



The Principals' Instructional Leadership Styles and Teachers' Well-being

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the significant relationship between principals' leadership styles and teachers' level of stress in public elementary and secondary schools in the Division of San Carlos City, Negros Occidental, as a basis for developing a teacher enhancement training program. Specifically, it described the profile of principals in terms of age, sex, and years of experience; identified their leadership styles; assessed teachers' stress levels; determined the relationship between leadership style and stress; and proposed an intervention program to improve teacher well-being. A descriptive mixed-methods design was employed, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative respondents included principals and randomly selected teachers from elementary and secondary schools using stratified random sampling, while qualitative participants were purposively selected school heads and teachers. Standardized instruments were used, namely Burke's (1983) leadership styles questionnaire measuring transformational and transactional leadership, and the Pullis Inventory of Teacher Stress (PITS), which assessed sources, effects, and coping strategies of stress. Data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, and Pearson product-moment correlation, while qualitative responses were treated through thematic content analysis. Findings revealed that most principals were aged 41–50 years, with balanced sex distribution and generally 2–4 years of experience, and that transactional leadership was more dominant than transformational leadership across groups. Teachers reported generally moderate stress levels, with higher stress associated with transactional leadership. A significant positive relationship was found between principals' leadership styles and teachers' stress levels, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Teachers commonly coped through peer discussions, time management, relaxation activities, rest, family support, and leisure or digital distractions. The study concludes that leadership style significantly influences teachers' stress, with transactional leadership linked to higher stress and transformational leadership associated with lower stress, and recommends strengthening administrative support, improving workload management, and implementing mentoring, and coaching, and incentive-based programs to enhance teacher well-being and school performance.

Keywords: Instructional leadership, principals, teachers' well-being

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INTRODUCTION

School principals are confronted daily with critical decision-making responsibilities, particularly in relation to improving academic achievement in schools that are not demonstrating sufficient progress. Enhancing students' academic performance remains a persistent challenge for educational leaders. In recent years, the emphasis on school improvement has increasingly focused on the formulation and implementation of clear goals, strategic leadership practices, and evidence-based decision-making that directly influence student outcomes (Leithwood & Azah, 2022; OECD, 2023). As a result, leadership effectiveness has become a central factor in determining school success and continuous improvement.

In the Philippine educational context, public elementary and secondary schools are managed by school heads or principals who demonstrate varying leadership and management styles. These styles reflect their exercise of authority, accountability, and responsibility in guiding school development. Historically, school heads were selected based on tenure, perceived competence, or institutional belief systems, but recent reforms have emphasized merit-based selection and performance through standardized qualification processes and leadership assessments. Informal discussions among teachers often revolve around perceptions of principals' leadership styles, which are strongly influenced by levels of job satisfaction, workplace experiences, and occupational stress.

Recent studies continue to highlight the relationship between leadership, workplace conditions, and teacher well-being. Teacher job satisfaction is closely linked to school climate, working conditions, and administrative support, all of which contribute significantly to stress levels in the profession (Kim & Cho, 2022; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2023). Moreover, job satisfaction is increasingly understood as being shaped not only by actual working conditions but also by teachers' perceptions of those conditions, including their expectations, professional values, and internal standards. Contemporary research also emphasizes that employees' perceptions of fairness, support, and organizational climate significantly influence satisfaction and performance outcomes (OECD, 2023; UNESCO, 2022). In response, many educational institutions and organizations have strengthened workplace well-being initiatives aimed at reducing stress and promoting healthier professional environments, recognizing that teacher well-being is directly linked to effectiveness, retention, and instructional quality (World Health Organization, 2022; Johnson et al., 2024).

The researcher's experiences as a secondary school teacher were full of frustrations that made her level of stress escalate. There were times when the researcher thought of leaving the school as a teacher and venture into another field of work because of stressful situations. The traditional way of the school principal's management and leadership style contributed much to the unmotivated life of being a teacher. This resulted in poor instructions, monitoring and feedback giving. The researcher had been exposed to previous principals where she is teaching recently. One principal was very particular on PTA dues where students should pay but very lax on instructional leadership like class observations and another principal showed support but more on extra-curricular activities but unmindful of the academics, and to some have the same self-directed management system. Driven by desire and experience, the researcher is hopeful that the ideal school leadership style would embody either a transactional leadership or transformational leadership style or a combination of both in a justified way would be internalized. When teachers' level of stress are intensified due to dissatisfaction with leadership in the workplace, then poor student performance and teacher factions will bring about failure in the attainment of the school's mission and vision.

Furthermore, this study focused and found out that teachers' level of stress would be affected by the principals' leadership style.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to determine the significant relationship between principals' leadership styles and teachers' level of stress in public elementary and secondary schools in the Division of San Carlos City, serving as a basis for the development of a teacher enhancement training program. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions: (1) the profile of public elementary and secondary school principals in terms of age, sex, and years of experience; (2) the principals' leadership styles as a whole and when grouped according to age, sex, and years of experience; (3) the level of stress experienced by teachers in public elementary and secondary schools in the Division; (4) whether there is a significant relationship between principals' leadership styles and teachers' level of stress; and (5) what intervention program may be designed to help reduce teachers' level of stress.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership plays a very important role in schools, especially in how teachers perform, cope with stress, and support student learning. In recent years, studies have shown that principals are not just administrators but key influences on the daily experiences of teachers. Leadership styles such as transformational and instructional leadership are often highlighted because they focus on support, motivation, and collaboration rather than control alone. Research shows that when principals lead in a more



transformational way—by inspiring and supporting teachers—schools tend to have better teacher morale and improved performance outcomes (Bellibaş et al., 2020; Tian & Guo, 2024).

In many recent international studies, school leadership has been strongly linked to teacher well-being. Large-scale reports such as OECD (2025) and TALIS-based findings show that teachers feel more supported and less stressed when principals provide clear guidance, emotional support, and opportunities for professional growth. Instructional leadership, which focuses on improving teaching and learning directly, is especially important because it helps teachers feel more confident in their work. When teachers feel supported by their school heads, they are more likely to stay motivated and committed to their profession (OECD, 2025; Chen & Yin, 2025).

At the same time, teaching remains one of the most stressful professions. Teachers often deal with heavy workloads, large class sizes, administrative tasks, and emotional demands from students and parents. Recent studies confirm that these pressures can lead to burnout, exhaustion, and reduced job satisfaction, especially when support from school leadership is limited (OECD, 2024; Zhou et al., 2024). This shows that teacher stress is not only an individual issue but also something influenced by the school environment and leadership practices.

Another important point in recent research is that teachers' perceptions matter a lot. How teachers see their principals—whether they feel supported, respected, and heard—can strongly affect their stress levels and job satisfaction. Even if working conditions are similar, teachers who perceive strong leadership support tend to experience lower stress and higher motivation (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2023; Konu et al., 2024). Leadership styles that emphasize trust, communication, and encouragement are consistently linked with better teacher well-being.

Overall, recent studies from 2020 to 2025 consistently show that principals' leadership styles are closely connected to teachers' stress levels and overall well-being. Transformational and instructional leadership are generally the most effective in creating positive school environments where teachers feel supported and less stressed (OECD, 2025; Chen & Yin, 2025). On the other hand, less supportive leadership approaches can increase stress and reduce teacher motivation. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening principals' leadership skills to build healthier, more supportive, and more productive school environments.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study made use of a descriptive design with mixed quantitative and qualitative approaches. The independent variable of this study was the principals' leadership styles which describe the manner and approach used to provide direction, implement plans, and motivate people to deliver and is determined by several factors and considerations over which they have some degree of control. The leadership style chosen either consciously or unconsciously allowed one to express their values and to reinforce things in which they believed. The dependent variable of this study was the teachers' level of stress which referred to a dynamic state in which the individual can develop their potential by managing stress levels and striving to promote wellness, work productively and creatively, build strong and positive relationships with others, and contribute to their community.

Study Respondents

The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative approaches in selecting participants from the Division of San Carlos City, Negros Occidental. For the quantitative phase, the respondents included principals from five public secondary schools and sixty public elementary schools, as well as randomly selected teachers from the same schools. Stratified random sampling was employed, with a sampling error level set at 0.1, and the sample size of 91 representing 9.35% of the total population, computed using the Slovin Formula (1960). Each school's population was multiplied by 0.0935 to determine proportional representation, and participants were then identified through a convenience approach. For the qualitative phase, eight school heads and eight teachers were purposively selected based on inclusion criteria requiring at least two years of service in their current school assignment, equal gender representation (four males and four females each group), and voluntary participation, ensuring informed consent for interviews.

Instruments

There were two sets of questionnaires in obtaining the perceptions of the respondents. To collect the data of the leadership styles (transformational and transactional), the research adopted the questionnaire survey of leadership styles developed by (W. Warner Burke 1983, as cited by Schermerhorn, 2002). The instrument contained twenty items measuring transformational and transactional leadership styles and it's available on the World Wide Web (Schermerhorn, 2002). The questionnaire contained ten questions to represent the independent variables that have been identified in the light of ten factors describing the



transformational leadership (represented by A in each question), and ten other factors describe transactional leadership (represented by B in each question). The respondents were asked to read each item and then divided 5 points between A and B statements in any one for the following ways: 5 for a, 0 for b; 4 for a, 1 for b; 3 for a, 2 for b; 2 for a, 3 for b; 1 for a, 4 for b; 0 for a, 5 for b, but not equally ($2\frac{1}{2}$) between the two. The respondents' choices were weighed between the two according to the one that characterized them or their beliefs better. The instrument is an international instrument, that had been used and tested by different researchers as indicated in the United States by Burke (1983), and in Jordan by AL-Elaumi (2014).

The second model of standardized tool was the Pullis Inventory of Teachers Stress (PITS) which was developed by Michael Pullis, Ph.D. in the 1980s for the use in teacher-stress workshops. It consisted of 63 items organized into three parts: Sources of Stress, Effects of Stress and Coping with Stress. The instrument produced an overall stress score and determined the effectiveness of strategies identified in Part III. The instrument had been used in previous research (Pullis, 1992; Sweeney & McCabe, 1992).

Part I of the instrument, Sources of Stress, comprised of 29 items and centered on the working conditions of teachers. Each item presented will be rated by the participant on a five-point Likert-type scale where 1 = not at all stressful; 2 = mildly stressful; 3 = moderately stressful; 4 = quite stressful; and 5 = extremely stressful. Through factor analysis, Pullis (1992) found that the 29 items separated into four main areas or factors. These are Pupil Characteristics, Career Issues, Workload Issues and Intraschool Factors.

The Pupil Characteristics factor included seven items from the instrument (items 2, 7, 14, 16, 21, 27, and 28) with each item describing a student behavior that could be stressful (e.g., #2 – loud, noisy pupils; #14 – poorly motivated students). The Career Issues factor included five items (items 3, 8, 13, 29, and 30) with each item describing a specific source of stress related to education in general (e.g., #8 – inadequate salary; #13 – low status of the teaching profession). The Workload Issues factor consisted of eight items (items 4, 6, 9, 11, 12, 17, 19, and 25) with each item describing a distinctive demand of the job which could cause stress (e.g., #9 – too much work to do; #11 – responsibility for the students' progress/learning). Finally, the Intraschool factor consisted of nine items (items 5, 10, 15, 18, 20, 22, 23, 24, and 26) which describe a potentially stressful feature of the school environment (e.g., #18 – inadequate equipment and instructional materials; #15 – lack of recognition for good teaching).

Part II of the instrument, Effects of Stress, supplied eighteen possible symptoms of occupational stress and for each symptom, will require the participant to rate how frequently he/she experienced that symptom on a six-point Likert-type scale where 1 = hardly ever; 2 = once in a while; 3 = sometimes; 4 = often; 5 = very often; and 6 = almost always. The symptoms presented in Part II of the PITS represent emotional (i.e., frustration, depression, guilt), physiological (i.e., exhaustion, headaches and upset stomach) and behavioral (i.e., letting stress interfere with your personal life) reactions.

Part III of the PITS, Coping with Stress, consisted of fifteen strategies that teachers could use to manage their stress. Each participant was first required to check off from the list provided those strategies which he/she has used. Each participant was then required to rate the strategies checked off in terms of how effective they were, using a four-point Likert-type scale where 1 = not very effective; 2 = mildly or temporarily effective; 3 = pretty helpful; and 4 = extremely effective. Pullis (1992) found that the test-retest reliability on each of the factors was found to be greater than .80 using the Coefficient Alpha. The strategies listed in the instrument included ones that could be employed inside, as well as outside the school setting. Both tools were standardized in gathering data.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher secured permission from the Schools Division Superintendent of San Carlos City, Negros Occidental, as well as from the principals of the selected public elementary and secondary schools before conducting the study. After all approvals were obtained and the research instruments were cleared by the panel, questionnaires were reproduced for distribution. Since the data collection coincided with the end of the school year, school heads were busy with seminars, report submissions, and other administrative tasks; thus, the researcher coordinated with public schools' district supervisors to assist in distributing the Leadership Style Questionnaire for school heads and the PITS questionnaire for teachers. Out of 65 school heads, 63 initially returned the questionnaires, while two were reported lost but were later retrieved after a follow-up visit. All 91 teacher-participants successfully completed the survey. Once all responses were gathered, data tabulation and statistical computation immediately followed. The researcher also sought and received permission via email from the original authors of the standardized instruments before using them in the study.

In addition, the study utilized focus-group interviews involving eight selected participants who voluntarily gave written consent after being fully informed about the study's purpose, procedures, confidentiality, and ethical considerations in line with established guidelines (Creswell, 1998). Separate interviews were conducted for school heads and teachers, lasting approximately 45 minutes and 55 minutes, respectively. A semi-structured interview format was used, where the researcher asked uniform



questions to all participants while allowing probing follow-up questions to clarify and expand responses, fostering an open and conversational exchange (Merriam, 1998). The researcher followed established qualitative interviewing techniques (Seidman, 2006; Rubin & Rubin, 2005) to build rapport and encourage participants to freely share their experiences and insights. With permission, all interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and securely stored using computer technology, with multiple backups maintained to ensure data accuracy, confidentiality, and data integrity throughout the research process.

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

To analyze the quantitative data, frequency count and percentage were used to describe the principals' demographic profile and leadership styles, while the mean determined the level of teachers' stress. The relationship between principals' leadership styles and teachers' stress levels was examined using the mean and the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. For the qualitative data, all interviews were transcribed verbatim, organized, and securely stored before undergoing content analysis. Using an inductive approach, the researcher applied open coding to identify recurring ideas, which were then grouped into themes and categories. The themes derived from the principals' and teachers' responses were compared and interpreted descriptively to identify common patterns and provide meaningful insights into the study (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002).

Ethical Consideration

In accordance with the ethical principle that research participation must be voluntary and free from any form of coercion (Trochim, 2021), the researcher ensured that all participants provided informed consent after receiving a clear explanation of the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits (Arifin, 2018). Throughout the data collection process, strict measures were implemented to uphold participants' anonymity and confidentiality, ensuring that their identities and responses remained protected. All collected data were used solely for research purposes, stored securely, and made accessible only to the researcher. Upon completion of the study, all electronic files containing identifiable information were permanently deleted to prevent unauthorized access and to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of the participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section emphasizes the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the data in this research study. The results are displayed in tables to emphasize the specific objectives this study set out to accomplish.

Profile of School Heads

Table 1

Profile of School Heads

Variables		Frequency N = 65	Percentage (%)
Age	30-40	3	4%
	41-50	31	48%
	51-60	24	37%
	>60	7	11%
Sex	Male	32	49%
	Female	33	51%
Years of Experience	1	1	2%
	2-4	38	58%
	5-9	23	35%
	10-15	3	5%
	>15	0	0

The distribution in Table 1 shows that when school heads in the Division of San Carlos City were grouped according to age, 48 percent were between 41-50 years old, 37 percent were between 51-60 years old, 11 percent were more than 60 years old, and 3 percent were between the ages of 30-40. Data revealed that there was almost an equal distribution in the number of male school heads which was 49 percent and female school heads which was 51 percent of the total respondents.

In addition, it was observed that 58 percent of the school heads have 2-4 years of experience, followed by 35 percent with 5-9 years of experience, then by 5 percent with 10-15 years of experience and finally, 2 percent with only a year of experience.

Leadership Style



Table 2

Principal's Leadership Style

Levels	Leadership Styles	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Elementary	Transactional	50	83%
	Transformational	10	17%
	Total	60	
Secondary	Transactional	4	80%
	Transformational	1	20%
	Total	5	

Table 2 demonstrates that in the Division of San Carlos City elementary level, 83 percent of the principals have transactional leadership style and 17 percent have transformational leadership style. In the secondary level, 80 percent of the principals used transactional leadership style while only 20 percent used the transformational leadership style.

The table showed that there were more transactional leaders than transformational leaders in the public elementary and secondary schools in the Division of San Carlos City.

Principals' Leadership Styles when Grouped According to Age, Sex and Years of Experience

Table 3

Leadership Styles when Grouped According to Variables

Factors	Coded Value	Leadership Style (N=65)			
		Transactional	%	Transformational	%
Age	30-40 (1)	0	0%	3	4%
	41-50 (2)	24	37%	7	11%
	51-60 (3)	23	35%	1	2%
	>60 (4)	7	11%	0	0%
Sex	Male (1)	25	38%	7	11%
	Female (2)	29	45%	4	6%
Years of Experience	1 (1)	1	2%	0	0%
	2-4 (2)	31	48%	7	11%
	5-9 (3)	19	29%	4	6%
	10-15 (4)	3	4%	0	0%
	>15 (5)	0	0%	0	0%

The findings revealed that the majority of principals, regardless of age, sex, and years of experience, practiced a transactional leadership style, while a smaller proportion exhibited a transformational leadership style. This pattern was supported by the focus-group interviews, where most principals described leading by setting clear goals, monitoring performance, ensuring compliance with school objectives, and motivating teachers through rewards and recognition—practices consistent with transactional leadership.

However, some participants also emphasized fostering positive relationships, treating teachers as partners, encouraging innovation, and creating a supportive school environment, reflecting transformational leadership practices that promote collaboration, organizational growth, and continuous improvement in teaching and learning.

Teachers' Level of Stress under Different Leadership Styles

Table 4

Teachers' Level of Stress under Transactional Leadership



ITEM	1 Not at all stressful	2 Mildly Stressful	3 Moderately Stressful	4 Quite Stressful	5 Extremely Stressful	Total	Wtd Total	Mean	Interpreta- tion
1	1	2	30	32	13	78	288	3.69	Quite Stressful
2	1	4	35	22	16	78	282	3.62	Quite Stressful
3	5	18	45	7	3	78	219	2.81	Moderately Stressful
4	0	7	28	32	11	78	281	3.60	Quite Stressful
5	4	6	40	20	8	78	256	3.28	Moderately Stressful
6	8	29	24	11	6	78	212	2.72	Moderately Stressful
7	2	14	18	35	9	78	269	3.45	Quite Stressful
8	6	9	12	33	18	78	282	3.62	Quite Stressful
9	0	8	17	25	28	78	307	3.94	Quite Stressful
10	7	10	29	19	13	78	255	3.27	Moderately Stressful
11	7	20	14	30	7	78	244	3.13	Moderately Stressful
12	5	10	29	23	11	78	259	3.32	Moderately Stressful
13	6	17	24	24	7	78	243	3.12	Moderately Stressful
14	1	13	26	30	8	78	265	3.40	Quite Stressful
15	10	21	24	19	4	78	220	2.82	Moderately Stressful
16	18	13	26	18	3	78	209	2.68	Moderately Stressful
17	2	24	29	16	7	78	236	3.03	Moderately Stressful
18	3	14	27	17	17	78	265	3.40	Quite Stressful
19	4	9	31	22	12	78	263	3.37	Moderately Stressful
20	3	13	35	22	5	78	247	3.17	Moderately Stressful
21	3	17	22	27	9	78	256	3.28	Moderately Stressful
22	5	20	26	21	6	78	237	3.04	Moderately Stressful
23	9	26	25	12	6	78	214	2.74	Moderately Stressful
24	7	23	32	11	5	78	218	2.79	Moderately Stressful
25	5	15	20	25	13	78	260	3.33	Moderately Stressful
26	4	17	22	25	10	78	254	3.26	Moderately Stressful
27	14	15	16	19	14	78	238	3.05	Moderately Stressful
28	14	19	25	11	9	78	216	2.77	Moderately Stressful
29	4	15	29	24	6	78	247	3.17	Moderately Stressful
30	5	16	31	17	9	78	243	3.12	Moderately Stressful

Using the scale below, the scores are interpreted as:

Range of Scores Interpretation

4.21 – 5.00	Extremely Stressful
3.41 – 4.20	Quite Stressful
2.61 – 3.40	Moderately Stressful
1.81 – 2.60	Mildly Stressful
1.00 – 1.80	Not at all stressful

A. Under Transactional Leadership

The findings showed that under transactional leadership, most indicators of teachers' stress (73%) were rated as moderately stressful, while the remaining 27% were considered quite stressful. Focus-group discussions revealed that teachers experienced higher stress when school heads focused primarily on administrative tasks, provided limited support or recognition, imposed excessive paperwork and deadlines, and failed to foster a positive school climate. Participants emphasized that supportive leadership, adequate resources, and a conducive work environment enhanced motivation and job satisfaction, whereas poor leadership practices and increasing non-teaching responsibilities contributed to stress and reduced teaching effectiveness, consistent with previous studies linking transactional leadership to burnout and workplace stress (Pillay et al., 2005; Nelson, 2003; Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Table 5

Teachers' Level of Stress under Transformational Leadership



ITEM	1 Not at all stressful	2 Mildly Stressful	3 Moderately Stressful	4 Quite Stressful	5 Extremely Stressful	Total	Wtd Total	Mean	Interpretation
1	2	5	4	2	0	13	32	2.46	Mildly Stressful
2	0	5	7	1	0	13	35	2.69	Moderately Stressful
3	3	4	2	4	0	13	33	2.54	Mildly Stressful
4	0	5	7	1	0	13	35	2.69	Moderately Stressful
5	1	6	3	3	0	13	34	2.62	Moderately Stressful
6	4	4	2	2	1	13	31	2.38	Mildly Stressful
7	2	5	5	1	0	13	31	2.38	Mildly Stressful
8	1	2	7	2	1	13	39	3.00	Moderately Stressful
9	0	4	5	4	0	13	39	3.00	Moderately Stressful
10	2	7	2	1	1	13	31	2.38	Mildly Stressful
11	3	3	4	3	0	13	33	2.54	Mildly Stressful
12	1	5	2	4	1	13	38	2.92	Moderately Stressful
13	2	6	2	3	0	13	32	2.46	Mildly Stressful
14	2	2	5	3	1	13	38	2.92	Moderately Stressful
15	3	3	2	4	1	13	36	2.77	Moderately Stressful
16	5	3	5	0	0	13	26	2.00	Mildly Stressful
17	2	3	6	2	0	13	34	2.62	Moderately Stressful
18	4	4	2	2	1	13	31	2.38	Mildly Stressful
19	1	4	4	3	1	13	38	2.92	Moderately Stressful
20	1	5	4	2	1	13	36	2.77	Moderately Stressful
21	2	2	8	1	0	13	34	2.62	Moderately Stressful
22	4	3	4	1	1	13	31	2.38	Mildly Stressful
23	2	9	0	2	0	13	28	2.15	Mildly Stressful
24	3	3	4	3	0	13	33	2.54	Mildly Stressful
25	0	3	3	6	1	13	44	3.38	Moderately Stressful
26	0	4	4	3	2	13	42	3.23	Moderately Stressful
27	6	2	2	2	1	13	29	2.23	Mildly Stressful
28	5	3	4	0	1	13	28	2.15	Mildly Stressful
29	2	5	5	1	0	13	31	2.38	Mildly Stressful
30	1	3	6	1	2	13	39	3.00	Moderately Stressful

The same scale is used to interpret the score.

Range of Scores Interpretation

4.21 – 5.00	Extremely Stressful
3.41 – 4.20	Quite Stressful
2.61 – 3.40	Moderately Stressful
1.81 – 2.60	Mildly Stressful
1.00 – 1.80	Not at all stressful

B. Under Transformational Leadership

The findings indicated that under transformational leadership, teachers' stress levels were evenly distributed, with 50% of the indicators rated as moderately stressful and 50% as mildly stressful. During the focus-group interviews, teachers expressed a preference for leaders who are firm yet considerate, provide academic freedom, encourage open communication, involve teachers in decision-making, and create a positive and secure school climate. Participants emphasized that supportive principals who offer feedback, recognize teachers' contributions, and promote collaboration enhance motivation, commitment, and well-being while reducing work-related stress. These findings are consistent with previous studies highlighting the importance of transformational leadership and principal support in fostering teacher satisfaction, organizational commitment, and effective stress management (Bavendam, 2000; Singh & Billingsley, 1996; Howard & Johnson, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 1995).

Summary of the Teachers' Level of Stress under Each Leadership Style

Table 6

Summary of Teachers' Level of Stress under each Leadership Style

Leadership Style	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Interpretation
Transactional	78	86%	3.20	Moderately Stressful
Transformational	13	14%	2.62	Moderately Stressful
Total	91	100%		



Table 6 reveals that under transactional and transformational leadership styles, the teachers' level of stress were moderately stressful with a mean of 3.20 and 2.62, respectively. However, the results also show that although teachers' levels of stress are the same, there is a great difference between mean of the two leadership styles. The teachers' level of stress under transformational leadership is close to mildly stressful compared to transactional leadership which was inclined to moderately stressful

Significant Relationship Between Principals' Leadership Style and Teachers' Level of Stress

Table 7

Significant Relationship Between Principals' Leadership Style and Teachers' Level of Stress

Well-Being of Teachers Under Transformational Leader	Well-Being of Teachers Under Transactional Leader	Correlation
X	Y	
2.46	3.69	
2.69	3.62	
2.54	2.81	$\rho = 0.502$
2.69	3.60	
2.62	3.28	
2.38	2.72	
2.38	3.45	
3	3.62	
3	3.94	
2.38	3.27	1-tailed T-Test
2.54	3.13	level of significance @ 0.05
2.92	3.32	df = 28
2.46	3.12	$\rho = 0.502$
2.92	3.40	t-value = 3.070
2.77	2.82	critical value = 1.701
2	2.68	
2.62	3.03	
2.38	3.40	
2.92	3.37	Interpretation: Relationship is significant
2.77	3.17	
2.62	3.28	
2.38	3.04	
2.15	2.74	
2.54	2.79	
3.38	3.33	
3.23	3.26	
2.23	3.05	
2.15	2.77	
2.38	3.17	
3	3.12	

Table 7 revealed that there is a significant relationship between principals' leadership style and teachers' level of stress, as shown by the t-value of 3.070 which is greater than the critical value of 1.701 at the 0.05 level of significance. The Pearson correlation result further indicated a strong positive relationship between the two variables. This led to the rejection of the null hypothesis, implying that principals' leadership style is significantly associated with teachers' stress levels.

Supporting this finding, Waters (2013) emphasized that leadership styles significantly influence teachers' satisfaction and overall school outcomes, particularly when school leaders understand the link between morale, satisfaction, and school climate. Similarly, Eyal and Roth (2010) found that principals' leadership style predicts teachers' motivation and burnout, with transformational leadership linked to lower burnout and transactional leadership associated with higher stress and controlled motivation. Further, Fullan (2008) stressed the strong day-to-day influence principals have on teachers' motivation and performance, while Hipp and Bredeson (1995) and Nir and Kranot (2006) highlighted the connection between leadership style, teacher efficacy, and workplace conditions, showing that supportive leadership fosters better teacher outcomes and well-being.

Interventions to Reduce Teachers' Level of Stress

Table 8

Strategies Used by Teachers in Coping with Stress Ranked Based on Effectiveness



Item	Total	wtd total	wtd mean	Effective-ness
Discussing problems with professional colleagues	82	275	3.35	extremely effective
Discussing problems with personal friends and family	58	191	3.29	extremely effective
Taking courses and workshops to improve skill	39	134	3.44	extremely effective
Organizing your time and setting priorities	74	258	3.49	extremely effective
Doing relaxing activities (hobby)	73	250	3.42	extremely effective
Taking a nap; forgetting it; walk away for awhile	66	222	3.36	extremely effective
Taking a day off	60	201	3.35	extremely effective
Waking/jogging/maintaining diet and exercise	36	111	3.08	pretty helpful
Eating	57	174	3.05	pretty helpful
Revanping personal/professional expectations or goals	27	80	2.96	pretty helpful
Drinking coffee	41	118	2.88	pretty helpful
Getting professional counseling or therapy	12	34	2.83	pretty helpful
Leaving the school problems at school	44	122	2.77	pretty helpful
Drinking alcohol; taking drugs (including prescriptions	6	11	1.83	mildly or temporarily effective
Smoking cigarettes	2	2	1	not effective

Using the scale below, the scores are interpreted as:

Range of Scores Interpretation

3.26 -4.00	extremely effective
2.51 – 3.25	pretty helpful
1.76 – 2.50	mildly or temporarily effective
1.00 – 1.75	not effective

It is very important to achieve a dynamic state in which the individual can develop their potential by managing stress levels and striving to promote wellness, work productively and creatively, build strong and positive relationships with others, and contribute to their community. To find out the different ways teachers cope and reduce their level of stress, Part III of Pullis Inventory of Teachers' Stress (PITS) was used. Each subject of this study was requested to check off, from the list provided, those strategies that they have personally tried and rated for the effectiveness of each strategy using a four-point Likert-type scale.

An examination of Table 8 shows that the six most commonly used strategies by the respondents of this study to cope with stress were in order of popularity (a) discussing problems with professional colleagues, (b) organizing your time and setting priorities, (c) doing relaxing activities (hobby), (d) taking a nap; forgetting it; walk away for awhile, (e) taking a day off, and (f) discussing problems with personal friends and family. Coping strategies which have the potential to become addictive (drinking coffee, smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol/taking drugs) received less support from the respondents.

In a focus-group interview, two teachers pointed out that their health suffered because of stress. One teacher said that he was admitted to the hospital due to the many tasks given to them by the school head and so many deadlines to meet. Others said that they were not inspired anymore to come to school dreading the work that awaits them. "I cannot give my 100% in my teaching because I cannot concentrate especially if I am bombarded with so many things which I call „allergens or radicals“. I really lost focus and cannot give my best". Another teacher said, "I easily lose my patience and become so irritated". Students may be affected by the bad performance of teachers. Another factor that causes stress is the misalignment of their subject taught. They said that they have to spend more time doing research and preparation and thus, taking out their time for relaxation. "In my school, I am so stressed because I am not teaching my specialized field. I am not trained to teach this certain subject, yet I am forced to accept it. Almost every year, we're given different subjects to teach".

During the interview, teachers suggested several strategies to effectively cope with stress:

1. Five out of eight teachers said they indulge in eating when they are stressed.



2. Four out of eight teachers said they want to go out (shopping, travel, go to church/beach).
3. All participants said they talked it out with colleagues.
4. One teacher said having some recreation such as listening to music and taking care of pets, having Facebook account helps relieve stress.
6. Having a break and sleeping were also mentioned as a way of coping with stress.

Gascoyne (1997) mentioned that teachers must learn how to cope with stress to maintain a sense of well-being. Some teachers successfully reduce their stress levels by talking to friends, family, or colleagues (Berry, 1999; Byrne, 1998; Doig & Jensen, 1997; Holmes, 1997; Pullis, 1992; Stern & Cox, 1994; Terry, 1997; Wisniewski & Gargiulo, 1997).

Extreme stress causes an overactivation of physiological systems, leading to the negative consequences of stress on one's health. Therefore, relaxation training helps individuals learn to recognize the physiological processes associated with the stress response. Recognizing physical signs of stress allows him/her to gain control over physiological systems, providing the opportunity to prevent the development of serious health consequences. Relaxation techniques are widely used to moderate anxiety and to deal with stress-related somatic problems (Auerbach & Gramling, 1998).

CONCLUSION

This study examined the profile of public elementary and secondary school principals in the Division of San Carlos City, revealing that most were aged 41–50 years, nearly evenly distributed by sex, and largely with 2–4 years of experience. Findings showed that transactional leadership was more dominant than transformational leadership across both school levels and across age, sex, and years of experience. Teachers' stress levels were generally interpreted as moderately stressful, with those under transactional leadership experiencing higher stress compared to those under transformational leadership. Statistical analysis revealed a significant relationship between principals' leadership style and teachers' stress levels, with a strong positive correlation, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Common stress-reduction strategies among teachers included discussing concerns with colleagues, time management, engaging in relaxing activities, resting, taking breaks, and seeking support from family and friends, while interview data further highlighted coping practices such as eating, going out for leisure activities, and using recreational or digital distractions. Overall, the study concludes that leadership style significantly influences teachers' stress, with transactional leadership associated with higher stress levels and transformational leadership linked to relatively lower stress, alongside varied coping mechanisms employed by teachers to manage workplace stress.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, it is recommended that principals enhance administrative support to reduce teachers' stress, improve well-being, strengthen job performance, and promote better academic outcomes while also lowering attrition and fostering a more stable and committed teaching workforce through improved leadership practices and school policies. The study further suggests implementing interventions such as workload adjustments, alignment of teaching assignments, provision of adequate resources, school-wide coaching and training support systems, and incentives such as performance bonuses, promotion opportunities, and mentoring programs to help reduce work-related stress and improve teacher well-being. In addition, fostering student cooperation and support is encouraged as it may help reduce teachers' stress, improve classroom climate, and enhance students' self-esteem and academic engagement, ultimately benefiting overall school performance. Finally, the study emphasizes the need for continued exploration of effective leadership styles that address teacher stress and improve the educational climate to support the development of holistic 21st-century learners.

Conflict of Interest

The author confirms that there are no known conflicts of interest associated with this publication and there has been no significant financial support for this work that could have influenced its outcome.

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