

# PARTICIPATIVE LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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## ABSTRACT

This study determined and described the participative leadership practices and professional development of language teachers in public secondary schools in Calinan District Cluster 7, Division of Davao City. This study used the non-experimental quantitative research design utilizing correlational method. The respondents of this study were composed of 131 teachers in public secondary school using the universal sampling. The data analysis utilized the mean, Pearson  $r$  and regression analysis. The findings disclosed that the participative leadership practices were high. Thus, the participative leadership practices were oftentimes demonstrated by the teachers. Moreover, professional development is high. Thus, the professional development was oftentimes manifested by the teachers. It was found out that there was a significant relationship between participative leadership practices and professional development of teachers. Based on the findings, the public-school teachers may attend conferences and training from the DepEd for proficient growth program in participative leadership practices and professional development of teachers. This may provide skillful improvement for teachers with the goal of building capability thorough supported education opportunities for learners and simultaneously learn the content of better academic rehearses.

Keywords: Participative leadership practices, professional development, teachers, public secondary schools, Philippines

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Teachers play a crucial role as the key guardians of education. Their voices must be the driving force behind educational improvement and development, especially in a time of numerous challenges and conflicting pressures within the education system (Tabassum & Alam, 2024). Professional development remains a cornerstone of education policy, enabling teachers to innovate and support the learning of children and young people in an ever-changing society. Such innovation stems from professional development that is rooted in critical self-reflection, professional autonomy, and respect for the teaching profession (Temitayo et al., 2024). However, the question of how to effectively build professional development continues to be a significant challenge. This unresolved issue contributes to the mixed feelings teachers have about their profession. To address this, researchers have explored various participative leadership practices that influence professional growth.

Professional teachers maintain discipline and fairness in their classrooms, ensuring their personal desire to be liked by students does not interfere with enforcing rules or fostering an equitable learning environment. They uphold the belief that every student has the potential to

succeed and design lesson plans enriched with strategies and materials to facilitate learning (Gregory & Fergus, 2017; Wilkins, 2023).

Collaboration is another hallmark of professionalism. Teachers regularly work with colleagues to share strategies, analyze data, address curriculum issues, and improve student performance. They prioritize the school community's success over individual concerns, fostering a positive, learning-focused environment (Visone, 2024). Professional teachers avoid unproductive behaviors such as gossip or arguments with colleagues, instead emphasizing constructive collaboration (Tamunodiepiriye et al., 2022).

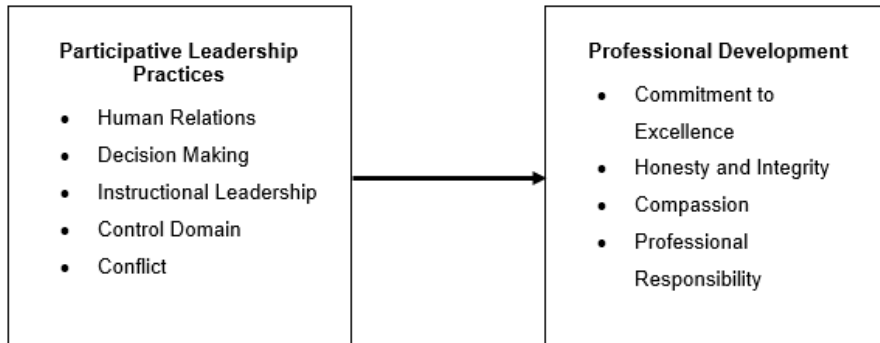
In many regions, including the Philippines, professional development is a requirement for maintaining certification. Teachers who are truly committed to their profession actively participate in development programs, staying up-to-date with best practices and educational strategies. They read extensively, conduct research to refine their teaching methods, and attend conferences, often as presenters. Membership in professional organizations further helps them build networks and engage with peers (Tulo & Lee, 2022).

In the Philippines, teachers are expected to serve as role models for their students. Professionalism in all aspects of their career helps maintain respect among students and colleagues while ensuring quality education. Teacher professional development whether formal or informal enhances skills and ultimately boosts student outcomes (Kilag et al., 2023).

In the Davao Region, the appearance and demeanor of teachers also significantly reflect their professional development. Male teachers are expected to wear dress pants and polo or button-down shirts, adding a tie or jacket on special occasions. Female teachers are advised to wear conservative clothing, avoiding attire such as short skirts or revealing tops. Many schools discourage visible tattoos, facial piercings, and brightly colored hair. Teachers are also advised to refrain from smoking or drinking in public and using inappropriate language or behavior in front of students. Professionalism in student interaction demands striking a balance between being a caring adult and maintaining professional boundaries (Almagro & Flores, 2023).

Recognizing these scenarios, this study aims to assess the current levels of professional development, identify its strongest predictors, and establish best practices for fostering professional growth. The findings will inform recommendations to enhance DepEd policies and regulations, ultimately improving teacher performance. Additionally, the study will provide

valuable insights into prioritizing programs and activities that stimulate professional development and address existing challenges.



**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework of the Study

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Research Design

This study employed a non-experimental quantitative research design utilizing the correlational method. A quantitative research design refers to a systematic approach that collects and analyzes numerical data to understand patterns, relationships, or trends. The primary objective of a quantitative research design is to quantify how many people think, act, or feel in a specific way. It involves large sample sizes, focusing on the quantity of responses rather than the in-depth emotional insights typically explored in qualitative research. The standardized nature of quantitative research ensures that each respondent answers the same set of questions, enabling a fair and consistent analysis of the entire data sample. The collected data is numerical and can be subjected to statistical analysis (Pregoner, 2024). Additionally, surveys can be customized to include follow-up questions based on initial responses, such as tailoring subsequent questions for respondents who are satisfied or dissatisfied with a particular service (Fink, 2024).

This method was chosen for the present study as it measures the relationship between participative leadership practices and the professional development of language teachers in public secondary schools. The correlational method specifically helps in describing and analyzing the statistical association between two or more variables (Pregoner & Baguio, 2024). By employing this approach, the study aims to uncover meaningful relationships and patterns that inform the understanding of how leadership practices impact professional development.

### 2.2 Research Respondents

The respondents of this study were teachers from public elementary schools, totaling 131 participants. Universal sampling was employed to select respondents for examining the

relationship between participative leadership practices and the professional development of language teachers in public secondary schools.

The selection criteria required respondents to have at least three years of teaching experience. This ensured that participants could provide more comprehensive and informed insights relevant to the study. The research was conducted during the school year 2021–2022.

### **2.3 Research Instrument**

The instrument used in this study was a survey questionnaire designed to measure participative leadership practices and the professional development of language teachers in public secondary schools. It was a researcher-developed tool, grounded in relevant studies and literature reviewed during the research process.

Before its administration, the draft of the instrument underwent evaluation for content validity and reliability by a panel of experts specializing in Doctor of Educational Management. Based on their feedback and recommendations, revisions were made to enhance its clarity and effectiveness.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the instrument, a pilot test was conducted with 30 elementary school teachers from a separate school within the same district. The results of the pilot test indicated that the instrument was reliable, yielding a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.80.

### **2.4 Data Gathering Procedure**

The data for this study were collected through a systematic procedure. First, the researcher sought permission and endorsement from the Dean of the Graduate School of Rizal Memorial Colleges to secure approval from the Schools Division Superintendent. Upon receiving the Superintendent's approval, a request letter was submitted to the respective School Heads for their endorsement.

Following the approval process, a schedule was arranged for the distribution of the survey questionnaires. The researcher included an explanation of the study's purpose and detailed instructions for completing the questionnaires to ensure clarity for the respondents.

Once all the questionnaires were retrieved, the data were meticulously tallied, tabulated, and analyzed. The findings were then interpreted in alignment with the objectives of the study.

### **2.5 Data Analysis**

The gathered data were systematically classified, analyzed, and interpreted using appropriate statistical tools. The mean was utilized to measure the level of participative leadership practices and professional development among the respondents. Additionally, the Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson  $r$ ) was employed to determine the significant relationship between participative leadership practices and professional development.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **3.1. Level of Participative Leadership Practices of Teachers**

Table 1. *Level of Participative Leadership Practices of Teachers*

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Descriptive Level</b>
Human Relations	4.11	High
Decision-Making	4.35	Very High
Instructional Leadership	4.01	High
Control Domain	4.01	High
Conflict	4.16	High
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>4.13</b>	<b>High</b>

Table 1 presents the level of participative leadership practices among teachers across five domains. The highest mean was observed in Decision-Making (4.35), rated as very high, followed by Conflict (4.16), rated as high. Human Relations received a mean score of 4.11, also rated as high. Both Instructional Leadership and Control Domain received a mean score of 4.01, which also falls under the high category. The overall mean of 4.13 indicates a high level of participative leadership practices, which means that teachers demonstrate a strong presence of collaborative leadership, with notable involvement in decision-making, effective conflict management, and maintaining positive human relations. This reflects a leadership environment that fosters teamwork and shared responsibility among educators.

This finding is consistent with the study of Or and Berkovich (2023), which emphasized the importance of participative leadership practices in fostering a collaborative work environment among teachers. Their research highlighted that when teachers actively participate in decision-making and effectively manage conflicts, it contributes to a positive and cohesive school culture. This finding suggests that participative leadership practices not only enhance teacher collaboration but also promote a sense of shared responsibility, which can improve overall school effectiveness and teacher satisfaction.

Furthermore, the finding aligns with the study of Egitim (2021), which found that strong participative leadership is key to building positive human relations among educators. Their study emphasized that fostering a collaborative leadership style helps create an environment where teachers work together toward common goals, thus improving both their professional development and the school's success.

In addition, Wang et al. (2021) found that participative leadership practices significantly contribute to a supportive teaching environment by promoting mutual respect and enhancing collaboration. Their research suggests that when teachers are empowered through participative leadership, it strengthens the overall educational experience, fostering not only professional growth but also a more harmonious school environment.

### **3.2 Level of Professional Development of Teachers**

Table 2. *Level of Professional Development of Teachers*

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Descriptive Level</b>
Commitment to Excellence	4.22	Very High
Honesty and Integrity	4.27	Very High
Compassion	4.27	Very High
Professional Responsibility	4.13	High
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>4.20</b>	<b>Very High</b>

Table 2 presents the level of professional development among teachers across four domains. The highest mean was observed in Honesty and Integrity and Compassion both with a mean score of 4.27, rated as very high, followed closely by Commitment to Excellence (4.22), also

rated as very high. Professional Responsibility received a mean score of 4.13, which falls under the high category. The overall mean of 4.20 indicates a very high level of professional development, which means that teachers demonstrate a strong commitment to ethical standards, excellence, and compassion, while also maintaining a high sense of professional responsibility. This reflects a well-rounded development in key professional attributes that contribute to effective teaching and positive student outcomes.

This finding is consistent with the study of Puyo (2021), which emphasized that teachers who demonstrate a strong commitment to ethical standards, excellence, and compassion are more likely to positively impact their students' academic and behavioral outcomes. Their research highlighted that a teacher's dedication to these professional qualities fosters an environment of trust and respect, which is essential for effective teaching.

Moreover, the finding aligns with the study of Matos et al. (2022), which found that teachers who uphold high standards of professional responsibility and compassion create a supportive and nurturing learning environment. Their study suggested that these qualities not only improve student outcomes but also enhance the overall school culture by promoting collaboration and respect among both students and staff.

Additionally, the study by Sprott (2019) supports the finding by noting that professional development programs that focus on ethics, responsibility, and compassion contribute significantly to teacher effectiveness. They argued that when teachers are empowered with these attributes, they are better equipped to meet the diverse needs of their students and create an environment conducive to learning and growth.

### 3.3 Significant Relationship between the Participative Leadership Practices and Professional Development

**Table 3.** Significant Relationship between the Participative Leadership Practices and Professional Development

Variables	X	Y	r-value	Degree of Correlation	p-value	Decision (Ho)
Participative Leadership Practices	4.46		0.0437	High Correlation	0.01	Rejected
Professional development		4.04				

Table 3 presents the significant relationship between participative leadership practices and professional development. The r-value of 0.0437 indicates a high correlation between the two variables. The p-value of 0.01 is less than the significance level of 0.05, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (Ho). This suggests that there is a statistically significant relationship between participative leadership practices and professional development, meaning that higher levels of participative leadership practices are associated with greater professional development among teachers.

This finding affirms the view of Transformational Leadership Theory by Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) which emphasizes that participative leadership practices significantly enhance teacher development by fostering a collaborative and supportive environment. The theory argues that transformational leadership, characterized by shared decision-making, vision-building, and teacher involvement in school leadership, has a profound impact on professional development. In the context of the study, the positive correlation between participative leadership practices and professional development suggests that when teachers are actively engaged in leadership processes and are given the opportunity to contribute to decision-making, their professional skills and motivation improve. This leads to a more positive work environment, greater teacher satisfaction, and ultimately, better student outcomes. Their work highlights the importance of collective responsibility and collaboration in driving systemic improvements in schools.

Moreover, the finding reinforces Bass's Full Range Leadership Theory (1996), which posits that leadership practices that empower teachers and encourage their active participation in school decisions are linked to higher levels of professional development. Bass's Full Range Leadership Theory includes transformational leadership, which focuses on inspiring and motivating teachers to take ownership of their professional growth. According to this theory, leadership practices that foster participation, autonomy, and empowerment can lead to increased teacher motivation, engagement, and overall effectiveness. Teachers who feel supported and involved in the decision-making process are more likely to seek professional development opportunities, try innovative teaching strategies, and collaborate with colleagues. Bass's theory suggests that such practices not only improve individual teacher performance but also contribute to the overall success of the school.

Furthermore, the finding validates Sergiovanni's Theory of Leadership and Community (1994), which stresses the importance of shared leadership and the creation of a professional learning community within schools. Sergiovanni argues that effective leadership is not just about authority or top-down control, but about fostering collaboration, trust, and shared responsibility among educators. In this framework, participative leadership is a key component, as it encourages teachers to take an active role in shaping school policies, curricula, and instructional practices. The theory highlights that when teachers work together in a supportive community, they are more likely to engage in continuous professional development, exchange ideas, and develop new teaching practices. This approach builds a strong professional culture in schools, where teachers are not only committed to their own growth but also to the collective success of the entire school community. In line with the study's findings, the theory suggests that participative leadership practices foster a sense of belonging and professional responsibility, which ultimately enhances the quality of teaching and student learning outcomes.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions can be drawn. The level of participative leadership practices among teachers is high, indicating that these practices are clearly evident and actively manifested in their teaching. Similarly, the level of professional development is also high, reflecting that teachers are committed to their growth and development. Furthermore, the null hypothesis, which stated that there is no significant relationship between participative leadership practices and professional development, is rejected. This decision is based on the finding that participative leadership practices are positively correlated with professional development, suggesting that as participative leadership practices increase, so does the professional development of teachers.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made. Since participative leadership practices and professional development are significantly correlated, it is recommended that policymakers and human resource managers consider these variables when formulating policies, as well as when planning trainings and seminars aimed at improving the professionalism of teachers. Additionally, school administrators are encouraged to conduct regular training programs and initiatives to support teachers' professional growth and contribute to organizational development. Teachers may also be actively encouraged to participate in school programs, trainings, and other activities that will enhance both their professional and social learning. Finally, future researchers interested in conducting similar studies may consider exploring other indicators of participative leadership practices and professional development, or investigating different variables to identify additional predictors that could contribute to the development of effective teaching practices.

## CONSENT (WHERE EVER APPLICABLE)

This quantitative study adhered to rigorous ethical standards to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of all participants. Before data collection, informed consent was obtained from all respondents, who were fully briefed on the study's goals and the measures taken to safeguard their privacy. To ensure anonymity, no personally identifiable information was collected, and each participant was assigned a unique identification code for data analysis. All data were securely stored on encrypted servers, with access limited to the research team. The results were reported in aggregate form to prevent the identification of individual responses. Furthermore, statistical analyses were conducted in a manner that further protected the anonymity of the respondents, maintaining their privacy throughout the study.

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