



Innovative leadership attributes of school administrators in the Philippines: Implications for educational management

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Abstract

Innovative leadership is crucial in the 21st century. The success of any organization depends on the kind of leaders in managing at the helm of the institution. This study determined the attributes of school administrators in the four dimensions namely: visionary, team builder, relationship builder, and risk taker. The descriptive method was employed using quantitative data. This study was conducted at Bukidnon State University, Northern Mindanao, Philippines. A total of 102 respondents participated in this study. They represented the five colleges of the university such as the College of Arts and Sciences, College of Nursing, College of Education, College of Social Development, College of Business, and College of Social Development and Technology. The data were gathered using a researcher-structured questionnaire. The instrument was validated and the coefficient reliability of Cronbach Alpha is 0.951. Mean and Standard deviation were utilized to analyze the data. The findings revealed that the administrators were rated *agree* by their teachers considering the four indicators of innovative leadership attributes. This implies that the administrators are much highly innovative. The result of the study serves as a guide for educational planners to incorporate the results of the study in the regular strategic planning.

Keywords: Attributes, innovative leadership, leadership styles.

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1. Introduction

Innovative leadership plays an important role in any educational institution. The best schools are managed by an effective leader. Leaders are multifaceted as they deal with teachers, support staff, students and parents. Innovation leadership is a combination of different leadership styles in organizations to influence employees to be more creative and innovative in the workplace. It is also about nurturing their skills and abilities to produce efficient results. Hence, innovation leadership is vital in attaining the mission and vision of the institution. According to Spahr [29] innovative leaders inspire others to think and create an environment where new ideas can be tested and evaluated. These leaders tend to be missionaries and motivate their subordinates through leading by example and fostering collaboration. Employees strive for creativity and innovation when their leaders are innovative Wipulanusat et. al [34].

Bukidnon State University envisions not only to produce expert teachers but also effective and innovative leaders. These leaders exhibit varied attributes

which can be the source of impression by the subordinates. The school leaders are expected to be innovative in managing the institution. They are expected to possess these attributes such as visionary, team builder, relationship builder, and risk taker.

These attributes will help encourage their subordinates to support them and work together for the attainment of the mission and vision of the institution. In addition, teachers are motivated to perform beyond expectations.

Numerous studies have confirmed the significance of innovative leadership. According to Hunter and Cushenberry [11] innovation leadership is highly significant in influencing creativity and innovation. Successful innovation becomes realistic and achievable with appropriate leadership. As such, Miller [21] mentioned that innovative leadership has evolved at the same pace as technology. Hence, innovation leadership is the skill of integrating an overview of innovation and leading its components of innovation in a strategic manner Ailin & Lindgren, [1]. However, current literature suggests that there is a research gap on the attributes required for innovative leadership specifically for school administrators that prompted a study to determine what those attributes are.

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The study is significant to the University in identifying the attributes of a good leader. The role of leaders is crucial for the success of the institution. Hence, this study aimed to determine the leadership attributes of school administrators at Bukidnon State University. This will also serve as a guide for the administrators on how to become an innovative leader in their respective positions.

2. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are the following:

1. To determine the innovative attributes of school administrators considering the four indicators namely: visionary; team builder; relationship builder; and risk taker.
2. To analyze the implication of the findings to educational management.

3. Literature Review

Relevant studies were reviewed to provide a perspective on the innovative attributes of the school administrators. This also provided the theoretical foundation of the study.

3.1 On innovative leadership

According to Basu and Green [2] innovative leadership is a product of path-goal theory and leader-member exchange theory as path-goal theory is based on the fact that many leadership styles are needed within an organization. Likewise, innovation leadership appears to be a new branch of study dealing with new complexities in value realization and the role of innovation in dealing with these. Carmeli et. al [3] who examined the firm importance of innovation leadership in enhancing various economic, relationship and product performance outcomes, found that leadership innovation can enhance firm performance. However, there are few studies on the attributes of an innovative school leader. Stevenson [30] in order for the organization to be successful, leaders will support innovation strategy and encourage their subordinates to make the right choices.

3.2 Attributes of innovative leadership

Recognizing the existence of individual differences in every human gathering as well as the need for efficient and effective realization of organizational goals, we must understand the nature of interactions within and around the organization especially in relation to their influence on the achievement of set objectives Chike-Okoli, [4]. Kotter [13] claimed that a successful organization has visionary leaders responsible for its innovation. On the other hand, Govindarajan [9] added that innovation leaders are visionary and innovators. They are responsible for developing innovations in the institution. They are also responsible for

managing not only the present but build the future as well.

According to Perry [23] the human relations theory of management, introduced by Mayo 1920 believed that people aspire as to belong to a team that fosters development and growth. That is, giving particular attention and due recognition to employees will encourage them to be more productive since they feel that they are doing something significant.

Since leadership centered on people, leaders must understand that the function of leadership is to guide and lead people. An effective leader is one who builds relationships and fosters communities Shaefer [27]. Hence, a collaborative environment is necessary for any organization.

One of the attributes of a leader is to take a risk. According to Flynn & Staw [7] effective leaders are expected to influence risk behavior among employees. He specifically examined the conditions under which leadership influences risk behavior. In addition, Ling [16] confirmed that a prone risk leader can attain innovative results. Yuan & Woodman [35] stated that innovative employees in the organization possess a desirable behavior which is to perform trial and error in any endeavor.

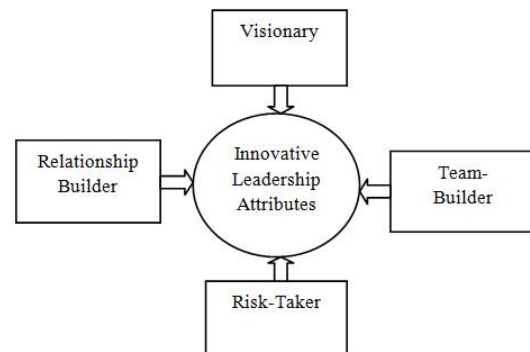


Figure 1: The conceptual framework of the study.

4. Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored on the concept of innovation leadership model developed by Gliddon [8]. This model emphasized that innovative leaders possess traits that create a work environment conducive to innovation and activities that lead to thinking and solving problem. This new paradigm shifts of innovation switches from information management to innovation management. To cope with this, innovation leaders should combine strategies and skills to implement change within an organization Lazarova [15]. According to Couros [6] the four characteristics of innovative leaders are visionary, open risk taker, team builder, and relationship builder.

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework showing the parameter of the study.

One of the roles of leaders is to establish a clear vision, mission, and objectives. It must be disseminated to all units in the organization to achieve uniformity. On the other hand, to create innovation, strong leadership is needed to embrace a creative culture that would promote innovation. Thus, there should be the presence of an innovation model that outlines how organizations deal with the flexibility to counter challenges and opportunities Sammut-Bonnici & Paroutis [25].

5. Method

This study employed the descriptive method of research, where a researcher-structured questionnaire was used to gather primary data needed. According to Sanchez [26] descriptive research describes and interprets what is. It is concerned with conditions and relationships that existed; practices that prevailed beliefs, a process that is going on effects that are being left or trends that are developing.

According to Koh and Owen [12] descriptive research is a study of the status and is widely used in education and behavioral science. It is based on the premise that problems can be solved and practices improved through observation analysis and description. The most common descriptive research is the survey, which includes a questionnaire, formal interviews, and normative surveys.

5.1 Sample size, sampling procedure & ethical procedure

This study was conducted at Bukidnon State University, the Philippines for the school year 2018-2019. The administrators refer to the unit heads and deans of Bukidnon State University. They were the subjects of the study. One hundred two (102) or 35% out of 292 teachers were taken as participants of the study. These participants represented the five Colleges of Bukidnon State University namely: College of Arts and Sciences, College of Nursing, College of Education, College of Social Development College of Business and College of Social Development and Technology. They were chosen using simple random sampling.

Prior to the gathering of data for the study, protocol as well as research ethics were observed. The participants gave consent to the researcher to gather data about them and to be utilized for research purposes. The researcher observed confidentiality in the process. Mean and SD were used to analyzed the data on the attributes of school administrators.

5.2 Instrument

The study was utilized researcher-structured instrument. The instrument was validated using both face and content validity by three experts in Educational Administration teaching at the Graduate School of Bukidnon State University. They examined the appropriateness and relevance of the items to the four

Table 1. Values of Cronbach alpha.

Variables	Cronbach Alpha
Visionary	0.952
Team-Builder	0.951
Relationship Builder	0.951
Risk-Taker	0.950

dimensions. Some revisions were made based on different suggestions by the experts. It was also tried out to 35 teachers not included in the study. Cronbach alpha was utilized to determine the reliability of an instrument and the value was 0.951, which shows that the twenty-one items in the questionnaire are reliable.

The instrument has two parts. The first part deals with the profile of the participants and the second part pertains to the four dimensions with a total of twenty-one items. A five-point Likert scale was utilized with a qualitative description of strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree.

Table 1 presents the reliability test for each dimension in the study.

6. Findings and Discussion Visionary Attributes

Table 2 shows the visionary attributes of administrators as rated by the teachers. The overall mean ratings were 4.21 or *strongly agree* with a standard deviation of 0.711. Among five indicators in visionary attributes, the three indicators are rated *strongly agree* and two indicators rated as *agree*.

The data in Table 2 also indicates that teachers *strongly agree* that their administrators have visionary attributes which means that administrators are very much highly innovative. This implies that the school administrator must be a visionary leader. He sets a clear vision for the institution and supports the teachers in making it happen. A well-developed vision unites everyone toward a common goal. Zenger [36] alleged that one of the traits of innovative leaders is displaying excellent strategic vision.

Hence, a visionary leader is someone who envisioned the future. Careful planning is necessary for creating and implementing a vision. As mentioned by Chopra and Ahmad [5] visionary leaders share and express the organization mission and goals in an easy and simple way so that everybody can understand. Their vision statement is always in a tangible and easy understood way. Their vision and mission statement is to help management. Visionary leadership develops the clarity, flexibility and focus in the organization grew to motivate the employees.

6.1 Team builder attributes

Table 3 presents the attributes of administrators as a team builder. The overall mean was 4.29 or *strongly agree* with a standard deviation of 0.707.

Table 2. Attributes of administrators as visionary.

A. Visionary	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
My administrators ...			
1. facilitate clear formulation of goals and objectives	4.28	0.708	SA
2. make sure that goals and objectives are parallel with the vision and mission of the institution	4.38	0.641	SA
3. conduct strategic planning regularly	4.17	0.755	A
4. motivate teachers to understand the strategic direction of the institution	4.04	0.838	A
5. create a work environment conducive to innovation	4.21	0.611	SA
Overall mean	4.21	0.711	SA

Table 3. Attributes of administrators as team builder.

B. Team Builder	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
My administrators ...			
1. motivate teachers to find other ways of doing work	4.22	0.801	SA
2. involve teachers in decision-making process	4.22	0.754	SA
3. open to new ideas from teachers	4.24	0.937	SA
4. give positive feedback	4.37	0.761	SA
5. utilize different forms of communications (ie. Fb, Twitter, Gmail, etc.) to reach out and transmit information	4.35	0.866	SA
6. encourage teacher to attend professional growth and development activities	4.34	0.971	SA
Overall mean	4.29	0.707	SA

As shown in table 3, it shows the attributes of school administrators as a team builder. This means that generally, teachers *strongly agree* that their administrators are a team builder. Administrators must foster teamwork among the subordinates. They encourage teachers to work together to attain success. Teamwork can lead to an increase in productivity and efficiency.

Several studies have shown that teamwork boosts productivity. When people work together towards a common goal, they can combine their skills, solve complex problems more efficiently, and strengthen their commitment to a positive outcome (Walgrove) [31]. According to Lepine et. al. [17] teamwork is positively related to important team effectiveness variables, including team performance, group cohesion, collective efficacy, and member satisfaction. In addition, McEwan et. al. [20] stated that teamwork training is an effective way to foster teamwork and team performance.

6.2 Relationship builder attributes

Table 4 reveals the attributes of administrators as a relationship builder. The overall mean was 4.21 or *strongly agree* with a standard deviation of 0.795. Out of the five indicators, three indicators are rated *strongly agree* and two indicators are rated agree.

Table 4 also presents the attributes of school administrators in relationship builder. The teachers' perception in this dimension is *strongly agree* which means very much highly innovative. This finding implies that

administrators establish a warm and cordial relationship among the teachers. Building a good relationship between teachers and administrators is valuable in any workplace. According to Kouzes & Posner [14], the quality of relationships and level of the trust require a great deal of attention on the part of a leader for a strong influence, and trust to motivate people to go beyond mere compliance with authority. It motivates teachers and administrators to reach for the best in themselves, their team, and their organization. In addition, human relations is the process of training employees, addressing their needs, fostering a workplace culture and resolving conflicts between different employees or between employees and management. Understanding some of the ways that human relations can impact the costs, competitiveness and long-term economic sustainability of business help to underscore their importance.

6.3 Risk taker attributes

As shown in table 5, the teacher rated their administrators as *agree* in all indicators, the overall mean was 4.09 with a standard deviation of 0.783. The standard deviation also shows that there is the homogeneity of their answers to each item because it is almost the same with the standard deviation of each item.

It can be noted from the results that administrators were rated *agree* in all items under risk taker attribute which means that they are much highly innovative.

Table 4. Attributes of administrators as relationship builder.

C. Relationship Builder	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
My administrators ...			
1. establish warm and collaborative working relationships with others	4.29	0.909	SA
2. work effectively with teachers from diverse backgrounds	4.27	0.802	SA
3. treat everyone with dignity and respect	4.33	0.903	SA
4. pay attention to individual needs	4.12	0.935	A
5. visit the teachers' workstations to converse with them face to face	4.05	0.980	A
Overall mean	4.21	0.795	SA

This indicates that school administrators are reluctant and avoid risk situations as much as possible.

Risk taking is something to do on how administrators make a right decision. According to the decision theory of Simon [28] decisions are made through rationale choice among different alternatives available. Hence, decision making is important in managing the organization. In addition, Zinn [37] mentioned that a person takes risk to develop a valued identity and to protect it.

According to March and Shapira [19] risk-taking is often regarded as an important organizational aspect of organizational success and many managers consider the evaluation of risk and management of uncertainty as essential components of their jobs.

One vital trait of innovative school administrators is to take risks and not be afraid to make a mistake. To make mistakes is the best way leaders learn. Tull [30] confirmed that risk-taking is an increasingly critical element of leadership and essential for a leader's effectiveness. A leader who wants to achieve success understands that taking risks is an essential part of achieving results. Furthermore, the willingness of leaders to take risks on novel initiatives and adopt fresh perspectives is the main factor in the success of innovation implementation Orazi et. al., [21]

Table 6 presents a summary of the attributes of school administrators in all areas. The overall qualitative description is agree. The responses in the table indicate a widely dispersed data. The responses of the teachers show heterogeneity which means that their responses vary. That probably means each teacher has different views on how innovative are their respective administrators.

Among the four attributes, the team builder got the highest mean. This implies that it is the responsibility of the administrators to establish teamwork among the teachers. As cited by Stott & Walker [31] teamwork provides teachers with a significant role in school decision-making, control over their work environment and opportunities to contribute to a range of professional roles.

Meanwhile, the attributes of administrators as risk-takers got the lowest mean. This signifies that school

administrators need to make risky decisions in order to achieve innovation. This would mean that administrators vary in their individual propensities to take risks. As mentioned by March [18] risk-taking is valued, treated as essential to innovation and success.

6.4 Implications of findings to educational management

The school administrators in this study were rated *agree* in the overall rating in the indicators of innovative attributes.

Among the four indicators, risk-taker got the lowest mean. The results show that there is a need for the administrators to take risk in managing the institution. Being innovative is a vital trait of an administrator. In this modern era, the success of any organization depends upon on the innovative leadership. With this, the university may conduct a training course on Risk Taking Management to enhance their knowledge in this aspect.

Another finding is the administrators must take time to visit the workstations of teachers to establish warm and cordial relations with them. This implies that teachers are happy when their administrators visit them in their respective assignment. It is also recommended that the institution must conduct training on human relations for the administrators.

In line with this, the university will conduct leadership training specifically on innovative management for the administrators to equip them with the new trends in management.

In addition, future research on the relationship of leadership attributes and organizational performance will be conducted.

7. Conclusion

The findings revealed that administrators were rated *agree* which means highly innovative considering the four dimensions namely, visionary, team builder, relationship builder and risk taker. It is therefore concluded that there is still a need to improve on these

Table 5. Attributes of administrators as risk taker.

D. Risk Taker	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
My administrators ...			
1. find new ways of doing things	4.10	0.795	A
2. apply new things to produce good results	4.09	0.849	A
3. devise ways that lead to creative thinking and problem solving	4.07	0.953	A
4. ready to make mistakes	4.0	0.930	A
5. recognize that success failure are connected and are necessary for growth	4.2	0.867	A
Overall mean	4.09	0.783	A

Table 6. Summary of innovative attributes of school administrators in four dimensions.

	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
A. Visionary	4.21	0.711	SA
B. Team Builder	4.29	0.707	SA
C. Relationship Builder	4.21	0.795	SA
D. Risk Taker	4.09	0.783	A
Overall Mean	4.20	0.749	A

attributes. The findings of the study are crucial to educational planners. This serves as their basis for possible agenda to be incorporated in the regular strategic planning.

This paper limits its scopes on the innovative attributes of school administrators which is quantitative in nature. Hence, it is recommended that a similar study may be conducted considering the profile of the administrators, their educational qualification, administrative position, age and gender. It is further recommended that a future research will be conducted on innovative attributes of administrators using multi factor analysis.

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