

Innovative Leadership Strategies and Teachers' Work Engagement in Public Elementary Schools, Cluster 9, City Schools Division of Dasmariñas, Cavite: Basis For Enhancement Program

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Publication Date: August 21, 2026

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.22047542

Abstract

This study examined the innovative leadership strategies and teachers' work engagement in public elementary schools in Cluster 9, City Schools Division of Dasmariñas, Cavite, as basis for the development of an enhancement program. It utilized a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design involving 107 respondents composed of one Public Schools District Supervisor, three School Heads, 86 Teachers, and 17 School Governance Council members, with data gathered through a validated structured survey questionnaire and analyzed using frequency, percentage, weighted mean, One-Way ANOVA, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. The findings revealed that innovative leadership strategies were generally evident, with a grand composite mean of 4.04, while adaptability and agility and creative problem-solving emerged as the strongest dimensions. Teachers' work engagement was rated highly engaged, with a grand composite mean of 4.24, particularly in vigor and collaboration. Significant differences were found among the assessments of the respondent groups, and a very strong positive and statistically significant relationship was established between innovative leadership strategies and teachers' work engagement. Challenges identified included unclear communication of the school vision, limited resources, fear of failure, low teacher involvement, fatigue, stress, and low morale. Based on these findings, an enhancement program focusing on visionary thinking, risk-taking, empowerment, adaptability, collaboration, technology utilization, creative thinking, and continuous professional growth was developed and found generally acceptable, relevant, and feasible by the respondents. The study concludes that strengthening innovative leadership practices can help sustain teachers' motivation, participation, dedication, and professional performance.

Keywords: *Innovative Leadership Strategies; Teachers' Work Engagement; Public Elementary Schools; Cluster 9; Leadership Development; Teacher Engagement; Enhancement Program*

INTRODUCTION

The rapidly changing educational landscape brought about by globalization, technological advancement, and changing societal expectations requires school leaders to adopt innovative approaches that promote adaptability, collaboration, creativity, and continuous improvement. Effective leadership plays an important role in shaping teachers' motivation, commitment, and engagement, which ultimately influence teaching effectiveness and learner outcomes.

In the Philippine educational context, educational reforms such as the Department of Education's MATATAG Agenda emphasize strengthened educational leadership, teacher support, improved learning environments, and organizational resilience. Public elementary schools in Cluster 9, City Schools Division of Dasmariñas, Cavite, likewise face challenges involving administrative responsibilities, workload, curriculum changes, and the need to adapt to innovative educational practices. These conditions make it necessary to examine how innovative leadership contributes to teachers' work engagement.

This study examined the innovative leadership strategies practiced in public elementary schools in Cluster 9 and their relationship with teachers' work engagement. Specifically, it assessed innovative leadership in terms of **Visionary Thinking; Risk-Taking and Experimentation; Empowerment and Dedication; Adaptability and Agility; Collaboration and Networking; Use of Technology; Creative Problem-Solving; and Continuous Learning**. Teachers' work engagement was assessed in terms of **Dedication, Absorption, Vigor, and Collaboration**.

The study also determined whether significant differences existed among the respondent groups, examined the relationship between innovative leadership and teachers' work engagement, identified challenges, and developed an enhancement program based on the findings.

METHODS

The study employed a **quantitative descriptive-correlational research design**. This design was used to describe the existing levels of innovative leadership strategies and teachers' work engagement and to determine the relationship between the two variables without manipulating the research conditions.

The respondents consisted of **107 participants**, including **1 Public Schools District Supervisor, 3 School Heads, 86 Teachers, and 17 School Governance Council members**. The respondents represented the identified population in Cluster 9, City Schools Division of Dasmariñas, Cavite.

A validated structured survey questionnaire was used as the primary data-gathering instrument. Data were gathered following the required permissions and ethical procedures. The responses were organized and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools.

The study utilized **frequency and percentage** for the respondents' profiles, **weighted mean** for determining the level of innovative leadership and teachers' work engagement, **One-Way ANOVA** for determining significant differences among the respondent groups, and **Pearson**

Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient for determining the relationship between innovative leadership strategies and teachers' work engagement.

RESULTS

Innovative Leadership Strategies

The overall assessment of innovative leadership strategies obtained a **grand composite mean of 4.04**, interpreted as **Evident**. Among the eight dimensions, **Adaptability and Agility** obtained the highest composite mean of **4.25**, followed by **Creative Problem-Solving** with **4.21**, both interpreted as Highly Evident. **Risk-Taking and Experimentation** and **Use of Technology** obtained the lowest composite mean of **3.86**, although both remained interpreted as Evident.

The results indicate that innovative leadership practices were generally manifested in the schools, particularly in adaptability and creative problem-solving. However, opportunities remain to strengthen innovation support systems, technology integration, collaboration, and research-based professional learning.

Differences Among Respondent Groups

The One-Way ANOVA results showed **significant differences ($p < 0.05$)** in the assessments of Supervisors, School Heads, Teachers, and School Governance Council members across the innovative leadership variables. Supervisors consistently provided higher assessments, while Teachers and the School Governance Council generally provided lower assessments, particularly in risk-taking, technology use, collaboration, and continuous learning.

Teachers' Work Engagement

Teachers' work engagement obtained a **grand composite mean of 4.24**, interpreted as **Highly Engaged**. **Vigor** obtained the highest rating at **4.42**, followed by **Collaboration** at **4.39**. **Absorption** obtained **4.14**, while **Dedication** obtained **4.02**. These findings indicate that teachers generally demonstrate strong enthusiasm, commitment, and active participation in their professional responsibilities.

Relationship Between Innovative Leadership and Work Engagement

The findings revealed a **very strong positive and statistically significant relationship** between innovative leadership strategies and teachers' work engagement. This indicates that higher levels of innovative leadership are closely associated with greater teacher dedication, absorption, vigor, and collaboration.

Challenges Encountered

The most pressing challenge in innovative leadership was the **lack of clear communication and understanding of the school's vision**. Other concerns included limited resources, fear of failure, and low teacher involvement.

For teachers' work engagement, the most notable concerns were **physical and mental fatigue, stress, and low morale**. Overall, challenges in both innovative leadership and teacher engagement were generally moderate.

Enhancement Program

The proposed enhancement program included eight major components:

1. **VISION** – Visionary Thinking
2. **RISE** – Risk-Taking and Experimentation
3. **LEAD** – Leadership Empowerment and Dedication
4. **FLEX** – Adaptability and Agility
5. **CONNECT** – Collaboration and Networking
6. **TECH** – Technology Utilization
7. **IDEAS** – Creative Thinking and Innovation
8. **GROW** – Continuous Learning and Professional Growth

The program was generally perceived positively. Supervisors rated it highly acceptable, while School Heads, Teachers, and School Governance Council members generally considered it clear, relevant, and feasible for implementation.

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that innovative leadership practices are already evident in Cluster 9 schools, particularly in adaptability and creative problem-solving. However, the lower ratings in risk-taking and experimentation and technology use suggest that school leaders need to create more opportunities for responsible experimentation, technology integration, and innovation.

The significant differences among respondent groups indicate that stakeholders do not always experience leadership practices in the same way. The higher assessments from supervisors compared with teachers and the School Governance Council may suggest gaps in communication, participation, and implementation. Strengthening shared understanding of the school vision and increasing stakeholder participation may therefore improve leadership effectiveness.

The high level of teachers' work engagement, especially in vigor and collaboration, demonstrates teachers' strong enthusiasm and willingness to participate in school activities. However, the presence of fatigue, stress, and low morale indicates that maintaining engagement requires continuing support, recognition, collaboration, and professional development.

Most importantly, the very strong positive and statistically significant relationship between innovative leadership and teachers' work engagement demonstrates that effective leadership is closely associated with stronger teacher engagement. Innovative leaders who promote creativity, empowerment, adaptability, collaboration, technology utilization, and professional learning can create a more supportive environment in which teachers are motivated to participate actively in their work.

The proposed enhancement program responds directly to the identified needs. Its components provide a systematic approach to strengthening leadership competencies while simultaneously supporting teachers' engagement and professional growth. The positive acceptability ratings indicate that stakeholders recognize the relevance and feasibility of the proposed program.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that **innovative leadership strategies are generally evident in Cluster 9 public elementary schools, while teachers demonstrate a high level of work engagement.** Adaptability, creative problem-solving, and empowerment emerged as strengths, while technology integration, risk-taking, communication, and continuous learning remain areas for improvement.

Teachers are generally highly engaged, particularly in vigor and collaboration. Nevertheless, moderate challenges such as fatigue, stress, low morale, limited resources, and communication gaps remain.

The significant positive relationship between innovative leadership and teachers' work engagement confirms the importance of strengthening innovative leadership practices to sustain teacher motivation, dedication, participation, and professional performance.

The proposed enhancement program is generally acceptable and provides a contextualized response to the identified needs of school leaders and teachers.