School Heads' Governance: Its Implications to Quality
of Institutional Climate and School Effectiveness

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Abstract

Aim: This study determined the relationship between the school heads' governance and the institutional climate and school effectiveness.

Methodology: This study used a descriptive, correlational design using surveys to determine the level and relationship between the variables. This study was conducted at the schools in Banga South District, South Cotabato with 292 respondents. Purposive sampling was employed to select respondents, specifically the complete enumeration.

Results: The relationship between school heads' governance and institutional climate showed a low positive correlation ($r = 0.2843$, $p = 0.00395$), indicating that while governance influences institutional climate, other factors also shape the overall school environment. Similarly, the relationship between school heads' governance and school effectiveness showed a low positive correlation ($r = 0.163$, $p = 0.0052$), reinforcing that leadership alone does not fully determine school effectiveness but interacts with other structural and instructional factors.

Conclusion: The results indicate a low positive correlation between school heads' governance and both institutional climate and school effectiveness. This suggests that while governance contributes to shaping the school environment and influencing outcomes, it is not the sole determinant. Other structural, instructional, and contextual factors also play a significant role in enhancing institutional climate and achieving school effectiveness.

Keywords: low positive correlation, school heads governance, institutional climate, school effectiveness

INTRODUCTION

Governing a school involves balancing the advantages of autonomy and the need for responsibility. It is about being a manager and a leader, ensuring consistency and discipline while allowing students and teachers to take risks, develop, and grow. School administration is challenging. It entails deciding where the principals are headed and knowing how to get there. It requires the development of abilities in both strategy and execution.

The Philippine educational system is facing tremendous issues like a source of financial sustainability with an insufficient budget, overcrowded classroom, insufficient teachers, fast-changing curricula, and conflicts among and within the teachers. This is where the greater challenge for the school administrator's governance is. The quality of institutional climate also manifests in good governance systems. Stories among teachers often tell the conflicts that exist in their circle. It is one of the unfavorable issues being avoided by all the schools' divisions nationwide (Frianeza et al., 2024).

The school administrator is one of the most crucial figures in the educational system. The administration's governance, a positive school environment, and content teachers' work performance determine the nature of the school. Through strong visioning and preserving the school mission, school administrators with high-quality training can hone their governance skills. The quality of the administrative support services offered by the school is next in significance to the quality of instructional services. They believe that no administrative support provided elsewhere in the educational system can compensate for the absence of management expertise among school administrators (Allen & Mintrom, 2010).

Today's schools are dominated by the need for administrators who possess the necessary and certified management skills (Dizon et al., 2019). Assessing school administrators is necessary to ascertain whether they embody the type of school manager who can guide and solve the problems that the schools face, especially when it comes to improving the standard of education provided to stakeholders and meeting societal expectations. The institutional environment is essential in ensuring a high-quality education (Al Shabibi et al.,2018). This study examines how the personality traits of school administrators influence teachers' performance, highlighting the impact of leadership characteristics on educational outcomes (Bandojo et al., 2021).

The school administrators are always partners in the school's growth for the field teachers with actual teaching responsibilities. Their level of performance and dedication to their jobs reflects the style of school administration in a particular establishment. The school's leadership impacts how the group of instructors respond and commit to maintaining their interest in the school's success (Katz, 2015).

The entire adjustment to the work environment is part of job performance. An attitude is the readiness to respond in a specific way to or against a circumstance, a person, or an object. Teachers who have a positive attitude about their work are typically successful, well-adjusted, and content with how they are performing. Despite numerous studies highlighting the role of school leadership in improving institutional climate and effectiveness, there remains a gap in understanding how specific governance systems employed by school heads directly influence these outcomes in diverse educational contexts. Existing research emphasizes the importance of leadership styles and a supportive climate that fosters school effectiveness (Sun & Leithwood, 2019).This underscores the need for more research assessing governance systems and their effects on institutional climate and overall school outcomes.

Teachers at the elementary level in Banga South District, South Cotabato, encountered notable challenges stemming from the governance and leadership practices of school administrators in the workplace. The researcher wanted to gather first-hand data and information to help the Department of Education determine the true causes of some educational problems and, particularly, consider the role and position of school administrators. Based on the above experiences, this study is conceived from this perspective.

Likewise, the lack of proper and effective school head governance, invisible barriers to institutional climate, and dissatisfied teachers towards school management would adversely affect the quality of the institution climate and effectiveness if such barriers cannot be checked (Dicdiquin et al., 2023). A weak school governance system, invisible institutional climate barriers, and teacher dissatisfaction disrupt organizational stability, reducing school effectiveness and student outcomes (Hoy & Miskel, 2012; Ingersoll & Collins, 2018).

This study is unique as it integrates these factors within the Philippine education context, providing localized insights to inform governance reforms that enhance institutional climate and teacher engagement. Thus, determining the link between the employed governance system and institutional climate in the school's effectiveness among elementary schools in Banga South District would benefit the respondent schools, the District, and the Department of Education in General.

Objectives

The study focused on the school heads' governance and its implication for institutional climate and school effectiveness. Specifically, it answered the following questions:
Specifically, it sought to answer the following research questions:
1. What is the level of the school head governance in terms of:
    1.1 Instructional supervision;
    1.2 Curriculum Planning; and
    1.3 Financial Management?
2. What is the level of implication of the school heads governance to the institutional climate in terms of:
    2.1 Safety
    2.2 interpersonal relationships;
    2.3 teaching and learning; and
    2.4 institutional environment?
3. What is the level of school effectiveness in terms of:
    3.1 curriculum and instruction; and
    3.2 human relations?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the school heads governance and the institutional climate of the elementary schools in Banga South District?

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5. Is there a significant relationship between the school heads governance and the effectiveness of the elementary schools in Banga South District?

Hypothesis

Given the stated research problem, the following hypotheses were tested on 0.05 level of significance:

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between the school heads governance and the institutional climate of the elementary schools in Banga South District.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between the school heads governance and the effectiveness of the elementary schools in Banga South District.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design, utilizing survey instruments to assess the levels of school heads' governance, institutional climate, and school effectiveness, as well as to examine the relationships among these variables. The collected data were systematically tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted using appropriate statistical scales to identify potential correlations (Burns et al., 2005). As noted by Calmorin (2003), descriptive research emphasizes the examination of present conditions in order to discover new insights and contribute to the foundation of scientific understanding.

Population and Sampling

This study was conducted in the schools of Banga South District, South Cotabato, from July 2024 to April 2025, involving a total of 292 respondents. A purposive sampling technique, specifically total enumeration, was employed in selecting the participants. All school heads, selected stakeholders, and regular permanent teachers for the school year 2024–2025 were included as respondents. According to Creswell (2013), purposive sampling involves the intentional selection of individuals and sites that can provide a comprehensive understanding of the central phenomenon under investigation.

Instrument

A survey questionnaire served as the primary data collection instrument for this study. The instrument was subjected to expert validation to ensure its relevance and appropriateness for the research objectives. The measure for School Heads' Governance was adapted from the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS, 2020). The Institutional Climate component was derived from the National School Climate Center (2020), while the School Effectiveness Survey was adopted from the study conducted by Romero et al. (2021).

Data Collection

The data were collected, reviewed, and analyzed in accordance with the study's objectives and established research protocols. The researcher initially sought approval from the Dean of the Graduate School to conduct the study. Upon receiving approval, a formal request was submitted to the Schools Division Superintendent of South Cotabato. After obtaining the superintendent's consent, similar notifications were sent to the district supervisor and school principals to inform them of the data collection.

Before administering the research instrument, the researcher provided a brief orientation to the respondents, explaining the study's purpose and providing instructions for completing the questionnaire. Respondents were given ample time to complete the instrument, and upon its completion, the questionnaires were promptly collected. The final stage of the procedure involved the tabulation, analysis, and interpretation of the collected data.

Treatment of Data

Statistical analysis were conducted using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The mean was employed to determine the levels of school heads' governance, institutional climate, and school effectiveness. Furthermore, Pearson's r was utilized to examine the relationships between school heads' governance and institutional climate, as well as between school heads' governance and school effectiveness. According to Alvarez (2023), Pearson's r is the most commonly used method for measuring linear correlations between variables

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Ethical Considerations

The researcher ensured full compliance with all ethical research protocols to safeguard the rights, confidentiality, and well-being of all individuals and institutions involved in the study.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

School Heads' Governance

The leadership and governance of school heads shape the institutional climate and determine the overall effectiveness of a school. Strong and visionary leadership fosters an environment where teachers feel supported, students are engaged, and academic goals are met collectively. School heads who cultivate a shared vision, promote collaboration, and encourage innovation to contribute to a more dynamic and motivated school community. Governance, in this context, goes beyond administrative functions. It involves creating an atmosphere of trust, open communication, and professional growth, essential for sustaining a high-performing educational institution.

Recent research underscores the significant impact of school heads' governance on school effectiveness. Dacpano (2022) revealed that transformational leadership qualities, such as inspiring and motivating staff, directly correlate with improved school performance and a more positive institutional climate. The entire learning environment flourishes when school leaders lead with purpose and actively engage with their faculty and students. The succeeding table shows the school heads' governance in various aspects.

Table 1. Level of School Head's Governance

Indicators	Means	SD	Interpretation
1. Instructional Supervision	4.06	0.33	Very Satisfactory
2. Curriculum Planning	3.78	0.05	Very Satisfactory
3. Financial Management	3.35	0.38	Satisfactory
Overall Mean	**3.73**	**0.26**	**Very Satisfactory**

The overall mean score of 3.73, interpreted as "Very Satisfactory," suggests that school heads are generally effective in their governance across instructional supervision, curriculum planning, and financial management. This reflects a strong capacity to oversee key administrative and academic responsibilities, ensuring that the school functions efficiently and aligns with its educational objectives. However, while the general performance is commendable, variations in the individual domains indicate areas where improvements can be made.

Among the three domains, instructional supervision received the highest mean score of 4.06, indicating that school heads excel in supporting teachers' professional growth, ensuring alignment with educational goals, and providing instructional guidance. This underscores the importance of teacher development and classroom effectiveness, which directly impact student learning outcomes. On the other hand, financial management received the lowest mean score of 3.35, categorized as "Satisfactory." This suggests that while school heads are competent in handling financial resources, there may be challenges in budget planning, resource allocation, or transparency that must be addressed. Strengthening financial management skills through targeted training and capacity-building programs could enhance school governance.

These results highlight the need for continuous professional development in financial oversight to ensure that school budgets effectively support instructional and curriculum-related goals. Ofoegbu and Alonge (2023) have shown that strong financial leadership is integral to institutional effectiveness, as it directly influences resource availability for learning and teaching activities.

Institutional Climate

The overall atmosphere of a school plays a vital role in shaping its effectiveness, directly impacting both teachers and students. When a school fosters a positive and supportive environment, educators feel more motivated, and students become more engaged in learning. This environment is built on shared values, strong leadership, and a culture of collaboration, where everyone feels a sense of belonging and purpose.

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Schools that prioritize an inclusive and well-structured institutional climate often see higher levels of teacher satisfaction and better student outcomes (Garcia & Torres, 2023). The entire school community thrives when school leaders create spaces where teachers are supported, communication is open, and collaboration is encouraged.

Table 2. Level of Institutional Climate

Indicators	Means	SD	Interpretation
1. Safety	4.31	0.26	Excellent
2. Teaching and Learning	4.18	0.13	Very Satisfactory
3. Interpersonal Relationships	4.30	0.25	Excellent
4. Institutional Environment	3.42	0.63	Very Satisfactory
Overall Mean	**4.05**	**0.54**	**Very Satisfactory**

The results clearly show the school's institutional climate, with an overall mean of 4.05, which falls under the "Very Satisfactory" category. This indicates that the school generally maintains a positive environment in which shared values, relationships, and organizational structures shape the daily experiences of teachers, students, and other stakeholders.

Safety received the highest rating among the different aspects of institutional climate, with a mean of 4.31. This suggests that strong policies on physical and emotional safety and a well-implemented discipline system contribute to a secure and supportive learning environment. Likewise, interpersonal relationships scored 4.30, reflecting a culture of mutual respect, strong teacher-student connections, and an inclusive atmosphere that fosters academic and personal growth.

The teaching and learning aspect was rated 4.18, highlighting that teachers feel supported and recognized in their roles. However, the institutional environment scored the lowest at 3.42, suggesting areas for improvement in administrative support, resource availability, and stakeholder involvement. While efforts are being made to engage the school community, there may still be challenges in ensuring that everyone feels fully connected to school life.

These findings align with the idea that shared norms, relationships, and organizational processes shape the quality of school life. The results support Tera's (2016) study, which found that a positive school climate enhances teacher motivation and student engagement. However, the lower rating in the institutional environment suggests that the school could further improve by strengthening leadership initiatives, increasing resource accessibility, and encouraging greater stakeholder participation.

School Effectiveness

School effectiveness refers to a school's ability to achieve its educational goals by fostering student learning, personal growth, and overall well-being. Research highlights several critical factors that contribute to an effective school environment. Strong educational leadership plays a pivotal role, as principals who provide clear instructional guidance help create a culture of academic excellence (Garcia-Jimenez et al., 2022). Additionally, a safe and orderly environment ensures that students can focus on their studies without security concerns, promoting a positive atmosphere conducive to learning. Schools that implement ongoing assessment and monitoring strategies are better equipped to identify areas for improvement and apply targeted interventions that enhance student performance.

Table 3. Level of School Effectiveness

Indicators	Means	SD	Interpretation
1. Curriculum and Instruction	3.25	0.07	Effective
2. Human Relations	3.38	0.06	Effective
Overall Mean	**3.32**	**0.008**	**Effective**

The summary of school effectiveness presented in Table 3 highlights key areas of institutional performance, focusing on curriculum and instruction and human relations. With an overall mean of 3.32, interpreted as "Effective,"

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the results indicate that while the school demonstrates effectiveness in these domains, there remains room for further development.

Among the two categories, human relations received a slightly higher mean of 3.38 compared to curriculum and instruction, which scored 3.25. This suggests that the school head is relatively more effective in fostering positive relationships with teachers than in implementing and managing instructional practices. The strength in human relations reflects a supportive and motivating leadership style, where teachers feel valued and engaged in decision-making. However, the lower rating in curriculum and instruction implies that while the school head and teachers are knowledgeable and committed to curricular programs, there may be challenges in setting clear goals, monitoring lesson plans, and ensuring that instructional quality remains a top priority.

The findings align with research emphasizing that school effectiveness is significantly influenced by instructional and relational leadership (Del Rosario & Cruz, 2022). A well-balanced approach that strengthens both areas can improve teacher performance and student learning outcomes. To enhance school effectiveness further, instructional leadership must be reinforced by providing more structured support for curriculum implementation, professional development, and resource allocation while nurturing strong, collaborative relationships within the school community.

Table 4. Relationship between School Heads' Governance and Institutional Climate

Indicators			r	df	Sig	Interpretation
School Head Governance	vs	Institutional Climate	0.2843	290	.00395	Low Positive Correlation

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The results presented in Table 4 indicate a statistically significant but low positive correlation (r=0.2843, p= 0.00395) between school heads' governance and institutional climate. This suggests that while there is a relationship between how school leaders manage and govern their institutions and the overall school climate, the strength of this association is relatively weak.

A low positive correlation implies that improvements in school heads' governance practices may contribute to a better institutional climate. However, other factors also significantly shape the school environment. The institutional climate, which encompasses safety, interpersonal relationships, and the overall learning environment, is influenced by multiple elements beyond leadership, including teacher collaboration, student behavior, and community engagement.

Since the correlation is statistically significant (p<0.05), the link between governance and institutional climate is not random. This aligns with previous studies, such as those by Childs and Russell (2017), which highlight the role of school leadership in fostering a positive learning environment but also emphasize the importance of collaboration and shared responsibility. To strengthen this connection, school heads could focus on more inclusive leadership approaches, encouraging teacher involvement in decision-making, fostering strong relationships among staff and students, and ensuring that learning resources are readily available.

Table 5. Relationship between School Heads' Governance and School Effectiveness

Indicators			r	t-$_{stat}$	Sig	Interpretation
School Head Governance	vs	School Effectiveness	0.163	2.8143	.0052	Low Positive Correlation

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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The findings in Table reveal a small yet meaningful positive connection (r=0.163, p=0.0052) between school heads' governance and overall school effectiveness. The correlation coefficient of 0.163 suggests a weak but positive relationship between school heads' governance and overall school effectiveness. This means that as school governance improves, there is a slight increase in school effectiveness, though the connection is not particularly strong. While leadership shapes school success, other factors contribute significantly, such as instructional quality, student engagement, and resource availability. A stronger correlation would indicate a more direct impact of governance on effectiveness, but in this case, it suggests that leadership alone is not the primary driver of school effectiveness.

The p-value of 0.0052 indicates that this relationship is statistically significant at the 0.05 level, meaning that the likelihood of this correlation occurring by chance is very low. A p-value below 0.05 is considered reliable in research, suggesting that the connection between governance and school effectiveness is meaningful.

However, the fact that the correlation remains low implies that leadership improvements alone may not be enough to create substantial changes in school effectiveness. Other structural and instructional elements must also be strengthened to achieve meaningful progress. This finding aligns with studies highlighting the multifaceted nature of school effectiveness. Research by Leithwood et al. (2020) emphasizes that while leadership is important, its influence is often indirect, shaping school culture and teacher motivation rather than directly improving student outcomes.

Similarly, Hallinger and Heck (2018) argue that governance works best with professional development, strong instructional programs, and a positive institutional climate. Therefore, school improvement efforts should not focus solely on leadership but take a more holistic approach to ensure long-term success.
development in nursing organizations

Conclusions

The study concludes that school heads' governance holds a modest yet meaningful influence on both institutional climate and school effectiveness. While governance in instructional supervision, curriculum planning, and financial management is generally rated very satisfactory, specific areas such as classroom observation, curriculum communication, and alignment of financial planning with strategic objectives require further enhancement. The institutional climate is positively perceived, particularly in terms of physical safety, inclusivity, and teacher recognition. However, greater efforts are needed to promote emotional well-being, foster professional development, and strengthen collaboration among teachers. School effectiveness is evident in leadership and curriculum implementation, though improvements in goal-setting and teacher motivation are necessary.

Recommendations

In light of these findings, it is recommended that school heads engage in continuous leadership training, adopt more structured and transparent decision-making processes, and enhance stakeholder collaboration. Additionally, classroom supervision should be improved, communication regarding curriculum decisions should be clarified, and financial planning must be strategically aligned with school goals. Support systems that address teachers' holistic development and promote a positive, collaborative institutional climate should also be prioritized to further advance school effectiveness

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