

# Quality Learning Through Modern Leadership: An Assessment of 21st Century Styles in Public Schools in Sulu

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## Abstract

In the fast-evolving landscape of education in the 21st century, leadership has become a pivotal force in shaping the quality of learning outcomes in schools. This descriptive-correlational study assessed the extent of 21st Century Leadership Styles of school heads towards ensuring quality learning of public schools in Sulu. While t-test for independent samples determined the significant differences as to the Gender, One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) determined the significant differences when data were grouped according to age, civil status, length of service and educational attainment. Frequency counts and percentages determined the respondent's profile; mean and standard deviation determined the extent of subsumed categories, such as Recognition, Participation, Diversity and Openness. A high significant correlation was found between the relationship of modern leadership styles and

quality learning of public schools in Sulu in the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson  $r$ ). Teacher-respondents showed strong agreement that their school principals adopting and implementing satisfactorily the 21st Century Leadership Styles towards ensuring quality learning in the context of Recognition, Participation, Diversity and Openness. As a result, the role of the school heads to continue recognizing teachers' commitment to work, create conditions to participate in decision-making, affirm to their diverse gifts and talents and respond positively to criticisms became crucial in fostering a learning environment that promotes excellence, equity, and lifelong learning. This study supports Thompson, C. S. (2017) Model of Educational Leadership Behaviors (Recognition, Participation, Diversity and Openness).

**Keywords:** *Quality Learning, Modern Leadership, 21st Century Leadership Styles*

## INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly evolving educational landscape of the 21st century, effective school leadership has emerged as a critical driver of quality learning. As educational systems across the globe adapt to technological advances, cultural shifts, and the growing demands for inclusive and transformative education, the role of school leaders has become increasingly complex and strategic. More than ever, school

heads and administrators are expected not only to manage institutions but to lead with vision, inspire innovation, and foster a learning environment that promotes excellence, equity, and lifelong learning.

Leadership is what increases the school's capacity for improving teachers' instructional capacity (Heck, R. H & Hallinger, 2014, in Hajres et al., 2017). Principals' instructional leadership may support, to a degree, teachers working together to improve instruction, and together leadership and teachers' collaboration may contribute to school effectiveness by strengthening collective efficacy beliefs.

Driving change in schools, developing and supporting school leaders, adapting teachers to new models of professional development, personalized and blended learning, leveraging on resources and more recently building partnership with the community are issues those educational leaders of the 21<sup>st</sup> century ought to address. Educational leaders face unprecedented accountability pressures in what is clearly a results driven business. As these environmental pressures intensify, leaders and managers require greater understanding, skills and resilience to sustain their institutions (Adams and Zabidi, 2017).

In rural and culturally diverse area like the province of Sulu—educational leadership faces distinct challenges and opportunities. Sulu, with its unique socio-cultural dynamics, security concerns, and economic constraints, requires school leaders to adopt leadership styles that are both contextually responsive and future-oriented. The 21st century calls for transformational, instructional, servant, and distributed leadership approaches that go beyond traditional administrative functions, aiming instead to build collaborative learning communities and data-driven instructional practices.

While national reforms have been introduced through programs like the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum and the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH), the success of these initiatives heavily relies on how effectively school leaders implement and lead such changes. It is in this context that this study is anchored—to assess how 21st century leadership styles practiced by school leaders in Sulu influence the quality of learning experienced by students in the region.

### **Objectives of the study**

The primary objective of this study seeks to fill the gap in localized educational leadership research by providing empirical evidence on the relationship between modern leadership styles and learning quality in Sulu. Through the assessment of leadership practices in public schools, this research will offer insights into what leadership approaches are most effective in improving student achievement, teacher performance, and school culture, especially in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas.

### **Research Problem**

This study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of teacher-respondents in public schools in Sulu in terms of:
  - 1.1 Gender;
  - 1.2 Age;
  - 1.3 Civil Status;
  - 1.4 Length of Service; and
  - 1.5 Educational Attainment?
2. What is the extent of the 21st Century Leadership Styles of school heads towards ensuring quality learning of public schools in Sulu in the context of:

- 2.1 Recognition;
- 2.2 Participation;
- 2.3 Diversity; and
- 2.4 Openness?

3. Is there a significant difference in the extent of the 21st Century Leadership Styles of school heads towards ensuring quality learning when data are grouped according to their demographic profile?

4. Is there a significant correlation among the sub-categories subsumed under the 21st Century Leadership Styles of school heads towards ensuring quality learning in public schools in Sulu?

## METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design method was used in this study in selected public schools in Sulu, 100 teacher-respondents were randomly selected. This will guarantee that each respondent has an equal probability of being included. The Schools Division Superintendent and school principals were asked permission to administer the questionnaire and conduct the retrieval. Frequency counts and percentages were employed, mean and standards deviation determined the extent of subsumed categories in the context of Recognition, Participation, Diversity and Openness; t-test for independent samples determined the significant differences as to the gender, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) determined the significant differences when data were grouped according to age, civil status, length of service and educational attainment; and Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Pearson r) determined high significant correlations between the relationship of modern leadership styles and quality learning of public schools in Sulu.

The questionnaire was adapted and patterned from the study of Thompson, C. S. (2017). This consists of four main behaviors that teachers expected their principals and other educational leaders to employ in their leadership approaches. The research instrument used consists of two parts. Part I of the questionnaire focused on obtaining the demographic profile of teachers-respondents that includes gender, age, civil status, length of service, educational attainment. Part II was focused towards obtaining data on the extent of 21st Century Leadership Styles of school heads towards ensuring quality learning of public schools in Sulu in the context of Recognition (7 items), Participation (8 items), Diversity (10 items), and Openness (5 items). The 4-point modified Likert Scale which has the values 4=Strongly Agree (SD), 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, and 1=Strongly Disagree was used to analyze the data received from this questionnaire.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The demographic profile of 100 teacher-respondents shows three-fourth or great majority are female 74 (74.0%) than male 26 (26.0%) respondents. This result implies that female teacher-respondents are predominantly greater in number over their male counterpart. Almost half of the respondents are distributed within the 31-40 years old of age bracket; majority are married and therefore assumed to engage in multi-tasking works such as their teaching job, household chores, family affairs, and other social obligations; and more than half or majority are within the lowest range of 10 years and below of teaching experience with only minimum educational qualification of Bachelor's degree.

**Extent of the 21st Century Leadership Styles of school heads towards ensuring quality learning in public schools in Sulu in the context of Recognition, Participation, Diversity, and Openness.**

**Recognition**

Teacher-respondents expressed high extent of recognition as evidenced by the total weighted mean score of 3.6943 with standard deviation of .41300 which is rated as “Strongly Agree”. This result indicates that respondents believed that there exists the principal’s recognition of the results of teachers’ commitment to their work. That is, school principals in Sulu commend teachers/staff when they demonstrate commitment, promote modeling of successful practice, and encourage teachers/staff members to continue professional development.

**Participation**

A total weighted mean score of 3.5588 with a standard deviation of .39944 and a rating of “Strongly Agree”. indicates that respondents believed that there exists where principal’s giving way for teachers being in place to facilitate shared leadership and thus participation in decision-making. School principals in Sulu create conditions for teachers/staff members to participate in decision-making, seek to influence rather than use power to enforce will, and ensure low performing teachers/staff members receive support.

**Diversity**

Respondents who received an overall weighted mean score of 3.4120 with standard deviation of .39830 were asked to rate their agreement with the statement “Agree” believed that there exists the principal’s affirmation of diverse gifts and talents of teachers and staff which are called upon in service to the organization. In other words, school principals in public schools in Sulu utilize diverse strengths of members of staff, promote collective responsibility, and publicly recognize staff when they produce spectacular results.

**Openness**

A total weighted mean score of 3.4540 with standard deviation of .46263 which is rated as “Agree” indicates that respondents believed that there exists the principal’s openness to criticisms on the part of leadership in responding to concerns and corrections from teachers and staff. It also means that school principals show willingness to accept criticism, responds positively to staff members even when there is disagreement, and lead in the development of the strategic plan.

**According to gender**

When data are grouped according to gender, all sub-categories subsumed under the 21st Century Leadership Styles of school heads with their corresponding Mean Differences, t-values, and probability values are not significant at alpha .05. This means that, male and female teacher-respondents in this study although vary in their gender, however, they do not differ in their perceptions towards the extent of 21st Century Leadership Styles of school heads. Therefore, the claim which states that “There is no significant difference in the extent of 21st Century Leadership Styles of school heads in public schools in Sulu when data are grouped according to gender” is accepted.

### **According to age**

Out of 100 teacher-respondents, 48 (48.0%) are 31-40 years old, 21 (21.0%) are 41-50 years old, 20 (20.0%) are 30 years old & below and 11 (11.05) are 51 years old and above. This result reveals that majority of school teachers in Sulu involved in this study are within the middle age group level.

### **According to Civil Status**

Teacher-respondents result revealed, 79 (79.0%) are married, 19 (19.0%) are single, and 2 (2.0%) are separated. This implies that majority of teachers in selected public schools in Sulu involved in this study are married and therefore assumed to engage in multi-tasking works such as their teaching job, household chores, family affairs, and other social obligations.

### **According to Length of Service**

The total F-values of 3.972\* and 3.967\* with probability values of .010 and for sub-categories Recognition and Openness subsumed under the 21st Century Leadership Styles of school heads are significant at alpha .05, respectively. This means that, teacher-respondents that vary in their length of service, generally differ in their perceptions towards the extent of 21st Century Leadership Styles of school heads. The result implies that a teacher-respondent with 10 years & below of teaching experience may probably make him/her better perceiver towards the extent of 21st Century Leadership Styles of school heads with that of 11-20 years, 21-30 years, and 31 years & above, or vice versa.

### **According to Educational Attainment**

F-values and probability values of all the sub-categories subsumed under the 21st Century Leadership Styles of school heads are not significant at alpha .05. Teacher-respondents though vary in their educational attainment but do not differ in their perceptions towards the extent of 21st Century Leadership Styles of school heads. The result implies that a teacher-respondent with bachelor's degree may not probably make him/her better perceiver towards the extent of 21st Century Leadership Styles of school heads with those with Bachelor's degree with units in Master's Program, Master's degree, Master's degree with units in Doctoral Program and Doctorate degree, or vice versa.

The degree of correlations specifically demonstrates:

- 1) High positive correlation between Recognition AND Participation, Diversity and Openness;
- 2) Very High positive correlation between Participation AND Diversity and Openness;
- 3) Very High positive correlation between Diversity AND Openness.

These findings generally show, the categories subsumed the extent of 21st Century Leadership Styles of school heads towards ensuring quality learning in Sulu are highly correlated. Therefore, the claim that, "There is no significant correlation among the sub-categories subsumed under the 21st Century Leadership Styles of school heads in public schools in Sulu towards ensuring quality learning in the context of Recognition, Participation, Diversity and Openness" is rejected.

## Conclusion

This descriptive-correlational study assessed the relationship between modern leadership styles and learning quality in public schools in Sulu. Teacher-respondents are adequately represented in terms of gender, age, civil status, length of service and educational attainment. On the average, teachers showed strong agreement that their school principals adopting and implementing satisfactorily the 21st Century Leadership Styles towards ensuring quality learning in the context of Recognition, Participation, Diversity and Openness. Generally, except for length of service profile variables like gender, age, civil status and educational attainment do not significantly intervene in ways how teachers in Sulu assess the extent of 21st Century Leadership Styles of school heads towards ensuring quality learning. The group of teachers in Sulu who believed in the high extent of the implementation of 21st Century Leadership Styles in the context of Recognition and Participation are the same group who believed in the high extent of implementation as to Diversity and Openness. This study supports Thompson, C. S. (2017) Model of Educational Leadership Behaviors of the given domains (i) Recognition; (ii) Participation; (iii); Diversity and (iv) Openness.

## Recommendation

This study recommends that school principals in Sulu should continue to recognize the results of teachers' commitment to their work. Commend teachers/staff when they demonstrate commitment, promote modeling of successful practice, and encourage teachers/staff members to continue professional development; give way for teachers being in place to facilitate shared leadership and thus participation in decision-making. Create conditions to participate in decision-making, seek influence rather than use power to enforce will, and ensure low performing teachers/staff members receive support.

Furthermore, they should continue to affirm diverse gifts and talents of teachers and staff which are called upon in service to the organization. Utilize diverse strengths of members of staff, promote collective responsibility, and publicly recognize staff when they produce spectacular results.

In like manner, school principals in Sulu should continue their openness to criticisms on the part of leadership in responding to concerns and corrections from teachers and staff. Show willingness to accept criticism, respond positively to staff members even when there is disagreement, and lead in the development of the strategic plan.

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