

The Mediating Effect of Accountability Climate on the Relationship between Transcendental Leadership of School Heads and Institutional Productivity

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Abstract: This study aimed to determine the mediating effect of accountability climate on the relationship between transcendental leadership of school heads and institutional productivity of public elementary schools in Region XI. Stratified random sampling technique was used which included 391 teachers as respondents. Through non-experimental quantitative mediation analysis through medgraph, validated questionnaire, mean, regression techniques and pearson-r, results showed significant relationships between transcendental leadership of school heads, institutional productivity and accountability climate. There was a partial mediation on the effect of accountability climate on the relationship between transcendental leadership of school heads and institutional productivity. Accordingly, accountability climate is one of the reasons how transcendental leadership of school heads can influence institutional productivity. It cannot, however, completely account for the relationship between the two variables.

Keywords: educational management, transcendental leadership, institutional productivity, accountability climate, mediating effect, Philippines.

1. INTRODUCTION

Institutional productivity problems are caused by several factors controllable by school (Hadderman, 2006). One major reason for the lack of improvement in schools is that administrators and teachers do not respond and implement well the change strategies designed by distant authorities (Fullan, 2009; Marzano, 2009). It is very much affected by the unstable governance (Halverson, 2007; Timperley, 2008), lack of incentives to leverage productivity improvement (Marzano, 2009; Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006), structures favoring continuity over continuous improvement and inadequate quality controls on innovations and proper use of students' time (Barber & Mourshed, 2009). Thus, only few school heads in the world are able to bring high academic result of their school productivity (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Yukl, 2006). It is constantly deteriorating inspite of the professional development plans of the Department of Education (Lapus, 2009).

Institutional productivity matters a lot in producing high achievement in its pupils (Barber & Mourshed, 2009; Chenowith, 2007). It gives schools greater incentives to be more productive because parents tend to choose educational institution that could raise students' achievement. Moreover, it is of great advantage to the industry and its growth where human capital has intensively built on it (Liu, 2008; Zacarro, 2007). Administrators who are actually pursuing to raise school's productivity induce productive staff and programs and allocate resources toward achievement-oriented ones to make the school more efficient (Fullan, 2009).

Cognizant of the importance of studies on institutional productivity, the researcher made an extensive review of literature for possible variables associated with it. Transcendental leadership of school heads was the first variable considered to be relevant. It plays an important factor in the productivity of the organization (Fullan, 2009; Kishore and Nair, 2013;

Jandaghi, 2009; Marsh, 2000). Transcendental leadership uses values, attitudes, and behaviors to intrinsically motivate followers, thus increase followers' senses of spiritual survival, and membership resulting to positive organizational outcomes (Fry et.al, 2005; Liu, 2007; Smith et.al, 2013).

Another variable that caught the attention of the researcher is accountability climate. It is used to describe the process of proving that something has been done or achieved (Fullan, 2010; Gilbert, 2006; Hopkins, 2007; Perry & McWilliam, 2012) to improve quality or performance (Marley, 2009). However, the researcher would like to know how accountability climate mediate the effect of transcendental leadership on institutional productivity.

It is on the above context that the researcher took interest to examine if accountability climate will mediate the relationship between transcendental leadership and institutional productivity. Hence making this study a generation of new knowledge that can give specific contribution to the field of education

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Transcendental Leadership:

Transcendental leadership is a balanced (Boney, 2009; Chary, 2007; Dhiman, 2007 Liu, 2008), conscious and inspired leadership that transcends self-interest and social conformity to create a climate for creativity and innovation (Boney, 2009). As a balanced leadership, it is concerned on the welfare of everyone that transcends his/her organization (Kishore and Nair, 2013). Conscious leadership is a leadership of self that includes self-awareness, self-regulation as well as character strengths and virtues (Fry et.al, 2005; Kishore and Nair, 2013; Lowder, 2011; Marti, 2009). Inspired leadership is leading others through modelling and developing positive leadership behaviours (Baguio, 2012; Kishore and Nair, 2013).

Accordingly, transcendental leadership is described as a special leadership wherein leaders transcended self into compassionate being and action (Ilies et.al, 2006; Kishore and Nair, 2013; Marti and Barrasa, 2009). Moreover, Gehrke (2008) opines that transcendental leadership begins with leadership of self, and ends in contribution to the greater community. This offers a platform for an enriching and collaborative human experience in organizational dynamics (Harung et.al, 2009; Liu, 2008; Sanders et.al, 2003).

While other styles of leadership focus on money, people and process; transcendental leadership initiates planet as a concept that needs attention (Ali, 2012; Gehrke, 2008; Marshall, 2012). Boney (2009) stated that it is the leadership of making difference for the welfare of all. To measure this construct includes demonstrated strengths in four meta-factor categories: humanity (social strengths), courage (instinctual strengths), wisdom (cognitive strengths), and resilience (philosophical strengths).

Institutional Productivity:

A productive institution has the following essential traits namely: clear focus, responsive internal and external adaptation mechanisms (Fullan, 2009; Goker, 2006; Marley, 2009; Tehubijuluw, 2014), intrinsic and extrinsic incentives (Hadderman, 2006; Liu, 2008; Marshall, 2012), and continuous improvement (Goker, 2006; Hopkin, 2007; Levin, 2005; Yukl, 2006). In addition, Levin (2005) identifies five dimensions of productive organization. Productive schools would have a clear objective function with measurable outcomes, incentives linked to success, efficient access to information, adaptability, and use of the most productive, cost-effective technologies.

Schools are social organization in which students, teachers, administrators, and many kinds of service personnel occupy distinctive positions and are expected to behave in certain ways (Warren, 2015). The relationships among many kinds of people in schools help to run the school organization effectively (Cashin 2010; Fryer, 2011; Lieberman & Miller, 2008). Every educational organization has a climate that distinguishes it from other schools and influences behaviour and feelings of teachers and students for that school (Fullan, 2010; Springer et.al, 2010). Springer et.al (2010) refers environment as a set of factors which gives each school a personality, a spirit and culture. Studies have found that school environment influences student cognitive and affective outcomes and values (Warren, 2015). Other studies also showed teacher job satisfaction is influenced by environmental factors of school (Gempes, et.al, 2011; Gregory & Chapman, 2015).

Yukl (2006) explicated that in a productive school, the structures operating for administration of the school is done appropriately. The school has clearly defined systems and structures that are operating for administration of the school. It

practices effective management of budget process and record keeping. Thus, if the school has a systematic process, all staff are engaged in the development of campus improvement plans that result in improved student learning. Moreover, when all teachers are engaged in the assessment of school programs and needs, they were more likely feel involved and responsible in their duties and responsibilities as a catalyst of change.

Accountability Climate:

The term accountability is often used to describe the process of proving that something has been done or achieved (Fullan, 2010; Gilbert, 2006; Hopkins, 2007; Perry & McWilliam, 2012). However, this is not the entire picture and that accountability is also a process to improve quality or performance (Barber, 2004; Herrera 2010; Marley, 2009). Earley and Weindling (2014) highlighted five different types namely: accountability to pupils: moral accountability, accountability to colleagues: professional accountability, accountability to employers or political masters: contractual accountability, accountability to the market or market accountability; accountability to the education system as a whole or system accountability These five facets of accountability can underpin an analysis of how leadership effect improvement within a climate of accountability, which is the purpose of this study.

Accountability climate in schools is not new (Goker, 2006; Hoover, 2011; Tehubijuluw, 2014). School heads have long been accountable for following the prescribed curriculum, for maintaining good order in their classroom (Hodgson, 2010; Levin, 2005; Liu, 2008; Rojas, 2012; Teegarden, 2006), and for carrying out various duties that include but extend beyond classroom teaching (Halverson, 2011; Hogdson, 2010; Macaulay, 2008). Until quite recent times, teachers were also accountable for their personal presentation and behavior to a degree that was arguably far more rigid than the various dress and ethical behaviour codes that exist today (Halverson, 2011; Hogdson, 2010; Williams, 2008).

Consequently, Sun (2011) noted that accountability has become a cornerstone of public sector reform in many countries. O'Donnell & White (2005) opines that producers should be held accountable for the outcomes they generate. Thus teachers and schools who are trusted with the imperative task of teaching and instructing children should be held accountable for student's outcomes and holding teachers and schools responsible for results intends to improve performance and identify underperforming schools for remediation (Halverson, 2011; Hogdson, 2010; Hogdson, 2011; Hurt, 2008).

Theoretical Framework:

This study is anchored on the proposition of Smith et.al (2003) that given a climate of accountability and potential for sanction created by current national education policy, principals' leadership behaviors have become central to the creation and facilitation of effective teaching and learning environments within their schools.

To support the above proposition the following views are cited: Perry & McWilliam (2007) proposed that school principals provide an account of all school policies and practices to anyone and everyone whom schools must be seen to perform in ways that are measurable and thus are rendered visible to all. Principals' ability to lead schools towards success may serve to support the global educational platform in identifying effective strategies to address school reform and accountability measures. The principal holds a critical role in shaping the school culture necessary for its success (Santamaria, 2014). Rebore (2011) cited that with a sense of transcendence, administrators may concentrate on carrying out the tasks and responsibilities of their leadership positions within a given school and reflect on their overall reasons for being educational leaders.

3. METHOD

This study employed non-experimental quantitative design utilizing the descriptive correlation technique of research which is designed to gather data, ideas, facts and information related to the study. In non-experimental research, researchers collect data without making changes or introducing treatments (Gehle, 2013). In this study the variables were not manipulated and the setting was not controlled. Descriptive-correlation research design describes and interprets what is, and reveals conditions and relationships that exist and do not exist (Calderon, 2006; Calmorin, 2007).

The study was conducted in public elementary schools in Region XI. The schools that participated included a mix of urban, sub-urban and rural school from diverse geographic areas of the region and were fairly represented by public elementary schools in terms of central and non-central type of school. A total of 391 respondents were involved in the study. Particularly, the number of teachers selected per division is as follows: Davao Oriental, 24 teachers (6.14%), Mati

City, 38 teachers (9.72%), Compostela Valley 61 teachers (15.60%), Davao del Norte, 37 teachers (9.46%), Tagum City, 17 teachers (4.35%), Panabo City, 14 teachers (3.58%), Davao del Sur, 75 teachers (19.18%), Digos City, 14 teachers (3.58%), Davao City, 102 teachers (2.30%), and Island Garden City of Samal, 9 teachers (2.30%).

There are three sets of questionnaires adopted from different authors, which were validated by experts on questionnaire construction. The first part of the questionnaire deals with transcendental leadership of school heads with indicators such as wisdom, humanity, courage and resilience. The instrument adapted and modified was taken from the study of Boney (2009). The second set of instrument employed is to measure institutional productivity. The instrument was adapted and modified from the study of Salisbury, et.al (2000). There were five indicators on this variable wherein each indicator is composed of five items. The third set of the questionnaire was adapted and modified from the study of Levitt, Janta & Wegrich (2000) consisting of ten items.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reflected in Table 1 is the correlation between variables. The r-value of .952 with a p-value of <0.01 signified the rejection of the null hypothesis. It means that there is a significant relationship between transcendental leadership and institutional productivity. This implies that the school heads' transcendental leadership is correlated with institutional productivity. Likewise, the result reflect that transcendental leadership is positively correlated to accountability climate since the r-value is .951 with a p-value of <0.01. Hence, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between transcendental leadership and accountability climate is rejected. Moreover, as indicated in the table, institutional productivity is positively correlated to accountability climate with the r-value of .964 with a p-value of <0.01, thus, signified the rejection of the null hypothesis. It means that there is a significant relationship between accountability climate and institutional productivity.

Shown in Table 2 is the regression analysis on the mediating effect of accountability climate on the relationship between transcendental leadership and institutional productivity. There are three steps to be met for a third variable to be acting as mediator (Baron and Kenny, 1986). These are categorized as Steps 1 to 3. Step 4 is the final step. In Step 1 (Path c) transcendental leadership as the independent variable (IV) significantly predicts institutional productivity, the dependent variable (DV). In step 2 (Path a) transcendental leadership (IV) significantly predicts accountability climate, the mediator (MV). In step 3 accountability climate (MV) significantly predicts institutional productivity. In step 4 the combined effect of transcendental leadership and accountability climate on institutional productivity is significant.

As a matter of triangulation, further mediation analysis through medgraph (Jose, 2003) is warranted, involving the Sobel Test to assess the significance of mediation effect. If the effect of the IV on the DV becomes non-significant at the final step in the analysis, full mediation will be achieved. It means all of the effects are mediated by the mediating variable. If the regression coefficient is substantially reduced at the final step but remains significant, only partial mediation is obtained. It means part of the IV is mediated by the MV but other parts are either direct or mediated by other variables not included in the model. In this particular case, the effect of the IV (transcendental leadership) on DV (institutional productivity) is significantly lessened after controlling MV (accountability climate). Therefore, only partial mediation took place since the effect is still significant.

TABLE.1: CORRELATION BETWEEN VARIABLES

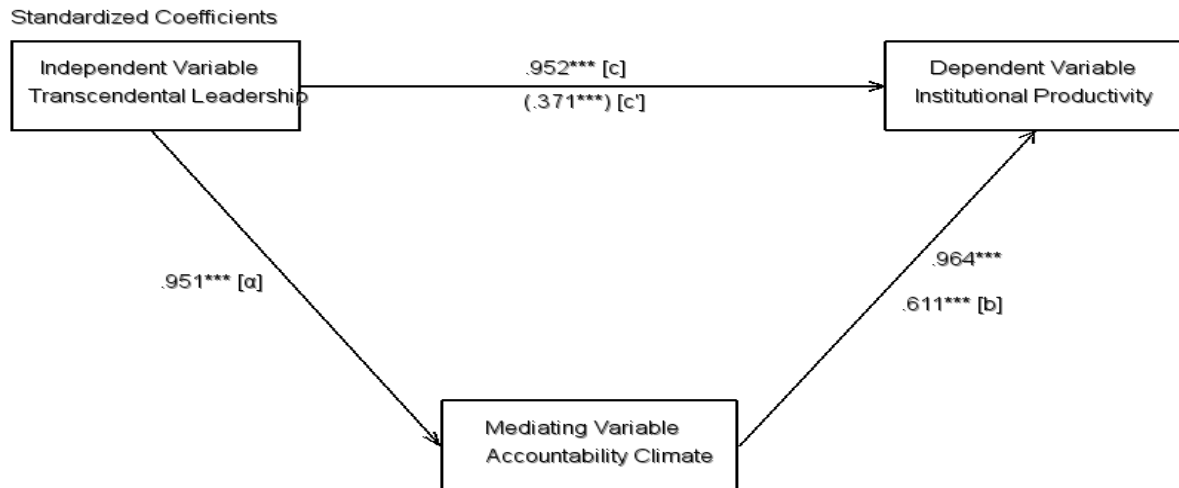
Correlated Variables	r value	p - value	Decision on Ho
Transcendental Leadership and Institutional Productivity	.952	.000	Reject
Transcendental Leadership and Accountability Climate	.951	.000	Reject
Accountability Climate and Institutional Productivity	.964	.000	Reject

TABLE.2: REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS OF THE DIFFERENT PATHS

Independent Variable (IV)	Transcendental Leadership
Dependent Variable (DV)	Institutional Productivity
Mediating Variable (MV)	Accountability Climate
STEPS	
Path C (IV and DV)	
Institutional Productivity Regressed on Transcendental Leadership	
B (Unstandardized regression coefficient)	.817
e (Standard error)	.013
Significance	.000
Path B (MV and DV)	
Institutional Productivity Regressed on Accountability Climate	
B (Unstandardized regression coefficient)	.876
e (Standard Error)	.012
Significance	.000
Path A (IV and MV)	
Accountability Climate Regressed on Transcendental Leadership	
B (Unstandardized regression coefficient)	.897
e (Standard Error)	.015
Significance	.000
Combined Influence of MV and IV on DV	
Institutional Productivity Regressed on Accountability Climate and Transcendental Leadership	
Accountability Climate:	
B (Unstandardized regression coefficient)	.555
SE (Standard Error)	.036
Beta (Standardized regression coefficient)	.611
Part Correlation	.188
Transcendental Leadership:	
Beta (Standardized regression coefficient)	.371
Part Correlation	.115
Total R Square	.942

Results:

Significance of Mediation		Significant
Sobel z-value	14.92855	$p = < 0.000001$
95% Symmetrical Confidence Interval		
Lower	.43247	
Upper	.56320	
Unstandardized indirect effect		
a*b	.49784	
Se	.03335	
Effect size Measures		
Standardized Coefficients		
Total:	.952	
Direct:	.371	
Indirect:	.581	
Indirect to Total Ratio:	.610	



NOTE: The numerical values in the parentheses are beta weights taken from the second regression and the other values are zero order correlations.

The sobel z-value of 14.92855 yielded a p-value less than 0.001, hence significant partial mediation occurred. The association between transcendental leadership (IV) and institutional productivity (DV) has been significantly reduced by the inclusion of the mediating variable which is accountability climate. It could be seen in the graph that .952 is reduced to .371 in the subsequent regression. The 95% confidence interval conclusively tells that significant mediation has occurred. It yielded a small standard error (se) of .03335 obtained by subtracting lower limit (.43247) from the upper limit (.56320) and dividing the difference with 3.92 (constant). The small se measures the precision of the estimate of the coefficient. The smaller the standard error, the more precise the estimate.

The effect size (.610) measures how much of the effect of transcendental leadership (IV) on institutional productivity (DV) can be attributed to the indirect path (IV to MV to DV). The total effect (.952) is the raw correlation between transcendental leadership (IV) and institutional productivity (DV). The direct effect (.371) is the size of the correlation between transcendental leadership (IV) and institutional productivity (DV) with accountability climate (MV) included in the regression. The indirect effect is the amount of the original correlation between the IV and the DV that now goes through the mediator to the DV ($a*b$) where “a” refers to the path between IV and MV and “b” refers to the path between MV and DV. The ratio index is computed by dividing the indirect effect by the total effect, in this case. $.581 \text{ by } .952 = 61\%$. It seems that about 61% of the total effect of the IV on the DV goes through the MV, and about 39% of the total effect is either direct or mediated by other variables not included in the model.

The aim of this study was to contribute to the literature regarding potential indirect, mediating variable for the relationship between transcendental leadership and institutional productivity. In particular, accountability climate was investigated as a potential mediating construct to explain the manner in which transcendental leadership affects institutional productivity. While full mediation was not found in this study, significant and important direct effects were shown that may be of help in the enhancement of the existing researches (Goker, 2006; Runhaar & Yang, 2010; & Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009) on transcendental leadership and institutional productivity. Importantly, the studies of these authors on the relationship between transcendental leadership and institutional productivity find relevance to the study of Smith et.al (2003) who declared that given a climate of accountability and potential for sanction created by current national education policy, principals’ leadership behaviors have become central to the creation and facilitation of effective teaching and learning environments within their schools. Specifically, the current study has found that accountability climate is a positive and significant partial mediator of transcendental leadership and institutional productivity and met Baron and Kenny’s (1986) mediation guidelines.

The mediation analysis involved the path between transcendental leadership and accountability climate and the path between accountability climate and institutional productivity. The findings confirmed the significant relationship between transcendental leadership and accountability climate, lending support to one of the framework accounts of this study that of Santamaria (2014) who maintained that principals’ ability to lead schools towards success may serve to support the global educational platform in identifying effective strategies to address school reform and accountability measures. The principal holds a critical role in shaping the school culture necessary for its success.

5. CONCLUSION

With considerations on the findings of the study, conclusions are drawn in this section. The findings of this study confirm the assumptions about the mediating effect of accountability climate on the relationship between transcendental leadership of school heads and institutional productivity. The findings are interpreted as a general acceptance of this assumption. Hence, the findings provide evidence that the consideration of transcendental leadership of school head is relevant for research on institutional productivity, transcendental leadership and accountability climate and accountability climate and institutional productivity. The respondents are agreeable with the idea that transcendental leadership is important on institutional productivity. The respondents exhibit a moderate level of transcendental leadership, high level on institutional productivity and high level on accountability climate. It generally indicates that there was a significant relationship between transcendental leadership of school heads and institutional productivity. There was also a significant relationship between transcendental leadership and accountability climate. There was a partial mediation on the effect of accountability climate on the relationship between transcendental leadership and institutional productivity.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the foregoing findings and conclusions, a number of recommendations are offered. The moderate level of transcendental leadership of school heads, high level on institutional productivity and high level on accountability climate suggested that school heads may develop and enhance their transcendental leadership and accountability climate for institutional productivity. To improve the moderate level of transcendental leadership, the school heads may be provided with opportunities by designing mechanisms that will involve all school heads to trainings and seminars that will enhance their leadership skills and learn the value of being responsible towards quality performance of school.

The high level of institutional productivity means that school shows a quality performance which means that students can already profit from quality education though they still need continuous improvement to support learning process. The teachers may encourage parents to play an active role in their child's education. Wittreich et. Al. (2003) remarked that when parents and teachers become partners, the connection between home and school strengthens. School educators, administrators, parents and students need to work collaboratively since their relationships are building blocks of effective teaching and student success (Witmer, 2005). The teachers should be exposed to trainings that can help them motivate and challenge as medium to deliver classroom instructions that facilitates collaborative and interactive learning process of the learners to achieve high quality performance. The high level of accountability climate means that school head carry out their functions as key players in the operation of the school. It suggests that DepEd officials, teachers, students, parents and community stakeholders may work hand in hand and must acknowledge their respective roles in achieving quality education with a focus on promoting leadership and accountability that make the school productive.

The partial mediation of accountability climate on the relationship between transcendental leadership and institutional productivity suggests that school heads may strengthen their administrative and supervisory functions giving emphasis on the productivity of schools. Finally, future studies toward examining other variables that can possibly mediate on the relationship between the variables will be of utmost importance to the research community.

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