

Elementary School Heads' Instructional Competencies and Management Capabilities Towards an Improved School Management

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Abstract—The role of an instructional leader differs from that of a traditional school administrator in several meaningful ways: whereas the conventional head of school spends the majority of his/her time dealing strictly with administrative duties, the head of school who is an instructional leader is charged with redefining his/her role to become the primary learner in a community striving for excellence in education. As such, it becomes the head of the school's responsibility to work with teachers to manage the instructional program. Utilizing a descriptive research design, this study involved all the school heads of the 17 elementary schools of Narra del Norte district, Narra, Palawan. Data were gathered through an adopted survey questionnaire administered by the researchers. More than half of the school heads were females, had ages between 46 to 50, were married and had units in master's degrees. They also had 10 or fewer teachers being supervised and had 1 to 10 years of experience as school heads. It was found that the school heads' level of instructional competencies is very competent, and their management capabilities are highly effective. Results of the study imply that instruction and support provided to teachers were given much priority with the aim of strengthening the school's instructional goals and objectives. More so, the management behaviors and functions are being performed by the school heads in a very satisfactory manner.

Keywords— Instructional competencies, management capabilities school heads, school management.

I. INTRODUCTION

Instructional leadership is an educational leadership that focuses on the core responsibility of a school, namely teaching and learning, by defining the school vision, mission, and goals, managing the instructional program, and promoting the school climate. It is very closely related to the role and duty of a school principal such as developing and disseminating school aims, setting targeted standards, coordinating curriculum, supervising and evaluating teachers' classroom instructions, encouraging students to study, and increasing teachers' and administration staff professional development (Ismail, 2018).

The role of an instructional leader differs from that of a traditional school administrator in several meaningful ways: whereas the conventional head of school spends the majority of their time dealing strictly with administrative duties, the head of school who is an instructional leader is charged with

redefining their role to become the primary learner in a community striving for excellence in education. As such, it becomes the head of the school's responsibility to work with teachers to manage the instructional program. Instructional leaders know what is happening in the classrooms and develop the capacities of their staff by building on their strengths and reducing their weaknesses (Manaseh, 2016).

One goal of instructional supervision is to evaluate teachers and find ways to improve their pedagogical strategies and procedures inside the classroom. The teacher's development is dependent on the quality of instructional supervision that they are receiving. The school's performance in terms of teaching and learning is primarily geared toward how it is being supervised. Its effectiveness depends mainly on the school heads' ability to monitor the teachers, clarify instructional goals, and work collaboratively to improve teaching and learning (Capadngan, 2020).

The issue of how school leaders practice instructional leadership to increase teachers' efficacy, beliefs, and competency; and improve teachers' classroom instructions need to be addressed. Thus, this study will identify the level of instructional competencies and management capabilities among school leaders and the relationship between these variables and their dimensions.

Instruction is perhaps one of the most basic building blocks of teacher leadership. Leadership in instructional practice means something more than being the best possible teacher within the four walls of one classroom—it means reaching out and sharing excellent teaching with others, including fellow educators, and extending to a broad range of stakeholders. Successful teacher leaders do not keep their effective practices to themselves; they share that knowledge with others to benefit all students (Manaseh, 2016).

Management competencies and leadership skills are essential in different types of organizations. The organization aims to move the performance of its employees still further and further. They can make the differences and significance and create evaluation between average and excellent managers. Perhaps the potential power of an organization is to possess outstanding or above-average employees by eliminating average employees with continual education and developing their personalities. Although there is a lot of

theoretical knowledge and concepts, introducing a competency approach is a complex process. At first, it means a change to improve performance across the organization. And these facts require a difference for each employee (Wenceslao, 2018).

Research has demonstrated that teaching leadership behavior factors such as giving feedback, praising, encouraging, and supporting various learning and teaching approaches, emphasizing learning and teaching exercises, supporting collaborative efforts, and starting teamwork predict school climate (Gu Saw Lan, 2014).

The role of the school heads is to provide a shared vision and facilitate and contribute to putting the idea into practice through coordinating professional learning terms in schools. Such words would respond to the changing realities with their professional competency and skills (Kousar et al., 2018).

Managing the Instructional Program is associated with the principal's role in working with teachers in areas specifically related to educational technology, curriculum, and instruction. School principals play two most important roles in managing the instructional program, the second dimension of instructional leadership (Ahmad et al., 2019).

One of the crucial aspects of educational management in instructional supervision which may be defined as the process of bringing about improvement in the teaching-learning process through a network of cooperative activities and the democratic relationship of persons concerned with teaching and learning, and is considered an important activity to achieve an effective education system (Oyewole and Ehinola, 2014).

Instructional supervision is a professional continuous, cooperative process for improving instruction. It is characterized by guidance, assistance, sharing of ideas, facilitation, or creation to help teachers improve the learning situation and quality of school learning. It is hand-holding for a professional colleague by a supervisor or instructional leader who possesses superior knowledge and skills and works collaboratively in a school environment that nurtures the development of a professional learning community (Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda).

The school heads, as managers and leaders, set the direction the schools are going. They are responsible for the overall operation of the school. The tremendous changes in scope, variety of competencies, and necessary skills for managing the school make their functions more complex, diverse, and challenging. These functions of school heads as educational leaders and managers are essential to the areas of management, namely: the vision, mission, and goals of the institution, curriculum and instruction, financial and budgeting, school plant and facilities, student services, community relations, and the school improvement plan. Identifying competencies needed to function in these areas brings forth the challenges faced by principals every day where accountability, challenges, and integrity as leaders and managers remain at stake. The essential competencies in these management areas greatly influence the effectiveness and efficiency of the school's performance as a whole (Cruz et al., 2016).

The quality of school leaders and managers is one of the primary factors influencing the quality of teaching and learning processes very significantly at each level of the system of education and each kind of school. Moreover, it impacts the staff's initiative, activity, and cooperation, as well as the school institutions' public relations (Bitterova et al., 2014).

School principals are confronted with various issues as they provide leadership and organization to their schools. Evidence is growing that successful school leaders influence achievement through the support and development of effective teachers and the implementation of effective organizational practice (Tobin, 2014).

Research Questions

This research aims to find out the elementary school heads' instructional competencies and their management capabilities at the Narra Del Norte District, Schools Division of Palawan, to improve the management of schools.

In particular, it intends to answer the following questions:

1. What describes the respondents' profile as to:
 - 1.1 gender;
 - 1.2 age;
 - 1.3 civil status;
 - 1.4 highest educational attainment;
 - 1.5 number of teachers supervised; and
 - 1.6 Years of experience as school head?
2. What is the level of instructional competencies of the school heads?
3. What describes the management capabilities of the school heads?

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This study used the descriptive approach to determine the school heads' instructional competence and management capabilities. This research design was employed so that the variables being studied are described, such as the profile of the school heads, their instructional competencies, and their management capabilities.

B. Sampling

A total enumeration sampling technique was utilized, which involved all the school heads of the 17 elementary schools in the Narra del Norte district. These schools are under direct supervision from the Schools Division Office of Palawan.

C. Data Collection

This study employed data-gathering instruments such as the survey questionnaire, adopted from the study of Goden (2016). The survey questionnaire consists of two parts. The first section involves the descriptive part, which will ask the respondents' profile as to their gender, age, civil status, highest educational attainment, number of teachers supervised, and years of experience as school head. The second section involved 5-point Likert-type scales. The survey was administered through limited face-to-face and online means

such as google forms. Permission from the public schools district supervisor of the concerned district was sought since this study involves school heads while the researchers are teachers.

D. Data Analysis

Data gathered were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency count and percentages to describe the respondents' profile; the weighted mean was used in determining the level of instructional competence and management capabilities.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents' Profile

TABLE 1. Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Gender, Age, Civil Status, Educational Attainment, Number of Teachers Supervised, and Years of Experience as School Head

	f	%
Gender		
• Male	8	47.06
• Female	9	52.94
Total	17	100.00
Age		
• 31 – 35	2	11.76
• 36 – 40	4	23.53
• 41 – 45	1	5.88
• 46 – 50	5	29.41
• 51 – 55	3	17.65
• 56 – 60	2	11.76
Total	17	100.00
Civil Status		
• Single	2	11.76
• Married	14	82.35
• Widow	1	5.88
Total	17	100.00
Educational Attainment		
• With units in MA	14	82.35
• MA graduate	1	5.88
• With units in PhD	2	11.76
Total	17	100.00
Number of Teachers Supervised		
• 10 and below	9	52.94
• 11 to 20	6	35.29
• 21 to 30	1	5.88
• 31 and above	1	5.88
Total	17	100.00
Years of Experience as School Head		
• 1 to 10	10	58.82
• 11 to 20	7	41.18
Total	17	100.00

The profile of the school heads is described in Table 1. In terms of gender, more than half or 52.94% of them were females (f = 9) and 47.06% were males (f = 8). In terms of age, most of the respondents 29.41% had ages between 46 to 50 (f = 5). Also, there were 4 or 23.53% whose ages belong to 36 to 40 age range. In terms of civil status, the majority of the respondents or 82.35% were married (f = 14), 2 or 11.76% were single, and 1 or 5.88% was a widow. In terms of educational attainment, most of the respondents or 82.35% had units in master's degree (f = 14), 1 or 5.88% was a holder of a master's degree, and 2 or 11.76% had units in Ph. D. In terms of the number of teachers supervised, more than half or

52.94% had 10 or less teachers being handled (f = 9), and 6 or 35.29% had 11 to 20 teachers being managed. In terms of years of experience as school head, the majority of the respondents or 58.82% had 1 to 10 years of experience (f = 10), and 7 or 41.18% had 11 to 20 years of experience.

Instructional Competencies

TABLE 2. Level of Instructional Competencies of the School Heads

	Weighted Mean	Std. dev.	Adjectival Rating
1. School Head assists teachers in lesson planning.	4.35	0.6063	Very Competent
2. School Head assists teachers in developing/selecting instructional materials.	4.35	0.6063	Very Competent
3. School Head helps teachers to evaluate curricula and suggest changes to meet the students' needs.	4.47	0.7998	Very Competent
4. School Head encourages teachers to use appropriate methods of teaching.	4.53	0.7998	Very Competent
5. School Head assists teachers in evaluating student performance.	4.35	0.7859	Very Competent
6. School Head advises teachers about new developments in teaching.	4.41	0.7952	Very Competent
7. School Head conducts meetings with teachers to review progress.	4.47	0.7998	Very Competent
8. School Head communicates with administrators about instructional concerns.	4.41	0.7952	Very Competent
9. School Head communicates with teachers about instructional concerns.	4.35	0.7859	Very Competent
10. School Head promotes the exchange of ideas and materials among teachers.	4.35	0.6063	Very Competent
11. Sets a personal example of what he/she expects of others.	4.47	0.7998	Very Competent
Composite Mean	4.41		Very Competent

Presented in Table 2 is the school heads' level of instructional competencies. Remarkably, the respondents perceived all their identified instructional competencies as very competent.

Results further show that the school heads are very competent in instruction as revealed by its composite mean of 4.41. This implies that instruction and support provided to teachers were given much priority with the aim of strengthening the school's instructional goals and objectives (Goden et al., 2016).

Management Capabilities

Table 3 indicates the management capabilities of the school heads. It is worth noting that all the identified indicators of management capabilities obtained an adjectival rating of highly effective.

Results also manifests that the school heads are highly effective in terms of their management capabilities as shown by its composite mean of 4.43. This suggests that the management behaviors and functions are being performed by the school heads in a very satisfactory manner (Goden et al., 2016).

TABLE 3. Management Capabilities of the School Heads

	Weighted Mean	Std. dev.	Adjectival Rating
1. Talks about future trends that will influence how schoolwork gets done.	4.35	0.7859	Highly Effective
2. Seeks out challenging opportunities that test his/ her skills and abilities.	4.41	0.7952	Highly Effective
3. Develops cooperative relationships among the people he/she works with.	4.47	0.7998	Highly Effective
4. Praises people for a job well done.	4.35	0.6063	Highly Effective
5. Spends time and energy making certain that the people he/she works with adhering to the principles and standards that they have agreed on.	4.47	0.7998	Highly Effective
6. Describes a compelling image of what our future could be like.	4.53	0.7998	Highly Effective
7. Challenges people to try out new and innovative ways to do their work.	4.35	0.7859	Highly Effective
8. Actively listens to diverse points of view.	4.41	0.7952	Highly Effective
9. Makes it a point to let people know about his/her confidence in their abilities.	4.47	0.7998	Highly Effective
10. Follows through on promises and commitments he/she makes.	4.35	0.6063	Highly Effective
11. Appeals to others to share an exciting dream of the future.	4.47	0.7998	Highly Effective
12. Searches outside the formal boundaries of his/her organization for innovative ways to improve what they do.	4.53	0.7998	Highly Effective
13. Treats others with dignity and respect.	4.35	0.7859	Highly Effective
14. Makes sure people are creatively rewarded for their contributions to the success of projects.	4.41	0.7952	Highly Effective
15. Asks for feedback on how his/her actions affect other people's performance.	4.47	0.7998	Highly Effective
16. Shows how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision.	4.35	0.6063	Highly Effective
17. Asks "What can we learn?" when things don't go as expected.	4.47	0.7998	Highly Effective
18. Supports the decisions that people make on their own.	4.53	0.7998	Highly Effective
19. Publicly recognizes people who exemplify the commitment to shared values.	4.35	0.7859	Highly Effective
20. Builds consensus around a common set of values for running the organization.	4.41	0.7952	Highly Effective
21. Paints the "big picture" of what the school aspires to accomplish.	4.47	0.7998	Highly Effective
22. Makes certain that the organization set achievable goals, make concrete plans, and establish measurable milestones for the projects and programs that we work on.	4.35	0.6063	Highly Effective
23. Gives people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work.	4.47	0.7998	Highly Effective
24. Finds ways to celebrate accomplishments.	4.53	0.7998	Highly Effective
25. Is clear about his/her philosophy of leadership.	4.35	0.7859	Highly Effective
26. Speaks with genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of his/her people's work.	4.41	0.7952	Highly Effective
27. Experiments and takes risks, even when there is a chance of failure.	4.47	0.7998	Highly Effective
28. Ensures that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves.	4.53	0.7998	Highly Effective
29. Gives the members of the team lots of appreciation and support for their contributions.	4.35	0.7859	Highly Effective
Composite Mean	4.43		Highly Effective

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered, it was established that the school heads' level of instructional competencies is very competent, and their management capabilities are highly effective. It was suggested to explore also other facets of the school heads' profiles such as the position aside from gender, age, educational attainment, number of teachers supervised, and years of experience as school head. More so, the existing practices of the school heads in Narra del Norte district in terms of their instructional competencies must be sustained since the study established that the school heads in this district are very competent when it comes to instruction. Furthermore, the current systems being implemented by the school heads along with their management capabilities should be maintained because it was supported by the study that school heads are highly effective in their management capabilities. Also, include the teachers as respondents of the study to examine how they perceive their school heads as to their instructional competencies and management capabilities towards them. In this way, not only the perceptions of the school heads are given consideration, but also the teachers themselves to validate the responses of the school heads as they perform their duties. Since the results

of this study only depict the instructional competencies and management capabilities of the school heads of Narra del Norte district, broaden the scope of the study in such a way that a representative sample of the population can be drawn and make associations between the variables such as their profile and their competencies and capabilities.

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