

Original Article

# Leadership Behaviors of School Heads and its Influence on Teachers' Motivation

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## Article History:

Date received: November 30, 2025

Date revised: December 23, 2025

Date accepted: January 2, 2026

## Recommended citation:

Aportadera, L., Casa, I., Juan, B., Manait, K., & Trinidad, A. (2026). Leadership behaviors of school heads and its influence on teachers' motivation. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 4(1), 363-367. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.776>

**Abstract.** This study investigated the management behavior of elementary school heads and teachers' motivation in Esperanza District III, Sultan Kudarat Division. The research aimed to determine the extent of school heads' management behavior, the level of teachers' motivation, and the relationship between these two variables. Employing a descriptive correlational survey design, data were collected from elementary school heads and teachers. Results revealed that school heads' management behavior was evident, indicating consistent demonstration of effective leadership and organizational skills. Similarly, teachers' motivation was highly evident, reflecting strong intrinsic and extrinsic motivators in the work environment. Correlation analysis showed a significant positive relationship between school heads' management behavior and teachers' motivation, suggesting that improvements in management behavior correspond to increased teacher motivation. The findings emphasize the crucial role of effective school leadership in fostering a motivated teaching staff. Recommendations include continuous leadership training for school heads, the implementation of feedback and appreciation programs, and the fostering of collaborative environments to sustain and enhance teacher motivation. This study contributes to the field of educational leadership by empirically demonstrating the intrinsic link between administrative behavior and faculty morale in elementary education.

**Keywords:** Educational management; Management behavior; School leadership; Teacher engagement; Teacher motivation.

School leadership serves as the stabilizing force that shapes the quality of education within any learning community. While the classroom is the primary locus of learning, the school head is responsible for the climate, direction, and organizational stability necessary for teachers to perform optimally. Duran and Barlas (2025) highlight that leadership is not merely administrative; it is a critical determinant of teacher attitudes, job satisfaction, and sustainable motivation. In the specific context of Esperanza District III, Division of Sultan Kudarat, the efficacy of this leadership has become increasingly pivotal as schools face heightened accountability standards.

However, the relationship between leadership and motivation is complex and multifaceted. While current research establishes that supportive and communicative leadership enhances intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (General & Pua, 2024) and that poor management precipitates burnout (Singleton et al., 2024), there remains a need to examine how these dynamics play out in specific, high-demand local contexts. Motivation is not solely an individual trait but a responsive state shaped by the immediate administrative environment (Jud et al., 2023). Consequently, there is a gap in understanding how specific management behaviors directly mitigate or exacerbate the pressures faced by teachers in rural areas or district divisions.

In Esperanza District III, teachers currently manage a convergence of rising demands, ranging from rigorous curriculum implementation to intense community expectations. These local realities create a unique pressure on the teaching workforce, transforming effective leadership from a theoretical ideal into an urgent necessity. The current landscape suggests that without a precise understanding of which management behaviors most effectively buffer these demands, efforts to improve educational outcomes may be compromised by teacher attrition or disengagement.

Therefore, this study moves beyond general associations to empirically investigate the specific correlation between school heads' management behaviors and teacher motivation within this district. Addressing the scarcity of localized data on this interplay, the research aims to provide actionable insights. These findings are intended to bridge the gap between administrative practice and faculty morale, offering a basis for evidence-driven interventions that strengthen school governance and foster a resilient, highly motivated teaching force.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design. According to Creswell (2012), this design is used to describe variables and measure the degree of association or relationship between them. It is descriptive. It documents the status of school heads' management behavior and teachers' motivation. It is correlational, as it statistically tests the strength and direction of the relationship between these two variables without manipulating them. This design is appropriate for this study, as it seeks to determine whether specific leadership behaviors are significantly associated with higher levels of teacher motivation.

### **Research Locale**

The study was conducted in the 12 elementary schools of Lambayong District III, Division of Sultan Kudarat. The specific schools included were Baumol ES, Bilumin ES, Caridad ES, Pimbalayan ES, Midtapok ES, Mamali ES, Tumiao ES, Maligaya ES, Pidtinguian ES, New Cebu ES, Tinumigues ES, and Zeneben ES. Lambayong is a 2nd class municipality in the province of Sultan Kudarat. The selection of this locale is premised on the district's diverse educational landscape, which presents unique challenges in resource allocation and administrative demands. Focusing on these specific schools enables an in-depth analysis of how leadership behaviors manifest in a rural educational setting, where school heads often balance administrative duties with community engagement.

### **Research Respondents**

The respondents included both school heads and teachers from the identified schools. A total enumeration method was used to select school heads ( $n=12$ ) to ensure complete representation of the district's administrative leadership. For the teachers, the study drew from a total population of 173. To determine the sample size, the researcher applied Gay's Sampling Technique, which suggests that for smaller populations, a sampling ratio of at least 20% is sufficient for representativeness. In this study, a robust 30% sampling rate was used, yielding a sample of 52 teachers. Stratified random sampling was employed to ensure proportional representation across the 12 schools, thereby preventing bias from larger schools dominating the data.

### **Research Instrument**

The primary data-gathering tool was a researcher-developed survey questionnaire, rigorously designed based on a review of related literature and standard leadership frameworks. The instrument consists of three parts: Part I - Demographic profile of respondents. Part II - Assessment of School Heads' Management Behavior. Part III - Assessment of Teachers' Motivation. Each construct was measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 5 (Highly Evident) to 1 (Least Evident). To ensure validity, the initial draft was subjected to content validation by a panel of experts, including the research adviser, master teachers, and a principal, who evaluated the items for clarity and relevance. Following validation, a pilot test was conducted with 10 teachers from a non-participating school to assess the instrument's clarity and internal consistency. The data were analyzed to determine reliability. While traditional split-half methods were considered, the instrument demonstrated a reliability coefficient of .971, indicating high internal consistency and reliability, making the tool suitable for the final study.

### **Data Gathering Procedure**

The data collection followed a strict protocol to ensure ethical standards and administrative order. The process

began with securing formal approval from the Schools Division Superintendent of Sultan Kudarat, followed by obtaining necessary endorsements from the District Supervisor and the respective School Heads. Once permissions were granted, the researcher personally administered the questionnaires to respondents to ensure a 100% response rate. During this administration phase, the study's purpose was clearly explained, and informed consent was obtained from all participants. Upon retrieval, the researcher immediately checked the questionnaires for completeness to prevent missing data. Finally, the collected data were encoded and cleaned using statistical software to prepare for analysis.

**Ethical Considerations**

The study adhered to ethical standards approved by the Graduate School and the Division Office. Participation was strictly voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to data collection. To ensure confidentiality, personal identifiers were removed, and data were coded numerically. The researcher ensured that the data-gathering process did not disrupt the school's operations and that the respondents' psychological welfare was respected throughout the study.

**Data Analysis**

The gathered data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The following statistical tools were used: Mean and Standard Deviation. To determine the level of school heads' management behavior and teachers' motivation. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (Pearson r). To determine the significant relationship between the management behavior of school heads and the motivation of teachers.

**Results and Discussion**

**School Heads’ Management Behavior**

The assessment of the school heads' management behavior yields an overall mean score of 4.45, indicating a highly evident level of management behavior. This shows that school administrators in the district consistently demonstrate effective leadership practices, particularly in instructional support and accountability. The data highlight that the most prominent behavior is giving technical assistance to increase student achievement (Mean = 4.56). This suggests a leadership style heavily focused on instructional supervision and academic outcomes. This aligns with the findings of Bojos et al. (2025), who emphasize that the instructional competence of public school educators is significantly enhanced when leadership actively provides technical support. When school heads prioritize instructional assistance, they essentially model the professional standards they expect from their teachers. Conversely, implementing a well-rounded curriculum (Mean = 4.37) and setting high standards with appropriate resources (Mean = 4.39) were rated slightly lower, though still evident. This gap suggests that, while leadership intent is strong, operational execution of resource allocation and curriculum breadth is constrained by practical constraints. As noted by Ng (2022), effective leadership requires not only setting expectations but also logistical mechanisms to support them.

*Table 1. Extent of School Heads’ Management Behavior*

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. Encourage and support teachers to improve their teaching practices.	4.48	Highly Evident
2. Give technical assistance to increase student achievement.	4.56	Highly Evident
3. Evaluate or supervise the performance or conduct of a student.	4.42	Evident
4. Set high standards but provide appropriate support/resources.	4.39	Evident
5. Implement a well-rounded curriculum.	4.37	Evident
6. Foster a culture of continuous improvement in teaching and learning.	4.46	Highly Evident
7. Uphold the values and objectives of the entire organization.	4.45	Evident
8. Make teachers accountable for their actions.	4.48	Highly Evident
9. Ensure that expectations are met.	4.39	Evident
10. Drive sustained success for both the individual and the organization.	4.44	Evident
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.45</b>	<b>Highly Evident</b>
<b>Note:</b> 4.21 - 5.00 Highly Evident      2.61 - 3.40 Moderately Evident      1.00 - 1.80 Least Evident 3.41 - 4.20 Evident                      1.81 - 2.60 Less Evident		

**Teachers’ Motivation**

The results for teachers' motivation show an overall mean of 4.47, indicating a level of motivation described as Highly Evident. The data indicate a clear hierarchy in the drivers of teacher performance: intrinsic factors and relational dynamics significantly outweigh monetary incentives. The highest-rated indicators – Feelings of respect from principals (4.61) and pleasant work environment (4.61) – underscore the psychological dimension of the

workplace. This finding resonates with the work of Palomar et al. (2025), whose study on work ethics in public schools highlights that a positive, respectful climate is a foundational element for sustaining teacher commitment. When teachers feel respected, their ethical drive and job satisfaction increase naturally.

Table 2. Extent of Teachers' Motivation

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. Feel genuine pleasure derived from witnessing students' progress.	4.59	Highly Evident
2. Feelings of respect from principals and/or other employees.	4.61	Highly Evident
3. Attain personal growth.	4.53	Highly Evident
4. Gain more trust from school heads.	4.39	Evident
5. Doing enjoyable work.	4.59	Highly Evident
6. Monetary incentive.	4.20	Evident
7. Provide flexible working hours.	4.42	Evident
8. Free trainings and workshops.	4.59	Highly Evident
9. Pleasant work environment.	4.61	Highly Evident
10. Opportunities for promotion.	4.53	Highly Evident
Overall Mean	4.47	Highly Evident
Note: 4.21 - 5.00 Highly Evident      2.61 - 3.40 Moderately Evident      1.00 - 1.80 Least Evident 3.41 - 4.20 Evident      1.81 - 2.60 Less Evident		

Interestingly, Monetary incentives (Mean = 4.20) received the lowest rating. While still evident, it is the least powerful driver compared with intrinsic factors such as pleasure derived from witnessing students' progress (4.59). This supports the vocational nature of teaching described by Abdullah et al. (2025), who argue that intrinsic growth and passion are primary motivators, whereas extrinsic rewards play a secondary, supportive role. Teachers in this district are more motivated by the impact of their work than by income, provided that the relational environment is safe and supportive.

School Heads' Management Behavior and Teachers' Motivation

The correlational analysis reveals a significant positive relationship between School Heads' Management Behavior and Teachers' Motivation ( $r = .99, p < .001$ ). Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. The correlation coefficient of .993 suggests a near-perfect linear relationship. While this statistically confirms that improvements in management behavior are strongly associated with increases in teacher motivation, a coefficient of this magnitude in social science warrants cautious interpretation. It may suggest a halo effect, where respondents who view their school heads favorably rate them highly across all attributes, including their own motivation.

Table 3. Correlation Results Between the School Heads' Management Behavior and Teachers' Motivation

Variables	r	P-value	Interpretation
School Heads' Management Behavior and Teachers' Motivation	.993	0.000	Highly Significant
Note: ns - not significant at the .05 level			

However, this strong link can be explained by the emotional and instructional connection between leaders and staff. Pilvera et al. (2024) argue that emotional intelligence and instructional efficacy are deeply intertwined; effective leaders do not just manage tasks—they manage emotions and efficacy beliefs. In this context, the school heads' high visibility in providing technical assistance likely directly meets teachers' intrinsic need for professional growth, creating a synchronized increase in both variables. Furthermore, this aligns with Liu et al. (2020) and Pardosi and Utari (2022), who found that leadership behaviors are not isolated administrative acts but are the primary antecedents to teacher commitment. The data imply that in Esperanza District III, the school head controls the school culture, as teacher motivation rises in nearly a one-to-one proportion to the head's support and management behaviors.

Conclusion

The study concludes that in Esperanza District III, the school head serves not merely as an administrative manager but as the primary architect of the school's emotional and professional climate. The faculty morale in this locale is highly responsive to leadership cues. Specifically, the alignment between school heads' focus on technical assistance and teachers' strong desire for professional growth creates a synergistic environment in which leadership directly fuels intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, the study challenges the assumption that material rewards are the sole driver of performance. The data reveal that while resources are necessary, the relational aspects of leadership—specifically respect, clear expectations, and a supportive environment—are the critical determinants of teacher engagement. Consequently, the leadership gap in this context is not one of competence

but of resource mobilization, as evidenced by slightly lower scores in curriculum implementation and resource support. This study posits that sustainable educational quality in rural districts relies heavily on a high-support, high-accountability leadership framework, where the principal's ability to provide instructional guidance is the strongest predictor of a resilient and motivated teaching workforce.

## Contributions of Authors

The principal author contributes to the study's writing and implementation. The co-author edits and supervises the data.

## Funding

This research paper received no specific grant from any funding agency.

## Conflict of Interests

The authors assert no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

## Acknowledgment

The researchers would like to express their sincere gratitude to the following individuals, who generously gave their time, encouragement, effort, guidance, and motivation to make this study a reality.

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