Leader-member exchange in Maguindanao Grade Schools: The role of behavioral influence tactics and adversity quotient

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The study was undertaken in DepEd’s Maguindanao I Division in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) during the SY 2014-2015. It aimed to determine the relationships of Grade School heads’ adversity quotient (AQ) and behavioral influence tactics to leader-member exchange (LMX). The researchers used the descriptive-correlational method of research. A total of 23 randomly selected Grade School heads answered the survey questionnaires on AQ Profile and LMX Scale, while 196 teachers responded the Influence Behavior Questionnaire and LMX Scale. In data analyses, percentage, mean, Pearson r and coefficient of determination were used. As found out, school heads’ AQ is normally of moderate level denoting that mostly have reasonable level of resilience and effectiveness in handling problems or adverse situations. They often used behavioral influence tactics like inspirational appeal, rational persuasion, consultation, collaboration, personal appeal and ingratiation. The subordinates are more likely to respond favorably to tactics that bring out their commitment and nurture their emotional well-being. Generally, a high quality LMX exists between Grade School heads and teachers. It is maintained through fostering respect for each other’s knowledge and competence on the job. Behavioral influence tactics and LMX of school heads are proven related to each other. Positive influence tactics tends to promote high work performance. Nonetheless, the Grade School heads’ AQ is not related to LMX. Thus, the ability of school heads to cope with life’s adversities has no direct link to the existing leader-member exchange in public schools.

Key words: Adversity quotient, behavioral influence tactics, school management, leader-member exchange, grade school heads.

INTRODUCTION

Practically, leading Grade school literally means capturing the hearts and minds of the teaching staff. This educational task maybe even simplified given a school leader who possesses distinctive charisma, and has definite control over himself, his works and subordinates, including those unwelcome events in the workplace and in life.

According to Yukl (2005), leadership is a process of interaction between leaders and subordinates where the former attempts to influence the behavior of his subordinates to accomplish organizational goals.

Corollary, the works of Pfeffer (1981) confirm influence as the ability to exercise power in order to overcome resistance in achieving a desired objective or result. McFarland et al. (2002) agree that the appropriate use of influence is an essential leadership function that distinguishes successful managers from non-successful ones. In addition, Kelman and Hamilton (1989) as cited by Barry and Shapiro (1992), explained that influence tactics are actions that people take to change the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of target individuals. In their study, Kipnis and Schmidt (1985) group influence tactics they had identified and consolidated as hard, soft, and rational. Hard tactics require the use of authority and position power, soft tactics involve the use of personal power, and rational persuasion tactics rely upon the use.
of logic.

Moreover, advocates of Adversity Quotient (AQ) theorized that the higher a person’s AQ is, the higher his ability to withstand adversity, which in turn is thought to translate into increases in work performance. It is currently the world’s most widely used measure in assessing one’s resilience and learning how to deal with everything from minor troubles to major setbacks more effectively. Implicitly, educational leaders have to keep satisfactory AQ owing to their stressful job.

To further understand organizational dynamics, the theory of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) was advanced by some industrial experts. Scandura (1999) and Yukl (2005) describe the model as the relationship between a leader and a subordinate, and how they influence each other in an organization, and examine their interdependencies. It also states that leaders in groups maintain their position through a series of implicit exchange agreements with their members. Graen and Cashman (1975) justify that in every supervisor-subordinate dyad, the nature of the exchange varies between supervisors and subordinates. Precisely, LMX plots do exist in schools.

Acknowledging public schools as dynamic systems, and Grade School head-teachers relationships as vital towards achieving school effectiveness and quality delivery of services, the researchers thought of exploring the association of school heads’ Behavioral Influence Tactics and Adversity Quotient to LMX. Relevant researches on these concepts have been done in western countries, and studies in school settings are still limited so far. Even so, these theories are almost under-studied and unexplored in the Philippines. On this light, the study was carried out.

The results of the study expect to ordinarily benefit the school’s stakeholders. Notably, it will be incredibly helpful to school administrators because it will provide them better appreciation on the usefulness of having cordial working relations with their followers. Also, the school heads will be provided essential facts about AQ, behavioral influence tactics, and LMX. Being conscious of their AQ, they will certainly be motivated to endure challenges in life for productivity, performance, innovation, and morale. Having fluency with the most or less effective influence tactics, school leaders would have better options to work in solving common problems.

Besides, teachers will be aware of the common behavioral influence tactics that school heads are employing to successfully get their actions together and done. Eventually, the pupils will indeed experience improved learning opportunities and academic achievement given a healthy administrator-teachers relationships in school.

Primarily, this study endeavored to describe the role of behavioral influence tactics and adversity quotient (AQ) of Grade School heads to the so-called leader-member exchange (LMX) in the Division of Maguindanao I. In particular, this study sought to achieve these objectives: 1) to describe the school heads’ behavioral influence tactics and AQ, and the LMX; and 2) to relate behavioral influence tactics with LMX, as well as adversity quotient with LMX.

**Conceptual framework**

Basically, this study is anchored on Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory of Graen and Cashman (2005). It asserts that leaders develop relationships with each member of their work group. A high quality relationship is characterized by the member having high levels of responsibility, decision influence, and access to resources. Members who enjoy a high quality LMX relationship are said to be in the in-group, while those having low levels of responsibility and decision influence, belongs to the out-group. It also explains that high LMX relationship will result to positive outcomes like lower turnover, higher subordinate performance, commitment, and satisfaction. Said relationship includes role taking, role making and consistency.

In contrast, Dr. Stoltz (1997) introduced the concept of Adversity Quotient (AQ) which refers to the capacity of a person to deal with the adversities in life. Along with the supervisor-members interaction is the ability of an employee to respond or deal with the challenges of work. He theorized four dimensions of one’s AQ to comprise control, ownership, reach, and endurance (CORE). A person’s inner CORE tells how that person responds to adversity, that is, how one handles every conflict, deadline, setback, injustice, opportunity and challenge.

Moreover, Crawford and Strohkirch (2008) posited that the school leader’s ability to positively influence their co-workers or members is one of the leadership responsibilities, and has impact on their organizational performance. Thus, it is ideal that school leaders and teachers should possess positive and charismatic influence behaviors or tactics. Quinley (2006) identifies that influence tactics used in educational set up usually include dimensions such as rational, consultation, inspiration and personal, ingratiation, and pressure. These are essentials to influence the development of goals and policies, including the management of the human resources necessary to support the school system and planned programs (Figure 1).

In this study, it is assumed that AQ and behavioral influence tactics as inherent and acquired characteristics of school heads may affect their way of influencing and interacting with their subordinates and colleagues at work. This inquiry may also partly determine whether or not school heads are highly regarded and respected by their subordinates based on their Adversity Quotient. Figure 1 illustrates the relationships of AQ and behavioral tactics, serving as independent variables, with LMX as the dependent variable. Implicitly, the existing
relationships or working environment demonstrated by quality LMX will most likely conclude to a quality delivery of school services.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The descriptive-correlational design was used in this study. Essentially, the scheme was applicable in describing the school heads’ adversity quotient, behavioral influence tactics, and the prevailing LMX, including the potential relationships between these variables.

The study was undertaken in the Division of Maguindanao I, part of DepED Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), during the School Year 2014-2015. Respondents were the school heads and teachers coming from the selected public elementary schools. Sampling methods were applied in determining the size of the respondents. The researchers used the estimation from the population mean approach so that a sample of 23 school heads and 196 teachers was derived representing all complete Grade schools in the School Division.

In data gathering, the study made use of three (3) sets of survey questionnaires adapted from Stoltz’s Adversity Response Profile (1997), Yukl’s Influence Behavior Questionnaire (2007), Liden and Maslyn’s Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Scale (1998). The original research instruments were duly evaluated, and slightly modified to customize the present needs of the study. To ensure validity and reliability, experts were tapped to validate the contents of these tools, and later pilot-tested to measure the internal consistency.

In particular, the ARP questionnaire was a self-rating tool used to measure how school heads respond to adverse situations. It describes 20 scenarios where each represents an event or situation answerable on a 5-point bipolar scale (that is, 1-no effect to 5 - completely affects).

Similarly, the LMX Scale was consist of 12 items with 4 indicators each on role taking, role making, and consistency. The four-point response format was used with 4-strongly agree, 3-agree, 2-disagree, and 1-strongly disagree. The IBQ was used to determine the behavioral influence tactics used by the school heads as perceived by the teachers. The instrument included 7 tactic subscales (rational persuasion, inspirational appeal, personal appeal, consultation, collaboration, ingratiation, pressure) with 4 statements each. For responses, it used the four-point Likert scale format with 4-very often, 3-moderately often, 2-occasionally, and 1-very seldom or never.

Subsequently, the gathered data were analyzed and tested through applicable statistical treatment. Graphical chart and percentage were used to present the school heads’ adversity quotient profile according to Stoltz’s major levels that is, high, moderate and low. The mean was used to describe the school heads’ behavioral influence tactics and LMX. Also, the Pearson r correlation was applied to determine the relationship of AQ and Behavioral Influence Tactics with LMX. The coefficient of determination was further employed to measure the strength of association between these variables. In
hypothesis testing, the level of significance was set at $\alpha = 0.05$.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As shown in Figure 2, roughly one-half (48%) of the Grade School heads have moderate level of adversity quotient. It is worth noting too, that 30% were having high AQ while 22% have low AQ. These figures also denote that school heads with moderate and high AQ levels constituted around 78% or approximately 3/4. In other words, only 1 out of 4 has low AQ; hence, the rest or about 3 in 4 Maguindanao school heads are becoming and more resilient, optimistic, conscious of their well-being and, most of all, greatly accountable for improving a situation and responsible for the consequences of their actions. Most likely, the AQ level of these school officials maybe attributed by the fact that peace and order in the province is often unstable, and poverty is prevalent.

The result apparently confirms Zhou’s (2009) compilation of studies revealing that grade school administrators and even teachers usually fall within the moderate level of adversity quotient. Due to the pressures of teaching, and as educational managers, they are prone to experience hardships in meeting or coping from adverse situations from time to time.

Many studies unanimously agreed that influence tactics encompass a wide variety of proactive influence behaviors relevant to an agent’s effectiveness (Yukl and Tracey, 2002). Table 1 summarizes the seven (7) commonly behavioral influence tactics observed by teachers among Grade School administrators in Maguindanao I.

Obviously, Grade School heads have “occasionally” used pressure; thus, they rarely used it as a strategy in influencing their subordinates. This approach categorically obliges them to resort to using demands, threats, or persistent reminders to influence a target. It cues members that their leaders expect compliance with their requests regardless of the member’s intrinsic motivation. The occasional application of this tactics is indicative of its less acceptability and ineffectiveness to teachers.

In contrast, tactics like rational persuasion, inspirational appeal, personal appeal, consultation, collaboration, and ingratiation are repeatedly used by school heads to influence colleagues and subordinates. This result implies that school heads prefer to use subtle and friendly tactics to persuade their subordinates into freely performing their participation, support and loyalty when given tasks.

Gardner and Avolio (2008) have similar idea as regards this finding. As cited, soft influence tactics like inspirational appeal is ordinarily practiced in a school setting. It provides followers and subordinates with challenges and meaning for engaging in shared goals and undertakings. Also, the inspirational appeal of the authentic transformational school leader tends to focus on the best in their people - on harmony, charity and good works.

Gerstner and Day (2007) discussed the basic principle of LMX such that leaders develop different types of exchange relationships with their followers. Apparently, the quality of these relationships affects important leader and member attitudes and behaviors. Northouse (2007) categorizes LMX to consist role taking, role making, and consistency.

Table 2 presents the quality of Leader-Member Exchange among the Grade School heads and teachers in Maguindanao I.

In general, the quality of LMX among Grade schools is high; individually, it is true to role taking, role making and consistency. This means that school heads and their subordinates mutually recognize each other’s individuality and consider each one as a friend. Similarly, school heads provide support and trust in their subordinates, and extend help when necessary for the individual’s professional growth and accomplishment of organizational goals. The teachers show respect and loyalty to their school heads by working hard and meeting their desired expectations. The working relationships between the school head and his teachers are established due to respect for each other’s professional abilities, and satisfaction in one another’s performance and contribution to the organization. In summary, there is an essentially good social relationship between the Grade School heads and their teachers.

According to Graen and Uhl-Bien (2005), high quality LMX relationships can facilitate leaders to “identify the passions of individual academic faculty, and then draw upon these passions to foster a sense of organizational citizenship and transformative collaboration.” Likewise, favorable LMX enhances the subordinates’ motivation, job satisfaction and productivity (Lunenburg, 2010). High-quality relationship prompted members to assume greater job responsibility, contribute more to the organization, and are rated higher in performance (Schreisheim et al., 1998).

Table 3 shows the result of the correlational analyses of the school heads’ behavioral influence tactics, adversity quotient, and leader-member exchange.

Empirically, behavioral influence tactics and LMX are significantly related to each other, that is $\rho =$ 0.829 > r-tab (0.05) = 0.413. It follows that the proactive strategies used by the Grade School heads to influence their teachers are associated with the quality of their social exchange relationship. The statistical result can also be construed, such that, 69% of the variations in leader-member exchange are explained by the variations in behavioral influence tactics employed; the remaining 31% may be attributed to other factors such as the worker’s age, gender, personality, attitude, workload, job challenges, and the likes. This relationship is relatively strong, thus, it can be inferred that LMX in Grade schools...
can be determined by the mode of behavioral influence tactics a certain administrator applies.

Apparently, this finding substantiates the earlier claim that there is moderate link between LMX and choice of influence tactics of managers and executives in large-scale multinational companies in Malaysia (Lo, Ramaya, and de Run, 2010). In contrast, Raabeh and Beehr’s (2003) study found out that no direct works on how LMX would affect supervisors’ influence tactics.

Conversely, the adversity quotient of the Grade School heads is not related to LMX (r-comp=0.133<r-tab (0.05)=0.413). This implies that having a high AQ does not guarantee a high quality leader-member exchange. Similarly, when there exists a poor relationship between the school head and subordinates in a school it does not mean that the former has lower AQ. It can be deduced that the school heads’ ability to deal and cope with adverse situations have nothing to do with the quality of leader-member exchange. Whether their adversity quotient is low or high, it will not directly manifest influence or impression to the professional and personal relationships between them and their subordinates.

CONCLUSIONS/IMPLICATION

Majority of the Grade School heads have moderate level while about ¼ have low Adversity Quotient. Cognizant of the importance of AQ, there is a need to enhance it from its current level as it can be adjusted and developed because it is behavioral. Dr. Stoltz advised, “The stronger your AQ, the more effectively you will respond to adversity, and the less life’s events will take a toll on your energy, performance, health, and outlook. The weaker your AQ, the more difficult it can be for you to maintain the energy, optimism, and fortitude required to optimize your talents and your life.” (http://www.peaklearning.com). Thus, it is highly suggested that the Department of Education should initiate intervention programs or relevant training on this regards either in the district or division level. This will probably equip them how to exactly handle every conflict, deadline, setback, injustice, opportunity and challenge in school.

In terms of behavioral influence tactics, the Grade School heads commonly used inspirational appeal, rational persuasion, consultation, collaboration, personal appeal, and ingratiation; pressure is rarely employed. These most preferred tactics are categorized in Mullaney’s (2013) study as soft influence factors; they usually incite commitment. In contrast, pressure tactic is categorized as hard; this tactic together with coalition and legitimating are referred to those factors that seek to force compliance among subordinates. Thus, regardless

Table 1. Behavioral influence tactics of grade school heads.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tactics</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Verbal interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rational Persuasion</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>Moderately often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational Appeal</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>Moderately often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Appeal</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>Moderately often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>Moderately often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>Moderately often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingratiation</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>Moderately often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Adversity quotient profile of the grade school heads.
Table 2. Leader-member exchange among grade schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of leader-member exchange</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Verbal interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role taking</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>High quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role making</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>High quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>High quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall mean</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>High quality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Correlational analysis of the grade school heads’ behavioral influence tactics and adversity quotient with the leader-member exchange.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Computed r (r&lt;sub&gt;comp&lt;/sub&gt;)</th>
<th>Coefficient of Determination (r²)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Influence Tactics</td>
<td>0.829*</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adversity Quotient</td>
<td>0.133</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*significant @ 0.05 level.

of culture or geographical setting it appears that pressure as a behavioral tactics is not practical.

The leader-member exchange between the school heads and their subordinates indicates high quality. This led us to surmise that Maguindanao school heads are good in dealing with their teachers. They ensure every subordinate to belong or motivated to be part of the in-group rather than in the out-group. Moreover, it can be inferred that teachers also knew how to work harmoniously with their heads. LMX in school is a mutual understanding, feeling, and relationship between and among school heads, teachers and other staff; thus, LMX quality is creditable to all actors in school.

Behavioral influence tactics of school heads and LMX are proven related, but AQ and LMX are not. Precisely, the way school heads influence their teachers to stimulate compliance and commitment, or minimize resistance when implementing educational tasks is associated to the manner of working relationships they have. Thus, his manner of exercising power over his subordinates creates an apparent result on the characteristic of their social partnerships. Conversely, the school head’s resiliency or capacity to face adversities in work or even in life is, by no means, related to the quality of social engagement he has with his teachers. Nonetheless, there is still a strong presumption that these variables are closely related. It is suggested then that a follow-up investigation will be carried out to validate the result. Likewise, another study should be replicated to include a wider and more varied population. It may include varied experiences of teachers and school principals to allow greater generalization and provide better understanding on the quality of the leader-follower relationship.

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