

Social Change Initiatives and Leadership Development of Secondary School Teachers

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the engagement of secondary school teachers in social change initiatives and how it contributes to their leadership development. It aimed to identify the initiatives teachers participate in their school and communities, the leadership skills they apply, the relationship between the two, the challenges encountered, and propose an intervention to strengthen teacher involvement. A quantitative descriptive-correlational design was used. Sixty (60) purposively selected secondary school teachers from Capalonga, Camarines Norte served as respondents during the school year 2023–2024. Data were gathered through a validated survey and analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation via SPSS. Findings revealed that teachers were actively involved in social change, especially in environmental conservation. The most utilized leadership skills were strategic planning, communication, and decision-making, while conflict resolution and ethical leadership were less used. A significant positive relationship was found between social change engagement and leadership skill development. Challenges included financial limitations, lack of time, minimal administrative support, and restricted access to professional development. The study proposed a professional development training program as an intervention to improve leadership skills and teacher participation in social initiatives. In conclusion, teachers play a vital role in social change and benefit in leadership growth through active engagement. Supportive structures, training, and recognition are recommended to maximize their impact.

Keywords: Social change, leadership development, secondary teachers, community engagement, challenges, intervention

INTRODUCTION

In educational systems across the globe, teachers play a vital role not only in transmitting knowledge but also in fostering the ethical, civic, and leadership values essential for societal advancement. As catalysts of social transformation, teachers possess the capacity to inspire learners to become proactive, socially responsible citizens and community leaders (Bourn, 2016).

The global relevance of this role has been supported by empirical research. Baltes and Brown (2017) demonstrated that individuals with higher levels of education are more likely to participate in social change efforts. Their findings underscore a positive correlation between educational attainment and perceived involvement in civic and community engagement. However, the same study also highlighted a research gap in understanding how educational backgrounds and contexts shape social change participation across specific demographics particularly within school systems.

In response to educational demands, modern teaching now emphasizes collaboration, innovation, and leadership. Gräsel et al. (2021) examined these dynamics in secondary schools in Germany, employing Social Network Analysis (SNA) to understand how trust and collaboration shape teacher relationships. Their findings revealed that trust is cultivated not by the frequency of collaboration, but by the quality of interpersonal engagement, shared values, and mutual respect. This reframes schools as not only instructional spaces but also dynamic ecosystems of professional relationships and leadership development.

In the Philippine context, local research reinforces the connection between professional development and leadership effectiveness. Capuno et al. (2021) highlighted the importance of sustained teacher training in enhancing instructional competence. Similarly, Corbades (2018) emphasized reflective leadership among principals as a driving force for improved teaching outcomes in Iloilo, particularly through 21st-century learning approaches. Villar (2021), in a study conducted in Quezon City, identified limitations in resource availability but underscored the positive influence of social support structures in public elementary schools.

Within this national framework, the Capalonga District in Camarines Norte presents a microcosm of both the potentials and limitations of teacher-led social change. Under the leadership of the OIC-District Supervisor, select schools have initiated programs such as tree planting and community clean-up drives to promote civic engagement and environmental awareness among students and teachers. However, these initiatives remain isolated and inconsistently implemented across the district.

This study aimed to determine the social change engagement and leadership development of secondary school teachers in Capalonga, Camarines Norte. Specifically, it sought to identify the types of social change initiatives that teachers are involved in within their schools and local communities. It also aimed to determine the leadership development skills that teachers apply when initiating or participating in these social change efforts.

Furthermore, the study sought to identify whether there is a significant relationship between teachers' engagement in social change initiatives and their development of leadership competencies. It also explored the challenges teachers face in carrying out social change activities, particularly in terms of access to resources, time constraints, administrative support, and opportunities for professional development. Lastly, the study intended to propose an intervention to promote the initiatives of secondary school teachers in enhancing social change.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative method and utilized a descriptive-correlational design to explore how secondary school teachers in Capalonga, Camarines Norte engage in social change initiatives and how these contribute to their leadership development. This methodological choice allowed for a systematic and objective investigation by integrating quantitative data collection and analysis procedures.

The descriptive component focused on identifying the types of social change initiatives secondary school teachers are involved in, the leadership skills they demonstrate through these activities, and the challenges they encounter in promoting social change. The gathered data provided a detailed understanding of current practices and needs related to teacher engagement and leadership in school and community contexts.

The inferential component examined whether significant differences existed among respondents in terms of their engagement in social change initiatives and the leadership skills they exhibited. This allowed the study to test its hypotheses and offer insights into patterns of variation across the sample.

The correlational aspect explored the relationship between teachers' participation in social change efforts and their leadership development. This analysis determined whether a significant connection exists between the extent of teachers' social engagement and the enhancement of leadership competencies such as strategic planning, communication, decision-making, and ethical leadership.

The participants of the study were sixty (60) purposively selected public secondary school teachers from Capalonga, Camarines Norte during the school year 2023–2024. Selection criteria included active involvement in school or community initiatives, leadership roles in academic or non-academic functions, and a minimum of three years of teaching experience.

The research instrument was a structured and validated questionnaire composed of five parts: demographic profile, social change initiatives, leadership development skills, challenges encountered, and proposed interventions. The instrument was pilot-tested and subjected to expert validation to ensure clarity, reliability,

and internal consistency. Prior to data collection, appropriate permissions were secured from school authorities, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents.

The collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics software. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, and weighted mean were used to summarize the data. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was computed to determine the relationship between teachers' engagement in social change and their leadership development. A significance level of $p < 0.05$ was used to evaluate the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social Change Initiatives of Secondary School Teachers within Their Schools and Communities. It was found that the most commonly practiced social change initiative among secondary school teachers was environmental conservation activities, with a frequency of 56, ranking first. This indicates that teachers are highly engaged in activities such as recycling drives and tree planting. A larger number of teachers are involved in efforts that promote environmental awareness and sustainability.

Table 1. Social Change initiatives of Secondary School Teachers within their School and Communities

Indicators	Frequency	Rank
1. Environmental conservation activities (e.g., recycling drives, tree planting)	56	1
2. Health and wellness programs (e.g., health education sessions, fitness activities)	46	6
3. Community service and volunteering (e.g., local charity work, community clean-up days)	52	3
4. Educational workshops or seminars for community development (e.g., literacy programs, adult education)	49	5
5. Advocacy or awareness campaigns (e.g., anti-bullying, gender equality)	54	2
6. Student leadership and empowerment programs	51	4

On the other hand, health and wellness programs were the least practiced, with a frequency of 46, ranking sixth. This shows that fewer teachers are involved in promoting physical and mental well-being through activities like fitness sessions and health education.

Leadership Development Skills Employed in Instituting Social Changes. It was found that the most commonly used leadership development skill among secondary school teachers was strategic planning, with a frequency of 59, ranking first. This shows that teachers focus on setting goals and implementing structured plans when leading social change efforts.

Table 2. Leadership Development Skills Employed in Instituting Social Changes

Indicators	Frequency	Rank
1. Communication skills (e.g., clear, persuasive, and effective exchange of ideas)	56	2
2. Conflict resolution skills (e.g., managing and resolving disputes effectively)	44	6.5
3. Decision-making skills (e.g., making informed and timely decisions)	51	3
4. Emotional intelligence (e.g., understanding and managing your own emotions and those of others)	50	4.5
5. Strategic planning skills (e.g., setting goals and defining strategies to achieve them)	59	1
6. Team-building skills (e.g., creating and leading effective teams)	50	4.5
7. Ethical leadership (e.g., demonstrating honesty, integrity, and fairness)	44	6.5

On the other hand, the least used leadership skills were **conflict resolution** and **ethical leadership**, both with a frequency of 44, tied at rank 6.5. This indicates that fewer teachers practice managing conflicts and making value-based decisions when leading social change initiatives.

Relationship between Social Change Initiatives and the Leadership Development Skills. The result showed a significant positive relationship between social change initiatives and leadership development skills, with a correlation coefficient of **r = 0.318** and a **p-value = 0.013**. This means that greater teacher involvement in social change activities is associated with higher levels of leadership skill development. This suggests that as teachers participate more in social initiatives, their leadership skills also improve.

Table 3. Significant Relationship between Social Change Initiatives and the Leadership Development Skills

	Social Change Initiatives		Remarks
	r	p-value	
Leadership Development Skills	.318*	.013	Reject H ₀

Correlation is Significant @ 0.05 level.

Challenges that Secondary School Teachers faced in Engaging with Social Change Initiatives. Resources. It was found that the most serious resource-related challenge was the **lack of financial resources**, with a weighted mean of **3.48**, interpreted as a **Significant Challenge**. This shows that limited funding affects teachers' ability to carry out social change initiatives.

Table 4. Challenges Faced by the Respondents in Engaging with Social Change Efforts along Resources

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. I lack the financial resources needed.	3.48	SC
2. I do not have the necessary material resources.	3.10	MoC
3. There is a shortage of human resources to assist.	2.80	MoC
4. Access to relevant information is insufficient.	2.58	MiC
Overall Weighted Mean	2.99	MoC

Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation:

4.20-5.00	Major Challenge (MC)
3.40-4.19	Significant Challenge (SC)
2.60-3.39	Moderate Challenge (MoC)
1.80-2.59	Minor Challenge (MiC)
1.00-1.79	Not a Challenge (NC)

On the other hand, the least challenging factor was **access to relevant information**, with a weighted mean of **2.58**, interpreted as a **Minor Challenge**. This means that although teachers generally have access to information, they still lack the necessary funding and materials to implement their initiatives fully.

Challenges that Secondary School Teachers faced in Engaging with Social Change Initiatives. Time Constraints. The most common time-related challenge encountered by teachers was **insufficient time for implementation**, with a weighted mean of **3.12**, interpreted as a **Moderate Challenge**. This means that teachers find it difficult to carry out social initiatives due to their existing workload.

Table 5. Challenges Faced by the Respondents in Engaging with Social Change Efforts along Time Constraints

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. I have insufficient planning time.	3.02	MoC
2. There is not enough time for implementation.	3.12	MoC
3. Maintaining ongoing activities is time-consuming.	3.10	MoC

4. Evaluating activities and outcomes lacks allocated time.	2.93	MoC
Overall Weighted Mean	3.04	MoC

Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation:

4.20-5.00	Major Challenge (MC)
3.40-4.19	Significant Challenge (SC)
2.60-3.39	Moderate Challenge (MoC)
1.80-2.59	Minor Challenge (MiC)
1.00-1.79	Not a Challenge (NC)

The least experienced challenge was **lack of time for evaluating activities and outcomes**, with a weighted mean of **2.93**, also interpreted as a **Moderate Challenge**. This shows that while teachers can plan and implement, they have limited time to assess the results of their initiatives.

Challenges that Secondary School Teachers faced in Engaging with Social Change Initiatives. Administrative Support. It was found that the highest-rated challenge under administrative support was the **lack of administrative support**, with a weighted mean of **3.05**, interpreted as a **Moderate Challenge**. This shows that many teachers implement initiatives without sufficient backing from school leaders.

Table 6. Challenges Faced by the Respondents in Engaging with Social Change Efforts along Administrative Support

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Administrative support for initiatives is lacking.	3.05	MoC
2. There is little encouragement from leaders.	3.00	MoC
3. Supportive policies or procedures are inadequate.	2.95	MoC
4. Efforts are not sufficiently recognized or rewarded.	2.88	MoC
Overall Weighted Mean	2.97	MoC

Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation:

4.20-5.00	Major Challenge (MC)
3.40-4.19	Significant Challenge (SC)
2.60-3.39	Moderate Challenge (MoC)
1.80-2.59	Minor Challenge (MiC)
1.00-1.79	Not a Challenge (NC)

The lowest-rated challenge was **insufficient recognition or rewards**, with a weighted mean of **2.88**, also a **Moderate Challenge**. This indicates that while teachers may not expect incentives, the lack of acknowledgment can still affect their motivation and long-term involvement.

Challenges that Secondary School Teachers faced in Engaging with Social Change Initiatives. Professional and Development Opportunities. The most common professional development challenge faced by teachers was **limited access to external experts**, with a weighted mean of **3.27**, interpreted as a **Moderate Challenge**. This indicates a lack of specialized guidance and mentorship in supporting teacher-led social change initiatives.

Table 7. Challenges Faced by the Respondents in Engaging with Social Change Efforts along Professional and Development Opportunities

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. Training opportunities related to social change are rare.	3.23	MoC
2. Workshops on social change are not readily available.	3.18	MoC
3. Access to external experts in social change is limited.	3.27	MoC
4. Opportunities for collaboration with others are infrequent.	3.00	MoC
Overall Weighted Mean	3.17	MoC

Rating Scale: Descriptive Interpretation:

4.20-5.00	Major Challenge (MC)
3.40-4.19	Significant Challenge (SC)
2.60-3.39	Moderate Challenge (MoC)
1.80-2.59	Minor Challenge (MiC)
1.00-1.79	Not a Challenge (NC)

The least experienced challenge was **infrequent opportunities for collaboration**, with a weighted mean of **3.00**, also categorized as a **Moderate Challenge**. While collaboration is valuable, the lack of platforms for shared learning and peer engagement remains a concern.

Proposed Intervention to Promote the Engagement of Secondary School Teachers in Enhancing Social Change Initiatives. In response to the study's findings, a training program titled “**Empowering Educators: Professional Development for Social Change Leadership**” was designed to strengthen the leadership competencies of secondary school teachers in Capalonga and address the specific challenges they face in implementing social change initiatives. The program includes targeted modules that promote engagement in health and wellness programs, as well as scenario-based workshops on conflict resolution and ethical leadership areas previously identified as underdeveloped. To address persistent barriers such as limited resources, time constraints, administrative support, and lack of professional development, the intervention introduces strategies for resource mobilization, time management, and collaborative planning with school heads and master teachers. It also provides expert-led sessions and peer networking opportunities to support continuous learning and mentorship. Delivered through three full-day virtual sessions, the training combines interactive lectures, workshops, and action planning, with structured feedback tools for evaluation. This proposal will be submitted to the Department of Education – Camarines Norte for consideration, with the ultimate goal of empowering teachers to become strategic, ethical, and community-driven leaders in educational transformation.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Secondary school teachers actively engage in social change initiatives, especially in environmental conservation, advocacy campaigns, and community service.
2. They commonly use strategic planning, communication, and decision-making skills, while conflict resolution and ethical leadership are the least applied.
3. A significant positive relationship exists between teachers' participation in social change and their leadership development, showing that engagement enhances leadership skills.
4. Teachers face moderate challenges such as financial constraints, time limitations, limited administrative support, and restricted access to professional development.

5. The proposed training program addresses these challenges by offering targeted leadership training, expert support, and collaboration opportunities, empowering teachers to lead and sustain impactful social change in their schools and communities.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are hereby proposed.

1. Schools may enhance teacher engagement in social change by integrating these initiatives into school programs and promoting partnerships with local organizations and stakeholders.
2. Professional development should focus on strengthening teachers' skills in conflict resolution and ethical leadership to promote balanced and value-based leadership.
3. School leaders are encouraged to support and recognize teachers' involvement in social initiatives, as these efforts contribute to leadership growth.
4. To address key challenges, schools may secure external funding, implement time management strategies, strengthen administrative support through clear policies and recognition, and expand professional development by providing access to expert-led training and collaborative opportunities.
5. The proposed training program should be implemented, supported, and regularly conducted to strengthen leadership skills and address professional development gaps.
6. Future researchers may broaden the study by including more schools and exploring other factors influencing leadership, such as culture, resources, and school policies. Mixed methods research is also encouraged for deeper insight.

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