



A Teacher-Centric Analysis of Humanistic Leadership Practices and Support from School: Leaders of DepEd Palawan: Basis for School Leadership Program

Nenito J Basaya

Schools Division of Palawan, Department of Education, Puerto Princesa City, Philippines

* Corresponding Author: Nenito J Basaya

Article Info

ISSN (online): 2583-6641

Volume: 05

Issue: 01

January–February 2026

Received: 21-11-2025

Accepted: 19-12-2025

Published: 16-01-2026

Page No: 77-81

Abstract

Humanistic leadership emphasizes empathy, human-centered values, and transformational practices that enhance teacher well-being, professional growth, and school climate. Effective leadership is critical to fostering positive teacher–leader relationships in public schools. This study examined the extent to which school heads in the Schools Division of Palawan demonstrate humanistic leadership practices and provide professional and personal support to teachers. Specifically, it assessed Human-Centered, Empathetic, and Transformational Leadership Practices, evaluated professional and personal support, and identified challenges encountered in teacher–leader relationships. A sequential explanatory mixed-methods descriptive design was employed. Quantitative data were collected from 227 teachers in the Aborlan District using a validated self-administered survey, followed by qualitative insights from open-ended responses. Descriptive statistics determined central tendencies, and thematic analysis identified patterns across leadership dimensions and support systems. School heads exhibited a Highly Humanistic leadership profile. Human-Centered and Transformational Leadership Practices were rated Very High (Median = 5.00), reflecting strong focus on instructional leadership and organizational development. Empathetic Leadership Practices were rated Moderately Humanistic (Median = 3.00), indicating inconsistencies in emotional responsiveness and individualized attention. Teachers identified challenges including limited empathy, insufficient mentoring, lack of recognition, minimal attention to mental health and work–life balance, and gaps in professional support and feedback. Findings informed the design of the Humanistic Empowerment Leadership Program (HELP), a structured intervention to enhance empathetic communication, human-centered supervision, and transformational mentoring through five phases: Leadership Orientation and Advocacy, Capacity Building, Mentoring and Coaching, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Recognition and Sharing.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54660/IJMOR.2026.5.1.77-81>

Keywords: Empathetic Leadership, Humanistic Leadership, School Heads, Teacher Support, Transformational Leadership

Introduction

Education is a cornerstone of societal progress, shaping leaders, expanding perspectives, and fostering enlightenment. Central to this transformative endeavor are teachers—dedicated professionals whose commitment directly impacts learning quality and student outcomes. However, the success of education is not solely the responsibility of teachers; effective leadership and robust support systems are equally critical in enabling educators to perform optimally.

Globally, schools face complex challenges, including curriculum reforms, socio-economic disparities, technological shifts, and professional conflicts among staff. Conflicts often arise from unequal access to information, divergent motivations, or uneven task distribution, highlighting the importance of transparent communication, equitable workloads, and supportive school cultures (Catana & Luminita, 2016) ^[1].

Empathetic and humanistic leadership has been identified as essential in addressing these challenges. In the Philippine context, systemic gaps exacerbate these issues. For instance, a widely publicized incident at Esperanza Elementary School revealed the consequences of inadequate communication and empathy between school leaders and teachers. Similarly, in the Schools Division of Palawan, over 400 legal cases were recorded as of September 2023, with 8% involving teacher–leader conflicts. Many of these disputes stem from leadership gaps, particularly insufficient empathetic and supportive practices, which can diminish trust and collaboration within schools.

Humanistic leadership offers a framework for addressing these challenges. Empathetic leadership emphasizes emotional understanding and connection; human-centered leadership prioritizes teachers' well-being and professional growth; and transformational leadership inspires innovation and collaboration toward shared educational goals. Empirical research supports the benefits of these approaches: empathetic leadership enhances teacher satisfaction and student engagement (O'Brian, 2022) [3], human-centered leadership promotes trust and organizational well-being (Zest Partners, 2022) [4], and transformational leadership fosters creativity and collaboration (American University School of Education, 2019) [2].

Despite these insights, there is limited empirical evidence on how school leaders operationalize these principles into actionable support for teachers, particularly in areas such as recognition, conflict resolution, work-life balance, professional development, and emotional well-being. Addressing these gaps is critical to developing supportive school environments. This study focuses on teachers in the Aborlan District of the Schools Division of Palawan to examine humanistic leadership practices, professional and personal support, and the challenges teachers encounter, thereby contributing to strategies for enhancing leadership and teacher support systems in Philippine schools.

Materials and Methods

This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine humanistic leadership practices and professional and personal support provided by school heads in DepEd Palawan. Quantitative data were collected from 227 public school teachers from 19 elementary and 10 secondary schools across three districts in Aborlan using a validated self-administered online survey. The questionnaire comprised four sections: demographic profile, levels of

humanistic leadership (empathetic, human-centered, transformational), personal and professional support across six dimensions (communication and empathy; recognition and appreciation; conflict resolution and transformation; professional development and growth; organizational development and innovation; work-life balance and well-being), and challenges in teacher–leader relationships. Open-ended items were included to capture qualitative insights, and participants could respond in English or Tagalog.

Participants were selected using stratified random sampling to ensure proportional representation by school type. Inclusion criteria required full-time teachers with at least one year of experience in schools with more than five teaching personnel, while teachers on extended leave or in schools with fewer than six personnel were excluded. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained prior to data collection. The survey was completed asynchronously via secure Google Forms, with all data stored on password-protected systems.

The qualitative component included open-ended survey responses and interviews, which were transcribed and analyzed thematically to identify patterns and recurring themes. This integration of quantitative and qualitative findings constituted methodological triangulation, enhancing validity and providing a comprehensive understanding of leadership practices and support systems.

The instrument underwent content validation by five experts (Cohen's Kappa = 0.86) and pilot testing with 30 teachers, yielding a Cronbach's alpha of 0.8653, indicating strong reliability. Data analysis included descriptive statistics for quantitative responses and thematic analysis for qualitative narratives. Ethical approval was secured from the Palawan State University Research Ethics Review Committee (PSU RERC), and all procedures adhered to principles of confidentiality, voluntary participation, and data protection. Participants could withdraw at any time, and no incentives were provided.

Results, Discussion, and Conclusion

The succeeding sections present the analysis and interpretation of findings in the order of the study's major variables: the level of humanistic leadership practices, the extent of professional support provided by school heads, and the challenges encountered by teachers in the teacher–leader relationship. Each section integrates both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of how leadership is experienced and enacted across various school contexts within the Division of Palawan.

Table 1: Summary of the Level of Humanistic Leadership Practices of School Heads as Perceived by Teachers

Dimensions of Humanistic Leadership Practices	Median	Adjectival Rating
a. Empathetic Leadership Practices	3.00	Moderately Humanistic
b. Human-Centered Leadership Practices	5.00	Very Highly Humanistic

Table 2: Level of Professional and Personal Support Provided by School Leaders as Perceived by Teachers in Terms of Communication and Empathy

Indicators	Median	Adjectival Rating
1. listens attentively to understand my emotions	5	Very Highly Supportive
2. shows understanding and tries to perspective during discussions	5	Very Highly Supportive
3. encourages me to share my ideas and opinions in meetings	5	Very Highly Supportive
4. understands the challenges I face and offers me assistance	5	Very Highly Supportive
5. feel comfortable approaching my concerns	5	Very Highly Supportive
6. values my feedback and encourages me to share my thoughts openly	5	Very Highly Supportive
7. keeps promises and commitments made to me	4	Highly Supportive

8. trusts me to handle confidential matters with discretion	5	Very Highly Supportive
9. involves me in decisions related to curriculum and teaching methods	5	Very Highly Supportive
10. considers my opinion when important decisions are made	5	Very Highly Supportive
11. encourages me to be involved in collaborative planning and decision-making	5	Very Highly Supportive
12. involves me in discussions about school policies and practices	5	Very Highly Supportive
13. provides regular feedback to improve my performance, both positive and constructive	5	Very Highly Supportive
14. involves me in workshops/seminars on mental health and stress management	5	Very Highly Supportive
15. actively supports initiatives that reduce stigma related to mental health	5	Very Highly Supportive

Table 3: Level of Professional and Personal Support Provided by School Leaders as Perceived by Teachers in Terms of Recognition and Appreciation

Indicators	Median	Adjectival Rating
1. acknowledges and appreciates my small and significant contributions	5	Very Highly Supportive
2. provides resources, opportunities for professional growth, trainings, seminars, and workshops to enhance my teaching skills	5	Very Highly Supportive
3. encourages and supports me in pursuing further education	5	Very Highly Supportive
4. provides constructive feedback to help me improve professionally	5	Very Highly Supportive
5. respects my personal time and avoids unnecessary work-related demands	5	Very Highly Supportive
6. assigns me a reasonable work schedule without excessive overtime	5	Very Highly Supportive
7. trusts me to make decisions related to my teaching methods and classroom management	5	Very Highly Supportive
8. respects my professional judgment and decisions in the classroom	5	Very Highly Supportive
9. encourages and supports me in autonomy of my teaching	5	Very Highly Supportive
10. empowers me to make decisions that enhance the learning experience for my students	5	Very Highly Supportive
11. provides me emotional support during challenging times, such as student crises or difficult events	5	Very Highly Supportive
12. makes me feel comfortable when seeking support and guidance during crises	5	Highly Supportive
13. ensures that appropriate resources and counseling services are available during crises	4	Very Highly Supportive
14. ensures crisis support initiatives and stability within the school community	5	Highly Supportive
15. encourages me to take breaks and vacations to avoid burnout	4	Supportive

Table 4: Level of Professional and Personal Support Provided by School Leaders as Perceived by Teachers in Terms of Professional Development and Growth

Indicators	Median	Adjectival Rating
1. provides workshops and training sessions aligned with my developmental needs	4	Highly Supportive
2. offers opportunities for me to take leadership roles in school projects and activities	5	Very Highly Supportive
3. provides guidance on incorporating innovative teaching methods	5	Very Highly Supportive
4. provides resources to enhance my subject knowledge and skills	5	Very Highly Supportive
5. supports and encourages me to involve in research and curriculum development	5	Very Highly Supportive
6. offers feedback that helps me improve my teaching techniques	5	Very Highly Supportive
7. recognizes my efforts to adapt to changing educational demands	5	Very Highly Supportive
8. encourages and helps me to reflect on my teaching	5	Very Highly Supportive
9. provides me resources to implement student-centered practices	5	Very Highly Supportive
10. encourages me to make decisions related to my teaching and classroom management	5	Very Highly Supportive
11. provides support and resources to help me enhance my content knowledge	4	Highly Supportive
12. encourages and supports my professional development in pedagogy	5	Very Highly Supportive
13. discusses and provides me with qualitative comments, observations, and recommendations in the IPC competency assessment and significant incidents which shall be used for training and professional development	5	Very Highly Supportive
14. discusses my strengths and development needs with me and reflects them in my Development Plan	5	Very Highly Supportive

Table 5: Level of Professional and Personal Support Provided by School Leaders as Perceived by Teachers in Terms of Organizational Development and Innovation

	Indicators	Median	Adjectival Rating
1	My school head... encourages me to propose innovative teaching methods and projects.	5	Very Highly Supportive
2	allocates me with resources to implement innovative projects and ideas.	4	
3	recognizes and values my innovation and creativity in classroom and school community	5	Very Highly Supportive
4	actively seeks my feedback to improve his/her leadership practices.	4	
5	allows me to feel comfortable when providing suggestions for the continuous improvement of school policies and practices.	5	Very Highly Supportive
	Composite Median	5	Very Highly Supportive

Table 6: Level of Professional and Personal Support Provided by School Leaders as Perceived by Teachers in Terms of Work Life Balance and Well-Being

Indicators	Median	Adjectival Rating
1. respects my time outside school hours	5	Very Highly Supportive
2. recognizes my need for time to recharge and relax	5	Very Highly Supportive
3. considers my well-being when planning school events and deadlines	5	Very Highly Supportive
4. acknowledges the challenges I face in managing my time	5	Very Highly Supportive

Table 7: Challenges in Leadership and Support Based on Teacher Responses (Triangulated)

Cluster/Dimension	Emerging Themes / Challenges
1. Teacher-Leader Relationship	Theme 1.1 Limited participation in decision-making and policy
	Theme 1.2 Indirect or filtered communication through intermediaries (department heads)
	Theme 1.3 Inconsistent transparency in planning and implementation
	Theme 1.4 Inconsistent experiences of responsiveness
	Theme 1.5 Favoritism, subjectivity in recognition, perceived inconsistency and bias in leadership judgment

4.00. Among the three leadership dimensions, Human-Centered Leadership and Transformational Leadership were rated Very Highly Humanistic (Median = 5.00), reflecting participatory decision-making, collaborative governance, and strong support for professional development and organizational innovation. Teachers consistently reported that school heads encouraged open dialogue, involved them in policy formulation, and provided opportunities for instructional improvement and innovation.

In contrast, Empathetic Leadership received a Moderately Humanistic rating (Median = 3.00), indicating inconsistencies in emotional responsiveness and individualized attention to teachers' needs. Qualitative responses highlighted gaps in active listening, fairness, and consideration of personal circumstances, with some teachers noting favoritism and limited attention to well-being.

Regarding professional and personal support, school heads were perceived as very highly supportive across six dimensions: communication and empathy; recognition and appreciation; conflict resolution and transformation; professional development and growth; organizational development and innovation; and work-life balance and well-being. Teachers indicated that their leaders provided constructive feedback, acknowledged achievements, promoted wellness initiatives, and respected autonomy. Minor inconsistencies were noted in resource allocation for innovation and the continuity of certain support practices. Despite these strengths, challenges persisted, particularly in teacher-leader relationships, personal support, and professional support. Issues included limited participation in decision-making, filtered communication, insufficient attention to mental health, and gaps in mentoring and feedback. These challenges suggest that while school heads demonstrate strong structural and collaborative leadership, the relational and empathetic aspects require enhancement. Viewed through the lens of Carl Rogers' Humanistic Theory, the findings underscore the importance of empathy, authenticity, and unconditional positive regard in leadership. While human-centered and transformational practices were embedded in daily operations, relational depth remained limited. Strengthening empathy, active listening, and responsiveness is critical for fostering teacher motivation, psychological safety, and professional growth.

Based on the findings, several strategies are recommended. School leaders should implement targeted training to enhance empathetic leadership, including emotional intelligence, active listening, and wellness check-ins. Participatory governance can be reinforced through structured mechanisms

for teacher involvement and transparent communication systems. Mental health and work-life balance initiatives should be integrated into leadership practices, alongside institutionalized mentoring, coaching, and professional development programs. Adequate resources should be allocated to support innovation and sustain leadership interventions. These recommendations inform the design of the Humanistic Enhancement Leadership Program (HELP), a structured, theory-driven initiative translating humanistic principles into actionable leadership practices with monitoring and evaluation to improve teacher well-being, professional growth, and school effectiveness. Future research should expand the scope to include a wider range of schools and municipalities, examine the influence of teacher demographics on leadership perceptions, and investigate the long-term impact of humanistic leadership on teacher retention, instructional quality, and student outcomes. By addressing these gaps, schools can institutionalize humanistic leadership practices that promote supportive, inclusive, and high-performing educational environments.

References

- Catana L, Sandu A, Frunza A, Gorghiu G, Ciongaru E. *New Approaches in Social and Humanistic Sciences*. Bologna: MEDIMOND; 2016. p. 89–93. Available from: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3342158>
- American University School of Education. *Transformational Leadership in Education*. Washington, DC: American University; 2019. Available from: <https://soeonline.american.edu/blog/transformational-leadership-in-education/#:~:text=In%20education%2C%20this%20leadership%20style,conflicts%20within%20their%20educational%20organizations>
- O'Brian AN. *The Effects of Leading with Empathy on Faculty Morale in a Montessori Setting*. St. Catherine University; 2022. Available from: <https://sophia.stkate.edu/maed>
- Zest Partners. *A Human-Centered Leadership Approach: Building Trust for Growth in the Future*. LinkedIn; 2022. Available from: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/human-centered-leadership-approach-building-trust-growth->
- Chou WJ, Cheng BS. *Humanistic Paradigm in Leadership Practice: A Case Study of a Confucian Entrepreneur*. *Cross Cult Strateg Manag*. 2020;37(3):XYZ. Available from: <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/>

CCSM-01-2020-0011/full/html

6. Deng C, Gulseren D, Isola C, Grocutt K, Turner N. Transformational leadership effectiveness: An evidence-based primer. *Leadersh Organ Dev J.* 2022;43(5):XYZ. doi:10.1080/13678868.2022.2135938
7. Calora EAR. An analysis of conflict management from the teachers' perspective. *Int J Acad Pedagog Res.* 2020;4(12):5–14. Available from: <http://ijeais.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/IJAPR201202.pdf>
8. McLeod S. Carl Rogers humanistic theory and contribution to psychology. *Simply Psychol.* 2024 Jan 29. Available from: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/carl-rogers.html>

How to Cite This Article

Basaya NJ. A teacher-centric analysis of humanistic leadership practices and support from school leaders of DepEd Palawan: basis for school leadership program. *Int J Manag Organ Res.* 2026;5(1):77–81. doi:10.54660/IJMOR.2026.5.1.77-81.

Creative Commons (CC) License

This is an open access journal, and articles are distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work non-commercially, as long as appropriate credit is given and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.