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Research Article

# Personality Traits Characterization: A Case of Selected School Leaders in Butuan City and Agusan Del Norte Divisions, Philippines

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## Abstract

This study examines the personality traits of school leaders in Butuan City and Agusan del Norte using the Panukat ng Pagkataong Pilipino (PPP), a culturally grounded tool designed to reflect Filipino values and traits. They took the test at the Center for Test and Measurement in Butuan City. The test is a requirement for the Human Dynamics course as part of the Doctor of Philosophy in Management Program at Saint Joseph Institute of Technology. The PPP assesses 19 personality dimensions grouped into three clusters: interpersonal relations, personal attributes, and intelligence-creativity. Employing a descriptive-purposive research design, the study focused on school leaders who were primarily principals and school heads who bring rich experience to their leadership roles in their divisions of the Department of Education. The results reveal that these leaders demonstrate noticeable strengths in interpersonal traits such as helpfulness and obedience, along with balanced personal qualities like humility and patience. They also show creativity and problem-solving abilities, supported by moderate levels of intelligence and risk-taking. However, the findings highlight areas for intervention, particularly in social curiosity and sensitivity, which are needed for fostering deeper connections and understanding within their stakeholders and communities. These insights emphasize the value of recognizing and developing personality traits to strengthen leadership effectiveness and create inclusive, adaptive school environments. The study recommends targeted professional development intervention to address areas for improvement, equipping school leaders with the tools they need to navigate the evolving challenges of education. By understanding and enhancing their traits, leaders can cultivate a positive school atmosphere and ensure a better future for their learners and communities.

## 1. Introduction

Personality traits are commonly described as stable patterns of thoughts, feelings, and actions in which each individual is different from the others Kandler et al. (2015) [1]. Personality is also defined as the set of habitual behaviors, cognitions, and emotional patterns that evolve from biological and environmental factors. Personality traits are fundamental to understanding human behavior, serving as a key focus in both psychological research and practical applications. Advances

in fields such as genetics, neuroimaging, and statistical analysis have provided more profound insights into the origins and real-world manifestations of these traits.

*The Cambridge Handbook of Personality Psychology* explores these advancements, offering a thorough resource on the scientific foundations, major theories, and future prospects of personality trait research (Corr, et al, 2020) [2]. According to Cattell and Mead (2016) [3], trait-based personality theories predict a person's behavior. They discussed the use of the 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF) and described what he saw as components of a personality. These include emotional stability, perfectionism, reasoning, warmth, and other traits that, in their unique combinations, explain differences among human individuals.

On the other hand, more behaviorally based approaches define personality through learning and habits. Olila, R. (2020) [4] posits that trait leadership theory is an integrated pattern of personal characteristics that reflects a range of individual differences and fosters consistent leader effectiveness across various groups and organizational situations. A leader would lead people following one's personality characteristics and traits.

Many professional individuals working in organizations have not fully discovered their personality dimensions because experts who can handle the exercise are unavailable, and many do not make it a priority to internally inventory their personality traits. Thus, personality traits are essential for school leaders, such as teachers, because they influence how they interact with students, colleagues, and the broader school community. Each personality type brings unique strengths and approaches to school leadership.

According to Parry (2024) [5], educational leaders can build a more balanced and effective leadership team by embracing and leveraging the strengths of diverse personality types. Adaptability enhances problem-solving and responsiveness and contributes to a more inclusive and positive organizational culture, ultimately benefiting the entire educational community.

The importance of personality assessment in education, as espoused by De Fruyt et al. (2019) [6], highlights the critical role of personality assessments in preparing individuals for educational and career success. Likewise, cultural influences on personality are important because they shape how people think, feel, and act. They can help reduce stereotypes and prejudices and contribute to more culturally sensitive mental health services (Church et al, 2017) [7].

An evaluation of the different characteristics of a school leader in the Philippines is a bit limited in educational literature. Hence, the study of Casinillo et al. (2022) [8] focuses on assessing the personal attributes, traits, and competencies of school leaders in the Hindang District, Leyte Division, Philippines. This was to elucidate its nature and promote new policies to improve the educational system. The paper concluded that each character is a vital asset for a school leader in developing the school. This implies that to attain continuous progress in a school, the qualifications for hiring a school leader must focus on personal attributes, traits, and competencies, not on curriculum knowledge. Furthermore, a school leader must undergo seminars and training that deal with lead management and innovative ideas to become globally competitive leaders.

School leaders, being the frontline professionals in educational institutions, have to inventory their personality traits to check if they fit best in the roles they play in the organization to which they belong. Their role is crucial as based on Republic Act (RA) 9155 [9], also known as the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, which establishes a framework for basic education governance and defines the role of school heads. Such an act defines the school head's role as being responsible for administrative and instructional supervision, and the principles of accountability and transparency shall be operationalized in the performance of functions and responsibilities at all levels.

It is in this context that the graduate students enrolled in the Doctor of Philosophy in Management (PhDM) at Saint Joseph Institute of Technology (SJIT), Butuan City, and taking the Human Dynamics course were required to undergo a particular personality test fit for a Filipino personality. This is to reveal its underlying traits and can eventually assess its strengths, weaknesses, and coping mechanisms, as well as if they are behaviorally fit to the school organization to which it belongs. As Meer (2017) [10], a good personality fit for a school environment typifies a very good personality that can communicate, understand, be good, decent, likable, gentle, and kind. Cramer (2013) [11] posits that personality theories deserve closer attention to educational psychology in their attempt to explain better the role of personalities of teachers and school leaders in the educational process.

## 2. Framework

The study is framed from the Panukat ng Pagkataong Pilipino (PPP) developed by Dr. Annadaisy J. Carlota and published by the Center for Educational Measurement, Inc. (CEM), Philippines is a standardized test designed to measure various Filipino personality traits and behaviors. It is a personality test designed to assess a total of nineteen personality dimensions (PDs) that are critical to a Filipino personality. These 19 PDs are grouped into three trait clusters, namely interpersonal relations, personal traits, and intelligence-creativity (Carlota, 1980) [12].

## 3. Objectives of the Study

The study was conducted to determine the nineteen (19) personality traits included in the PPP and to describe the norm, to provide a description of behavior that exemplified a particular trait of the test-takers in the personality areas of: 1. interpersonal relations, 2. personal traits, and 3. Intelligence-creativity traits.

# 4. Methodology

## 4.1. Research Design

This study used a descriptive-purposive research design to explore and understand the personality dimensions of the respondents. By focusing on a detailed description of their traits and behaviors, the study aimed to capture a clear picture of their unique characteristics. The purposive approach ensured that participants were thoughtfully chosen based on their relevance to the research, making the findings meaningful and specific. This method allowed the research to delve into the characteristics of the respondents' personalities, offering insights that reflect their individuality and experiences. Soto, C. et al. (2017) [13] emphasized the important role of standardized personality assessments in accurately predicting the behaviors of individuals.

## 4.2. Research Instrument

The Panukat ng Pagkataong Pilipino (PPP) assesses 19 dimensions grouped into three forms: interpersonal relationships, personal traits, and intelligence and creativity. Interpersonal relationships have 90 items that include traits like thoughtfulness, social curiosity, respectfulness, sensitivity, obedience, helpfulness, understanding, and sociability. Meanwhile, personal traits have 80 items that capture orderliness, emotional stability, humility, cheerfulness, honesty, patience, and responsibility. On the other hand, Intelligence and Creativity has 40 items designed to measure creativity, risk-taking, achievement orientation, and intelligence. It serves as a comprehensive tool to help students and other individuals recognize their unique qualities, understand their strengths, and identify roles or opportunities where they can excel. The instrument aims to capture values, traits, and behavioral dimensions relevant to Filipino culture.

## 4.3. Respondents

Twenty-one out of the 30 students in the class were respondents to the study. They were identified as school leaders based on their personal profiles. They have been in the Department of Education in the Divisions of Butuan City and Agusan del Norte for 10-25 years. Most are principals and school in-charge, and only very few are classroom teachers with a minimum rank of Teacher III. One thing pervasive among the group is that they lead, manage, deal, and interact with many people every day, like teachers, parents, students, and other stakeholders. The test was made as a final requirement of the course being taken. They took the PPP test at one of the Centers for Educational Measurement at a state university in Butuan City last August 2017. In handling their data, ethical considerations were observed, such as providing the researcher with a copy of the test result without revealing their identity.

## 4.4. Statistical Techniques

Scores on the 19 PDs are presented in a bar graph. The standard scores (SS) were calculated to reflect the percentile ranks (PRs) ranging from 1 to 99, indicating the percentage of examinees in the norm group who scored lower than the examinee. A percentile score means such a percentage of the norm scored below the examinee on that PD. The SS is calculated to reflect a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10 for the norm group. Hence, scores of 40 to 60, which fail within one standard deviation above and below the mean, can be interpreted as indicating a "typical" or "average" level of the trait.

To interpret results, the PPP uses percentiles and standardized scores as norms, providing a clear framework for understanding individual profiles. Its construct validity is supported by subscale intercorrelations, which range from 0.10 to 0.33, indicating meaningful connections between related traits.

# 5. Results and Discussion

The sub-sections show the test-taker's personality traits in interpersonal relations, personal traits, and intelligence-creativity.

## 5.1. Interpersonal Relations

Figure 1 shows the mean percentile score of the interpersonal relations trait of the respondents.

Figure 1 highlights the mean scores for interpersonal relations traits, with an overall average of 54. As revealed, two traits surfaced as the best traits of the respondents. These highest-scoring traits are helpfulness (62) and obedience (62), reflecting a strong willingness among respondents to assist others, conform to expectations, and follow instructions, indicating collaboration and discipline.

Thoughtfulness (59) also scored highly, demonstrating a significant inclination toward empathy and consideration for others. This is a tendency to be considerate of the welfare of others and try not to inconvenience other people. Sociability (55) and capacity to be understanding (53) are close to the mean, suggesting a moderate ability to build relationships, enjoy social interactions, and show tolerance for others' shortcomings.

On the other hand, respectfulness (50) scored slightly below the mean, indicating a generally adequate ability to regard others with deference but leaving room for improvement. Sensitiveness (46) scored lower, suggesting some challenges in being attuned to others' emotions or needs. This trait also describes the tendency to be easily aroused by emotions, especially negative emotions, and not like to be criticized. The lowest score, social curiosity (43), reveals a limited tendency to take an active interest in others' lives or engage in deeper social inquiry, which may hinder stronger interpersonal connections.

While the respondents exhibit strengths in key interpersonal traits such as helpfulness, obedience, and thoughtfulness, there is potential for growth in areas like emotional awareness, sensitivity, and curiosity about others. These insights can guide future initiatives to develop a more well-rounded interpersonal skill set.

The analysis of interpersonal relations traits among school leaders reveals a positive character, with helpfulness and obedience emerging as their strongest traits, scoring signifi-

cantly above the normal scale. These traits highlight their willingness to assist others, share resources, and comply with demands or commands. Other traits, such as thoughtfulness, sociability, and the capacity to be understanding, scored within or slightly above the average range, indicating a balanced inclination towards consideration, tolerance, and forming social connections. Overall, the findings suggest that school leaders demonstrate commendable interpersonal qualities, fostering a supportive and cooperative environment.
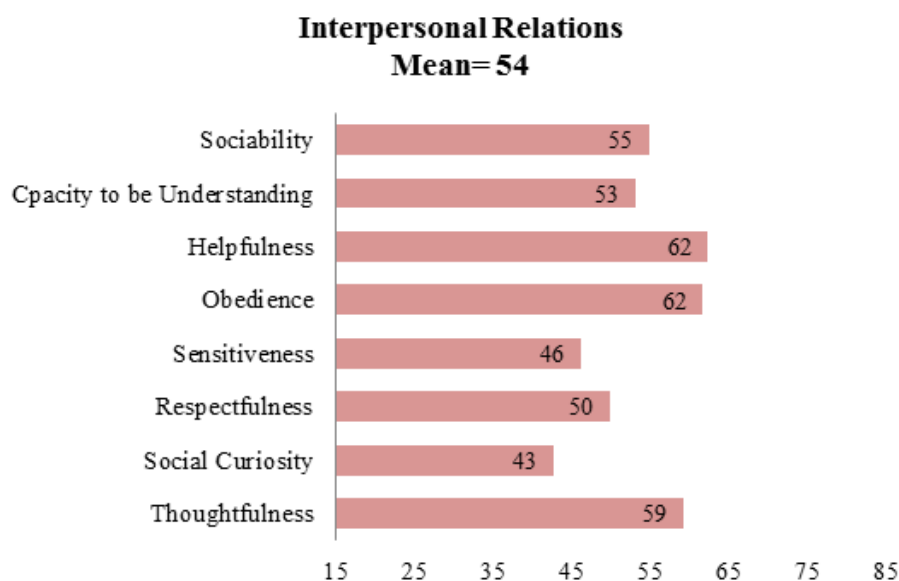
**Interpersonal Relations**
**Mean= 54**

| Trait | Score |
|-------|-------|
| Sociability | 55 |
| Cpacity to be Understanding | 53 |
| Helpfulness | 62 |
| Obedience | 62 |
| Sensitiveness | 46 |
| Respectfulness | 50 |
| Social Curiosity | 43 |
| Thoughtfulness | 59 |

*Figure 1. Percentile Ranks of Interpersonal Relations.*

## 5.2. Personal Traits

Figure 2 shows the percentile score of the personal traits of the respondents.

**Personal Traits**
**Mean= 57**

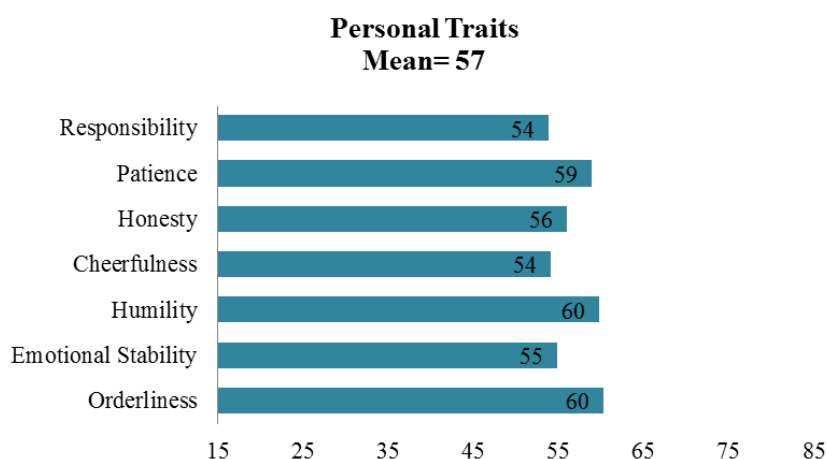| Trait | Score |
|-------|-------|
| Responsibility | 54 |
| Patience | 59 |
| Honesty | 56 |
| Cheerfulness | 54 |
| Humility | 60 |
| Emotional Stability | 55 |
| Orderliness | 60 |

*Figure 2. Percentile Score of Personal Traits.*

Figure 2 shows the overview of personal traits based on the mean scores of respondents, with an overall average of 57.

Among the traits assessed, Humility and Orderliness emerged as the most prominent characteristics, both scoring a mean of

60. Humility is the tendency to remain modest in the face of accomplishments; accepting one's mistakes and not boasting about one's successes are seen as good traits. Orderliness is the tendency of the respondents to be neat and orderly in their appearance as well as their work and put things in proper places. These traits indicate a strong tendency among respondents to exhibit modesty and maintain organization in their actions and decisions.

Patience followed closely with a mean score of 59, reflecting a significant capacity to endure challenges or delays without frustration, a vital trait in fostering a balanced and calm demeanor. Honesty, described as sincere and truthful, tells the truth even if this may hurt someone's feelings, achieved a mean of 56, highlighting a commendable inclination toward integrity and truthfulness.

Emotional stability, which describes the capacity of the said school leader to control emotional expressiveness and remain calm when faced with problems, scored a mean of 55, suggesting a generally composed and resilient mindset, though slightly below the overall average. Responsibility is the ability to carry out one's tasks on one's initiative, not procrastinate in completing assigned tasks. Cheerfulness espousing the capacity to see the humor aspects of situations, laughing readily and heartily, each scored 54, reflecting solid but slightly less dominant traits related to accountability and positivity.

Overall, the results indicate that the respondents possess notable strengths and traits essential for both professional and personal growth. There is a particular emphasis on humility, orderliness, and patience, which are critical for fostering harmonious interpersonal relationships and effective task management. However, the slightly lower scores in responsibility and cheerfulness suggest areas that could benefit from further development.

## 5.3. Intelligence-Creativity

This personality trait reveals the mental component of the respondents, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3 provides an insightful look into the intelligence-creativity traits of the respondents, with an average score of 55. Among these traits, achievement orientation stands out with the highest score of 58, highlighting the respondents' strong drive to set and accomplish goals and their keenness to strive to become competent and productive. This reflects their determination and ambition to succeed in their endeavors. Similarly, creativity scores 57, showcasing their ability to think outside the box and bring innovative ideas for application to life and work, which entails the capacity to think of many various ways of problem-solving.
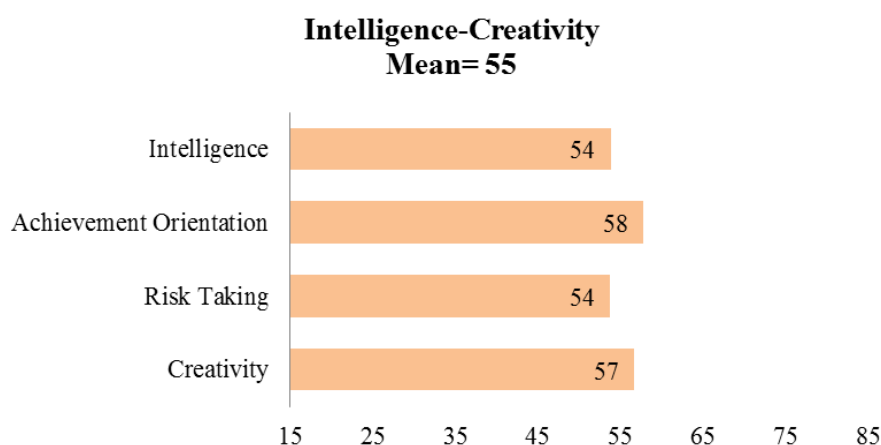


**Intelligence-Creativity**
**Mean= 55**

*Figure 3. Percentile Score of Intelligence-Creativity.*

On the other hand, intelligence and risk-taking both scored 54, reflecting a steady level of analytical thinking and a moderate willingness to take calculated risks. While these scores are within the average range, they suggest potential for further development in critical thinking and confidence when embracing challenges or exploring new opportunities.

In general, the results paint a picture of a group with a solid foundation in goal setting and creativity. These traits are complemented by balanced levels of intellect and risk-taking, indicating a capability to innovate while maintaining a thoughtful approach to decision-making. With continued growth, this group can further harness its potential to excel in problem-solving and dynamic leadership.

According to Runco et al. (2012) [14], "Teachers who exhibit creativity and intelligence in their practice are better equipped to design innovative instructional strategies, solve classroom challenges, and foster an engaging learning environment. Creativity allows teachers to adapt to diverse student needs, while intelligence supports critical thinking and decision-making in lesson planning and delivery."

Casinillo et al. (2022) established that each character is a very important asset for a school leader in developing the school. This implies that to attain continuous progress in a school, the qualifications for hiring a school leader must focus

on personal attributes, traits, and competencies, not on curriculum knowledge. To become globally competitive leaders, school leaders must undergo seminars and training on lead management and innovative ideas.

## 6. Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn that the respondent school leaders exhibit a typical or average level of personality traits, and more specifically they:

1) Have a typical or average level of interpersonal relations such as sociability, capacity to be understanding, helpfulness, obedience, sensitiveness, respectfulness, social curiosity, and thoughtfulness. Their strengths are helpfulness and obedience, while their weaknesses are sensitiveness and social curiosity.

2) Have normal personality traits in responsibility, patience, honesty, cheerfulness, humility, emotional stability, and orderliness. Respondent school leaders are humble and orderly in the day-to-day process.

3) Possess a normal level of intelligence-creativity in areas of intelligence, achievement orientation, risk-taking, and creativity.

4) By embracing the strengths of personality types, school leaders can create a more effective leadership team. This team is instrumental in better problem-solving, enhancing responsiveness, and building a more inclusive and positive organizational culture. In turn, the entire educational community thrives, benefiting from a supportive and dynamic environment.

## 7. Recommendations

It is recommended that the sensitiveness and social curiosity traits of the interpersonal relations aspect of the school leaders be improved as these traits are identified as lowly manifested among the nineteen personality dimensions. This could be treated when included in one of the five leadership domains in the School Heads Development Program (SHDP), particularly Developing Self and Others, as stipulated in DepEd Order No. 24, s. 2020 [15], or the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH).

## Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| PD | Personality Dimensions |
| PhDM | Doctor of Philosophy in Management |
| PPSSH | Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads |
| PPP | Panukat ng Pagkataong Pilipino |
| SHDP | School Heads Development Program |
| SJIT | Saint Joseph Institute of Technology |

## Author Contributions

Levita Blorecia-Grana is the sole author. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

## Conflicts of Interest

I hereby declare that the research I have submitted is free of conflict of interest. I affirm that the research was conducted independently and objectively, with no financial, professional, or personal interests.

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