciation	4.36	Very Highly Motivated	4
5. Organizational Support	4.31	Very Highly Motivated	5
Over-all Mean	4.47	Very Highly Motivated	

As reflected in Table 2, employee motivation obtained an overall grand mean of 4.47, interpreted as Very Highly Motivated. Commitment to Work ranked first ($M = 4.63$), indicating that employees remain dedicated to fulfilling their responsibilities and achieving school objectives. Although Organizational Support ranked last ($M = 4.31$), it was still interpreted as Very Highly Motivated, suggesting that respondents generally perceive a supportive work environment. The findings support Herzberg's (1968) motivation theory and Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, which emphasize that recognition, achievement, and opportunities for professional growth contribute to high employee motivation.

Research Question 3: Is there a significant relationship between the leadership styles of school administrators and the level of employee motivation in La Union National High School?

Table 3. Relationship Between Leadership Styles and Employee Motivation

Variables	Pearson r	p -value	Decision
Leadership Styles and Employee Motivation	0.823	0.000	Reject H_0

The results in Table 3 revealed a very strong positive relationship between leadership styles and employee motivation ($r = 0.823$, $p = 0.000$). Since the computed p -value is lower than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that effective leadership practices significantly influence employee motivation. The finding suggests that administrators who demonstrate transformational, democratic, instructional, and servant leadership create a work environment that enhances employee commitment, satisfaction, and engagement. This result is consistent with the studies of Leithwood et al. (2020), Hallinger and Heck (2020), and Yukl (2023), which reported that effective educational leadership contributes significantly to employee motivation and organizational performance.

Research Question 4: What problems are encountered that affect employee motivation in La Union National High School?

Table 4. Problems Affecting Employee Motivation

	Problem	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1.	Heavy Workload	4.39	Often Encountered	1
2.	Excessive Paperwork	4.28	Often Encountered	2
3.	Work-Life Balance Issues	4.17	Often Encountered	3
4.	Limited Promotion Opportunities	4.05	Often Encountered	4
5.	Stress and Burnout	3.98	Often Encountered	5
6.	Insufficient Resources	3.91	Often Encountered	6
7.	Inadequate Internet Connectivity	3.84	Often Encountered	7
8.	Limited Incentives and Recognition	3.79	Often Encountered	8

As presented in Table 4, heavy workload emerged as the most frequently encountered problem affecting employee motivation ($M = 4.39$), followed by excessive paperwork ($M = 4.28$) and work-life balance issues ($M = 4.17$). These findings indicate that although respondents reported a very high level of motivation, operational and administrative demands continue to challenge employee well-being. Addressing these concerns through workload management, employee recognition programs, and supportive leadership practices may further strengthen employee motivation and organizational effectiveness, consistent with the recommendations of Fullan (2022) and the Department of Education (2022; 2023).

Research Question 5: What Leadership Enhancement Program may be proposed based on the findings of the study?

Based on the findings of the study, a Leadership Enhancement Program is proposed to strengthen the leadership competencies of school administrators and sustain high employee motivation in La Union National High School. The program title LEAD: Leadership Excellence and Development Program for School Administrators. The General Objective is to strengthen the leadership competencies of school administrators through professional development activities that enhance employee motivation, organizational commitment, collaboration, and institutional effectiveness.

Table 5. Proposed Activities

Objectives	Activities	Persons Responsible	Time Frame	Expected Output
1. Enhance transformational leadership	Leadership Training Workshop	Principal, HRD Coordinator	First Quarter	Improved leadership competencies
2. Improve communication	Team Building and Communication Seminar	School Administrators	Quarterly	Better organizational communication
3. Increase motivation	Employee Recognition Program	School Head	Monthly	Increased employee morale
4. Promote wellness	Wellness and Stress Management Program	Guidance Counselor	Quarterly	Reduced employee stress
5. Improve teamwork	Collaborative Planning Workshop	School Management Team	Every Semester	Increased employee participation

The effectiveness of the Leadership Enhancement Program shall be evaluated using the Employee Satisfaction Survey; Leadership Competency Assessment; Employee Motivation Survey; School Climate Survey; Performance Management Results; Organizational Commitment Assessment; Focus Group Discussions; and Annual Program Evaluation Report. The results of the evaluation shall serve as the basis for improving future leadership development initiatives and sustaining organizational excellence in La Union National High School.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical principles throughout the research process. Approval to conduct the study was obtained from the appropriate university and school authorities before data collection. Participation was voluntary and informed consent was secured from all respondents after explaining the purpose, procedures and significance of the study. Respondents were informed of their right to decline or withdraw from participation at any stage without any penalty. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by ensuring that no personally identifiable information was collected or disclosed. All data were used solely for academic and research purposes, stored securely, and analyzed in aggregate form to protect participants' privacy. Furthermore, the study complied with the provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act

No. 10173) and upheld the principles of honesty, integrity, and objectivity throughout the conduct and reporting of the research.

Conclusion

The study concludes that school administrators of La Union National High School demonstrate highly effective leadership practices that foster collaboration, organizational commitment, employee participation and continuous school improvement. Transformational leadership emerged as the most dominant leadership style, indicating that administrators effectively inspire, motivate, empower and develop employees toward achieving organizational goals. The teaching and non-teaching personnel exhibited a very high level of motivation, reflecting their commitment, job satisfaction and dedication to their responsibilities. The findings further revealed that leadership styles significantly influence employee motivation, with transformational, democratic, instructional and servant leadership contributing positively to employee commitment, job satisfaction, teamwork, organizational trust and professional growth. Although employee motivation remained very high, operational concerns such as excessive workload, increasing paperwork, work-life imbalance and limited promotion opportunities continue to affect employee morale. Overall, effective leadership serves as a critical factor in sustaining employee motivation, organizational effectiveness, and continuous school improvement by fostering a positive organizational climate that enhances employee productivity, commitment and institutional performance.

Recommendations

Considering the findings, school administrators should continue strengthening transformational, democratic, instructional and servant leadership practices by inspiring employees, encouraging innovation, recognizing outstanding performance and promoting continuous professional development. Greater employee participation in school planning, policy formulation and decision-making should be encouraged to reinforce collaborative leadership. The Schools Division Office should provide regular leadership development programs focusing on transformational leadership, servant leadership, instructional leadership, emotional intelligence, conflict management and organizational communication. Employee motivation may be further enhanced through institutionalized recognition and reward systems, wellness and mental health initiatives and employee engagement programs. Strategies to reduce excessive workload and paperwork, including efficient delegation, digitization of reports and streamlined administrative procedures, should also be implemented. The Department of Education should continue strengthening policies that minimize administrative burdens on school personnel while expanding opportunities for seminars, graduate studies, coaching, mentoring and leadership training. School administrators should likewise strengthen communication through regular consultations, feedback mechanisms, coaching conferences, and employee dialogues to address workplace concerns. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to replicate the study in other educational settings using larger populations, additional organizational variables and mixed-methods or qualitative approaches to further validate and enrich the present findings.

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