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## School Heads' Communication and Management Functions in Building Organizational Trust

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### Abstract

The general purpose of this study was to investigate the role of school head's communication and management functions in shaping the organizational trust dynamics within the school. Specifically, this study aims to discover their practices in communication and management functions. This study also ascertain to assess the level of organizational trust among the internal stakeholders. Lastly, it ascertain to evaluate the correlations between school heads' practices in communication and management function to the level of organizational trust among the internal stakeholders. This study was conducted on public elementary schools in the North district of Mauban, Quezon Province, involving a total of 104 school heads and internal stakeholders selected through purposive sampling. Employing a descriptive-correlational quantitative research method, the study utilized a researcher-made survey questionnaire distributed among the participants. Based on the findings, the study found that most of respondents are from Mauban North ESI I, fall within the age range of 31 to 40 years, have a tenure of 10 years or less, and hold a Bachelor's degree with additional Master's degree. It is evident that the school head's communication function is highly observed across all subscales, including information dissemination, affirmation feedback, and interpretation of messages. The findings also suggest that school heads demonstrate highly observed practices in various management domains, including management for school goals, instructional management, direct supervision of instruction, and bureaucratic management which reflects effective leadership and administration within schools. The analysis indicates a high level of organizational trust among internal stakeholders across affective, cognitive, and behavioral aspects which highlights the consistent perceptions. In conclusion, moderate positive correlations observed indicate that effective communication practices, such as providing information, offering affirmation and feedback, and interpreting organizational matters, are associated with higher levels of trust. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that enhancing these communication functions can lead to increased organizational trust among internal stakeholders, contributing to a more positive organizational climate and improved outcomes. The findings also revealed that effective management for school goals, instructional management, direct supervision, and bureaucratic management are all associated with higher levels of trust. Based on these results, it can be hypothesized that improving management practices, particularly in terms of setting and achieving school goals, managing instruction effectively, providing direct supervision, and implementing bureaucratic processes efficiently, can lead to increased organizational trust among internal stakeholders. This study recommends for the future researchers to further explore the complex dynamics between school head communication, management functions, and organizational trust. Additionally, they should explore the influence of contextual factors, such as school culture and community dynamics, on trust dynamics within educational institutions.

### Keywords

Communication Function, Management Functions, Organizational Trust

### INTRODUCTION

In the landscape of educational institutions, the role of the school head is significant in shaping the organizational climate and fostering a culture of trust. School heads have big responsibilities, especially in communication and school management (Geleta, 2022). Communication involves sharing information, giving feedback, and making sure everyone

understands messages (Vain, 2023). When School Heads communicate openly and consistently, it creates an atmosphere of transparency and approachability, contributing to the establishment of organizational trust among teachers, staff, and other stakeholders (Tyler, 2022). In Tyler's seminal work on school improvement, he emphasized the importance of relational trust, highlighting that effective communication is a key driver of trust formation in educational settings. Therefore, the School Head's proficiency in communication not only influences the immediate organizational climate but also has far-reaching implications for the overall success and well-being of the school community.

While, the school head's management function is a multifaceted aspect of educational leadership, encompassing a range of responsibilities crucial for the effective functioning of the school (Gamala & Marpa, 2022). This involves not only setting and achieving goals but also employing effective teaching strategies, overseeing instructional practices, and efficiently managing administrative tasks (Chen, 2021). This management function contributes to the overall effectiveness of the teaching and learning process within the school (Lynch et. al., 2020).

In this indicative context, trust emerges as a fundamental element for a healthy school community. Organizational trust involves a complex framework encompassing affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions, mirroring established literature on organizational trust. Affective trust, rooted in emotional connections and relational bonds, flourishes in a positive and supportive work environment facilitated by effective management. Cognitive trust, shaped by clear communication and consistent decision-making, reflects rational assessments of reliability and competence. Behavioral trust focuses on the positive actions and collaborative behaviors exhibited within the school community, building upon foundations of affective and cognitive trust (Mayer et. al., 2019; Tschannen-Moran, 2020). This study explores how the school head's communication and management influence organizational trust among internal stakeholders. By examining the affective, cognitive, and behavioral aspects of trust, it aims to provide insights for fostering a trusting and thriving school community, supporting Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 through effective communication and transparent management.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The researcher employed a quantitative research method using a descriptive-correlational design. This was utilized through the collection of communication and management functions of school heads and the level of organizational trust among internal stakeholders. It involved detailing the current state of communication and management functions of school heads and describing the levels of organizational trust among internal stakeholders. The researcher explored how communication and management functions correlated with organizational trust levels among internal stakeholders.

**Construction.** To get the relationship of the school head's communication and management functions in building organizational trust. The researcher used a researcher-made survey questionnaire and are design in two (2) set. The first set of instruments is design for the school heads. This will be breakdown in two (2) parts. The first part is consisted of questions about the School Head's communication function, constructed based from the variables from Saul (2023), namely: information dissemination, affirmation/feedback processes and interpretation of organizational messages.

The second part is consisted of questions about the School Head's management function in terms of management for school goals achievement, instructional management strategies, direct supervision of instruction in the school and bureaucratic management practice. It is constructed based from the questionnaire of school principal leadership behavioral items developed by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2019).

The second set is consisted of questions regarding the internal stakeholder's level of organizational trust among the internal stakeholders, this is constructed based from Khalil et. al., (2022) variable: affective cognitive and behavioral.

**Validation.** To ensure the congruency and accuracy of the questionnaire the researcher submitted it to the thesis adviser and other panel members for corrections and suggestions for its refinement. The result of the data will be submitted through statistical validation for the validity and reliability of the instrument and whether it is compatible and has reliable information influenced by the study before disseminating the instrument to the respondents.

The researcher requested for the content validation to be done by one (1) principal, one (1) head teacher and four (4) master teachers to ensure the quality of questions and alignment to the variables under study.

**Run-Through.** A preliminary online survey was conducted with a total of thirty (30) non-participating respondents from Mauban South District better assess the reliability of the questionnaire which has been utilized in this study. Following the collection of pilot testing data, every response was compiled and examined for reliability testing incorporating Cronbach's Alpha to each statement. Cronbach's Alpha is a measure of internal consistency, indicating how closely related a set of items in a questionnaire are to each other. It measures how well the items in a scale correlate with one another, suggesting whether the items are measuring the same underlying construct.

The reliability analysis for the validated research instrument, focusing on School Head's Communication and Management Functions, reveals exceptionally high levels of internal consistency across all subscales. For the Communication Function, the subscale of Information demonstrates an impressive Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .960, indicating excellent reliability. This suggests that the items within the Information subscale consistently measure the intended construct of providing relevant and timely information to stakeholders. Similarly, the Affirmation Feedback subscale exhibits a Cronbach's Alpha of .955, further emphasizing excellent internal consistency. This indicates that items assessing the provision of positive reinforcement and constructive feedback are reliably measuring the underlying

construct. Moreover, the Interpretation subscale shows a Cronbach's Alpha of .966, indicating excellent reliability in capturing the ability of school heads to interpret and clarify organizational matters.

**Table 2** Level of Internal Consistency of the Validated Research Instrument

Variables	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
<b>School Head's Communication and Management Functions</b>			
<b>Communication Function</b>			
Information	10	.960	Excellent
Affirmation Feedback	10	.955	Excellent
Interpretation	10	.966	Excellent
<b>Management Function</b>			
Management for the School Goals	10	.959	Excellent
Instructional Management	10	.971	Excellent
Direct Supervision of Instruction in the School	10	.965	Excellent
Bureaucratic Management	10	.951	Excellent
<b>Internal Stakeholder's Organizational Trust</b>			
<b>Affective Aspect</b>			Excellent
Genuine Care	5	.908	Excellent
Concern for Welfare	5	.942	Excellent
<b>Cognitive Aspect</b>			
Capability	5	.908	Excellent
Consistency	5	.946	Excellent
<b>Behavioral Aspect</b>			
Integrity	5	.924	Excellent
Competence	5	.897	Excellent
Benevolence	5	.938	Excellent

**Legend:**  $a \geq 0.9$  Excellent,  $0.9 > a \geq 0.8$  Good,  $0.8 > a \geq 0.7$  Acceptable,  $0.7 > a \geq 0.6$  Questionable,  $0.6 > a \geq 0.5$  Poor,  $0.5 > a$  Unacceptable

As for Management for the School Goals, the subscale exhibits a remarkable Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .959, indicating excellent reliability. This suggests that the items comprising this subscale consistently measure the intended construct of managing school activities to achieve organizational objectives. Similarly, Instructional Management demonstrates an exceptionally high Cronbach's Alpha of .971, further highlighting the excellent internal consistency of items related to overseeing instructional processes within the school. Moreover, Direct Supervision of Instruction in the School presents a Cronbach's Alpha of .965, underscoring the excellent reliability in assessing the direct oversight of instructional activities by school leaders. Lastly, Bureaucratic Management shows a Cronbach's Alpha of .951, indicating excellent reliability in measuring the efficient management of administrative processes within the school.

For the Affective Aspect of Internal Stakeholder's Organizational Trust demonstrates excellent levels of internal consistency. Under the subscale of Genuine Care, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is .908, indicating excellent reliability. This suggests that the items within this subscale consistently measure the intended construct of genuine care within the organization. Similarly, Concern for Welfare exhibits an impressive Cronbach's Alpha of .942, further confirming excellent reliability in assessing stakeholders' perception of the organization's concern for their welfare. While, the analysis for the Cognitive Aspect of Internal Stakeholder's Organizational Trust indicates excellent levels of internal consistency.

Under the subscale of Capability, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is .908, signifying excellent reliability. This suggests that the items within this subscale consistently measure the intended construct of the organization's capability. Similarly, Consistency demonstrates an impressive Cronbach's Alpha of .946, further confirming excellent reliability in assessing stakeholders' perception of the organization's consistency.

Furthermore, under the subscale of Integrity, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is .924, indicating excellent reliability in measuring stakeholders' perceptions of the organization's integrity. For Competence, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is .897, which also reflects excellent reliability in assessing stakeholders' trust in the organization's competence. Furthermore, Benevolence exhibits a Cronbach's Alpha of .938, reaffirming excellent reliability in evaluating stakeholders' perceptions of the organization's benevolent behavior.

Overall, these high Cronbach's Alpha coefficients underscore the reliability and consistency of the research instrument in assessing School Head's Communication and Management Functions, providing confidence in the validity of the measured constructs.

**Conceptualization.** The topic as the focus of the researcher is based on the theory and concepts being explored. All the required protocols of the Graduate School and Applied Research office were strictly followed by the researcher. The concept undergoes a pre-oral defense whereas the panel members gave comments and suggestions for the refinement of the paper. Once approved, it will now be implemented.

**Implementation.** The researcher prepared a request letter for gathering data in the participant schools in the District of Sampaloc. The letter sent to the Public Schools District Supervisor of the said district and after the approval of Public Schools District Supervisor the researcher sent another letter to the principals or school heads of the respondents to help him to conduct the study. After the approval of the Public Schools District Supervisor, Principals and respondents the researcher conducted the study by following the different procedure: First, the researcher sent a copy of the questionnaire through goggle form. Then the respondents submit it back to the researcher.

The researcher asked permission from the office of the North districts of Mauban Quezon to list the number of public elementary schools in the area, which was done through a written request. Then a letter sent to the Public Schools District Supervisor of the said district and after the approval of Public Schools District Supervisor the researcher sent another letter to the principals or school heads of the respondents to help her to conduct the study. After securing the number of schools and the potential number of respondents from the North districts, the researcher then sought permission from the office of the listed schools to conduct the study among the chosen respondents, who were the public elementary school heads and internal stakeholders. This was also done through a written request to conduct the study.

**Data Analysis.** The researcher then analyzed and interpreted the responses based on the results of the study. They examined, categorized, assessed, tabulated, and evaluated the results from the participants using statistical approaches. The researcher assured respondents that their answers would be held strictly confidential and used for research purposes only.

**Ethical Consideration.** The researcher assured respondents that their answers would be held strictly confidential and used for research purposes only.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 2** Relationship between School Head’s Communication Function and Organizational Trust

Communication Function	Internal Stakeholder’s Organizational Trust						
	Affective		Cognitive		Benevolence		
	Genuine Care	Concern for Welfare	Capability	Consistency	Integrity	Competence	Benevolence
Information	.335**	.346**	.416**	.375**	.247*	.287**	.331**
Affirmation/Feedback	.409**	.368**	.496**	.449**	.374**	.365**	.416**
Interpretation	.444**	.429**	.549**	.499**	.395**	.427**	.466**

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

Table 2 provides the correlational analysis test of relationship between school head’s communication function and organizational trust. Among the Information under the communication function, Capability demonstrates the highest correlation with all aspects of Internal Stakeholder’s Organizational Trust: Capability ( $r = .416, p < 0.01$ ), Consistency ( $r = .375, p < 0.01$ ), Concern for Welfare ( $r = .346, p < 0.01$ ), Genuine Care ( $r = .335, p < 0.01$ ), Benevolence ( $r = 0.331, p < 0.01$ ), Competence ( $r = .287, p < 0.01$ ), and Integrity ( $r = .247, p < 0.01$ ). These correlations are all statistically significant at the 0.01 level, indicating a moderate positive relationship between information and each dimension of organizational trust. This suggests that the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating a significant relationship between the extent of practice of the School Head’s communication and the level of organizational trust among the internal stakeholders. This suggests that when school leaders transparently share information about updates, plans, and decisions, stakeholders—including teachers, staff, and parents—develop a greater sense of trust in the organization. Effective communication ensures that stakeholders are well-informed, which reduces uncertainty and builds confidence in the school’s leadership. As a result, stakeholders feel more connected and committed to the school’s goals and values, knowing that their leaders are open, reliable, and competent. This transparency not only fosters a supportive and cohesive environment but also enhances the overall functioning and morale of the educational community.

For Affirmation/Feedback, the highest correlation is observed with Capability ( $r = .496, p < 0.01$ ), followed by Consistency ( $r = .449, p < 0.01$ ), Benevolence ( $r = .416, p < 0.01$ ), Genuine Care ( $r = .409, p < 0.01$ ), Integrity ( $r = .374, p < 0.01$ ), Concern for Welfare ( $r = .368, p < 0.01$ ), and Competence ( $r = .365, p < 0.01$ ). This correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level, indicating a strong positive relationship between affirmation/feedback and the internal stakeholders’ trust in the organization’s trust. The analysis indicates a strong positive correlation between affirmation and feedback provided by the school head and organizational trust. When leaders offer praise, recognition, and constructive feedback to stakeholders, it fosters a trusting environment where individuals feel valued and supported.

Similarly, for Interpretation, the highest correlation is found with Capability ( $r = .549, p < 0.01$ ) followed by Consistency ( $r = .499, p < 0.01$ ), Benevolence ( $r = .466, p < 0.01$ ), Genuine Care ( $r = .444, p < 0.01$ ), Concern for Welfare ( $r = .429, p < 0.01$ ), Competence ( $r = .427, p < 0.01$ ), and Integrity ( $r = .395, p < 0.01$ ). This correlation is also statistically significant at the 0.01 level, indicating a strong positive relationship between interpretation and the internal stakeholders’ trust in the organization’s trust. When leaders effectively interpret and clarify complex issues, goals, and challenges, it helps stakeholders better understand and align with the organization’s direction and values.

In conclusion, these findings suggest that the School Head’s communication functions, particularly Information, Affirmation/Feedback, and Interpretation, play a crucial role in shaping the level of organizational trust among internal

stakeholders. The strong and moderate positive correlations observed indicate that effective communication practices, such as providing information, offering affirmation and feedback, and interpreting organizational matters, are associated with higher levels of trust. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that enhancing these communication functions can lead to increased organizational trust among internal stakeholders, contributing to a more positive organizational climate and improved outcomes.

The correlation between Information and Capability, Consistency, and Concern for Welfare resonates with literature highlighting the role of transparent communication methods in enhancing organizational trust (Cooper, 2023; Nwuke & Nwanguma, 2024). Similarly, the strong correlations between Affirmation/Feedback and various dimensions of trust are consistent with studies emphasizing the importance of constructive feedback and recognition in building trust and morale among stakeholders (Joseph, 2023; Urbano & Gurat, 2023). Moreover, the correlations between Interpretation and dimensions of trust reflect the significance of clear communication and interpretation of organizational matters in promoting understanding and alignment among stakeholders (Aquino et al., 2021; Fessehatsion, 2019).

**Table 3** Relationship between School Head's Management Function and Organizational Trust

Management Function	Internal Stakeholder's Organizational Trust						
	Affective		Cognitive		Benevolence		
	Genuine Care	Concern for Welfare	Capability	Consistency	Integrity	Competence	Benevolence
Management for the School Goals	.391**	.409**	.482**	.471**	.316**	.377**	.435**
Instructional Management	.408**	.381**	.515**	.459**	.308**	.395**	.430**
Direct Supervision	.504**	.470**	.560**	.538**	.384**	.438**	.492**
Bureaucratic Management	.356**	.402**	.509**	.469**	.316**	.392**	.425**

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

Table 3 provides the correlational analysis test of relationship between school head's management function and organizational trust. Among the indicators correlated to Management for the School Goals under the management function, Capability demonstrates the highest correlation with all aspects of Internal Stakeholder's Organizational Trust: Capability ( $r = .482, p < 0.01$ ), Consistency ( $r = .471, p < 0.01$ ), Benevolence ( $r = .435, p < 0.01$ ), Concern for Welfare ( $r = .409, p < 0.01$ ), Genuine Care ( $r = 0.391, p < 0.01$ ), Competence ( $r = .377, p < 0.01$ ), and Integrity ( $r = .316, p < 0.01$ ). These correlations are all statistically significant at the 0.01 level, indicating a moderate positive relationship between management for the school goals and each dimension of organizational trust. This suggests that the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating a significant relationship between the extent of practice of the School Head's management and the level of organizational trust among the internal stakeholders. The analysis reveals a moderate positive relationship between management for school goals and various dimensions of organizational trust. Stakeholders trust the organization more when school leaders effectively manage activities and resources to achieve school goals. This implies that when school heads demonstrate strong strategic planning and resource allocation skills, internal stakeholders perceive them as competent and reliable leaders. Effective management towards school goals fosters a sense of direction and purpose, reassuring teachers, staff, and parents that the educational institution is being guided competently towards success. This capability builds confidence in the leadership, promoting a collaborative and supportive environment where stakeholders feel their contributions are valued and aligned with the broader educational objectives. Consequently, the efficient management of activities and resources not only drives goal achievement but also cultivates a culture of trust, essential for organizational harmony and growth.

For Instructional Management, the highest correlation is observed with Capability ( $r = .515, p < 0.01$ ), followed by Consistency ( $r = .459, p < 0.01$ ), Benevolence ( $r = .430, p < 0.01$ ), Genuine Care ( $r = .408, p < 0.01$ ), Competence ( $r = .395, p < 0.01$ ), Concern for Welfare ( $r = .381, p < 0.01$ ), and Integrity ( $r = .308, p < 0.01$ ). This correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level, indicating a moderate positive relationship between instructional management and the internal stakeholders' trust in the organization's trust. Stakeholders trust the organization more when school leaders effectively oversee teaching and learning processes.

Similarly, for Direct Supervision, the highest correlation is found with Capability ( $r = .560, p < 0.01$ ) followed by Consistency ( $r = .538, p < 0.01$ ), Genuine Care ( $r = .504, p < 0.01$ ), Benevolence ( $r = .492, p < 0.01$ ), Concern for Welfare ( $r = .470, p < 0.01$ ), Competence ( $r = .438, p < 0.01$ ), and Integrity ( $r = .384, p < 0.01$ ). This correlation is also statistically significant at the 0.01 level, indicating a moderate positive relationship between interpretation and the internal stakeholders' trust in the organization's trust. Stakeholders trust the organization more when school leaders provide direct oversight and support to staff members.

Meanwhile, Bureaucratic Management received the highest correlation is observed with Capability ( $r = .509, p < 0.01$ ), followed by Consistency ( $r = .469, p < 0.01$ ), Benevolence ( $r = .425, p < 0.01$ ), Concern for Welfare ( $r = .402, p < 0.01$ ), Competence ( $r = .392, p < 0.01$ ), Genuine Care ( $r = .356, p < 0.01$ ), and Integrity ( $r = .316, p < 0.01$ ). This correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level, indicating a moderate positive relationship between bureaucratic management and the internal stakeholders' trust in the organization's trust. Stakeholders trust the organization more when

school heads effectively manage administrative processes and procedures. This involves clear communication, standardized procedures, and responsive administrative support to build trust in the organization's management practices.

The findings suggest that various management functions of school heads are significantly correlated with organizational trust among internal stakeholders. Effective management for school goals, instructional management, direct supervision, and bureaucratic management are all associated with higher levels of trust. Based on these results, it can be hypothesized that improving management practices, particularly in terms of setting and achieving school goals, managing instruction effectively, providing direct supervision, and implementing bureaucratic processes efficiently, can lead to increased organizational trust among internal stakeholders. Key findings include the importance of capability across all management functions, indicating that competence and effectiveness in managing school affairs are crucial for fostering organizational trust. Additionally, the strongest correlation is observed for direct supervision, highlighting its pivotal role in building trust among internal stakeholders.

For instance, the correlations between Management for the School Goals and various dimensions of trust resonate with literature highlighting the role of strategic goal-setting and alignment in building trust among stakeholders (Leithwood & Mascall, 2018; Ngidi & Ndebele, 2023). Similarly, the strong correlations between Instructional Management, Direct Supervision, and Bureaucratic Management, and dimensions of trust are consistent with studies emphasizing the importance of effective oversight, support, and administrative processes in fostering trust and confidence among stakeholders (Oplatka & Eyal, 2021; Guptill & Kostin, 2023). Moreover, the consistent significance of Capability across all management functions underscores the criticality of competence and proficiency in managing school affairs for nurturing organizational trust (Nguyen et al., 2022; Tschannen-Moran, 2014).

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the researcher has drawn the following conclusions: Effective communication and competent management practices by school heads play pivotal roles in shaping organizational trust dynamics within schools, as evidenced by the highly observed status of communication functions and management practices. Clear and consistent communication fosters trust and positive relationships within the school community, highlighted by the commendable implementation and consistency of communication practices. Competent management practices, including management for school goals, instructional management, direct supervision of instruction, and bureaucratic management, contribute to organizational effectiveness and trust dynamics within schools. A high level of organizational trust among internal stakeholders across affective, cognitive, and behavioral aspects underscores the consistent perceptions of trust regarding the organization's commitment to stakeholders' well-being and competence.

In conclusion, the findings suggest that the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating a significant relationship between the extent of practice of the school head's communication and the level of organizational trust among the internal stakeholders. The findings revealed that the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating a significant relationship between the extent of practice of the school head's management function and the level of organizational trust among the internal stakeholders.

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## DECLARATION OF CONFLICT

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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