



Leadership Skills of Public Elementary School Heads

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Abstract:

A successful school is managed by quality leaders who have practical leadership skills to ensure the realization of the school's vision, mission, and targets. Hence, this study was conducted to determine the school heads' level of leadership skills as assessed by their teachers in a medium-sized School Division in Central Philippines during the School Year 2022-2023. A descriptive research design was employed on 217 public elementary school teachers using the researcher-made questionnaire that passed the validity and reliability tests. The leadership skills in this study covered only the areas of training, coaching, and delegating. The results reveal that school heads had remarkably high leadership skills in all the areas covered in this investigation. Even when the teachers were grouped according to age, length of service, and plantilla position, they still rated their school heads' leadership skills as very high. Furthermore, no significant difference was found in school heads' level of leadership skills when respondents were grouped and compared by the same three demographic variables. These findings call for the inclusion of other variables like performance and highest educational attainment for the demographic profiles in similar studies in the future, the institution of a recognition system for school heads who are highly performing, and continued mentoring and coaching among school heads to further improve their level of leadership skills.

Keywords: *School Heads, Leadership, Training, Coaching, Delegating*

Introduction:

Nature of the Problem

Every school, says Valdez (2022), needs a school head as a leader and should act as one at all times. School heads have several roles in leading the school. Because of the multifaceted roles that school heads must perform, they must strive to possess appropriate educational leadership skills, qualities, and characteristics that will aid them in attaining the vision and mission of the Department of Education (DepEd).

In addition, any organization's success depends on its leader's effectiveness since effective leadership ensures possible productivity and effectiveness toward organizational goals (Beri & Shu' Aibo, 2018). School administrators' leadership skills impact how well teachers perform; each school head is unique and possesses a certain type of leadership style based on their experience and the situation's needs. Hence, only some leadership styles are considered the best (Asana, 2024). Nevertheless, school heads were given training, seminars, and workshops to be updated and capacitated on what they must do.

Current State of Knowledge

According to an article published by Independence School District (2020), leadership skills are behavioral patterns that a leader uses to influence their members. Since public education quality depends on the school head's quality (Villar, 2021), effective leadership is vital for school heads to create a quality learning environment for learners to receive quality education (Papa, 2022). A school head is primarily tasked to provide leadership, direction, and coordination in the varied school activities. It is responsible for providing a quality teaching-learning environment, providing support for teachers in their instructional practices, and providing effective leadership in accomplishing organizational goals. Effective leadership is in dire need to ensure the development of both the teachers and the community (Sarwar et al., 2022). Hence, school heads create leadership skills that will be most beneficial to them and responsive to the situation (Villar et al., 2020).

School heads' leadership skills and characteristics are key to stabilizing and developing the educational institution (Reyes, 2018). Furthermore, these leadership skills are complicated and are influenced by personal and social factors. In addition, the leadership skills of school heads influence how committed the teachers are to their work (Magallanes & Dioso, 2020; Bejer, 2019; Baluyos et al., 2019). Assessment of teachers on their school heads' leadership and management styles equally exhibits their attitude and work performance (Diyaryo Milenyo, 2022). According to Pedroso, Siason, and Siason (2021), assessment of the leadership skills of school heads is essential in



creating collaboration among educational authorities, teachers, learners, parents, and the community. Receiving frequent input from both teachers and fellow school administrators about managing school challenges and resolving conflicts can enhance the growth and enhancement of instructional leadership skills for school principals (Valmores, 2021). As part of improving leadership skills, school heads undergo training and seminars and should be able to share learnings from these trainings with teachers to improve teaching instruction. In addressing problems, certain school principals view constructive criticism as an opportunity to enhance their leadership abilities; they choose to analyze the issues and provide appropriate solutions (Valmores, 2021).

Theoretical Underpinnings

Objectives

This study analyzed public elementary school heads' levels of leadership skills in a medium-sized School Division in Central Philippines during the School Year 2022-2023. Specifically, it aimed to determine: 1) school heads' leadership skills in training, coaching, and delegating; 2) the significant difference, if any, in the school heads' leadership skills when grouped according to age, length of service, and plantilla position.

Research Methodology:

This section discusses the research design, the respondents of the study, and the procedures.

Research Design

This study used the descriptive method of research, which, in the words of McCombes (2022), explores one or more variables using a wide range of research techniques, and the researcher just observes and measures the variables rather than controlling or altering them. This research design emphasizes the absence of control over variables.

Study Respondents

This study used the stratified sampling to determine the respondents, courtesy of Cochran's Formula ($N=497$; $n=217$).

Instrument

The researcher used a 15-item self-made questionnaire to gather the data needed for this study. The 15 items were about public elementary school heads' level of leadership skills as assessed by the teachers. The leadership skills covered only the areas of training, coaching, and delegating, with five items for each area. The respondents were asked to rate the items as 5-Always, 4-Often, 3-Sometimes, 2-Rarely, and 1-Almost Never.

The research instrument was validated and tested for its reliability.

Five (5) research experts active in the academe and engaged in research in the division validated the instrument using Criteria of Good and Scates. Suggestions were considered and the instrument was modified. The computed validity index was 4.80, which is interpreted as excellent and considered valid.

To determine the reliability of the self-made questionnaire, this was conducted on thirty (30) public school teachers who assessed the leadership skills of their school heads and those who were not part of the actual respondents of the study. Using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, the computed reliability index was 0.980; therefore, it is considered excellent and reliable.

Procedures

The School Division Superintendent of the medium-sized schools division in Central Philippines secured prior approval to conduct the study. After that, the researcher personally administered the survey following the approved schedule. The teacher-respondents were oriented first on the purpose of the survey and were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Teacher-respondents were given enough time to answer, and their responses were gathered the following day.

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

Objective 1 used the descriptive analytical scheme and mean statistical tool to determine the level of school heads' leadership skills in training, coaching, and delegating. Objective 2 used the comparative analytical scheme and Mann-Whitney U-test to determine the significant difference in the level of leadership skills as assessed by their teachers when grouped by age, length of service, and plantilla position. The school heads' level of leadership skills



was interpreted using a scoring system and the following criteria: a. 4.50-5.00=Very High Level; b. 3.50-4.49=High Level; c. 2.50-3.49=Moderate Level; d. 1.50-2.49=Low Level; e. 1.00-1.49=Very Low Level.

Ethical Considerations

This study strictly adhered to the research ethics protocol. The researcher secured the necessary permits before gathering the data. The researcher explained the purpose of administering the survey to teacher-respondents. More so, the researcher secured the participants' safety and consent to participate in this study. The researcher also explained the respondents' right to withdraw from the study for a valid reason. The researcher gave instructions on completing the survey, answered questions, and clarified respondents' doubts and confusions. Furthermore, the researcher handled the data with the highest anonymity and confidentiality level.

Results and Discussion

This section contains the gathered data based on the researcher's study objectives. The presentation of data, analysis, and interpretation was shown in tabular form with the study results and implications.

Table 1
School Heads' Level of Leadership Skills in terms of Training

Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>My school head...</i>		
1. uses the results of teachers' Self-Assessment Tool (SAT) and Individual Development Plan (IDP) in crafting training development for teachers	4.69	Very High Level
2. plans with the school planning team on the prioritization of topics in the conduct of In-Service Training for Teachers (INSET)	4.71	Very High Level
3. includes and allots budget for the professional training of teachers in the AIP and SIP	4.64	Very High Level
4. sends teachers to DepEd-recognized training, seminars, and workshops and allows teachers to attend educational-related training, seminars, and workshops that are of personal expense	4.39	High Level
5. sees to it that the learnings gained from training shall be used in the teaching-learning process.	4.73	Very High Level
Overall Mean	4.63	Very High Level

Table 1 shows school heads' level of leadership skills in training. The table shows that the school heads' leadership skills are very high, as evidenced by the overall mean score of 4.63. This implies that the school heads possess skills and competencies of good leadership. This contradicts Reyes (2018), who found out that the level of their leadership school heads was rated as satisfactory (Reyes, 2018).

The data also reveal that the highest mean score is evidenced in Item No. 5, stating that the school head sees that the learnings gained from training shall be used in the teaching-learning process, with a mean score of 4.73, interpreted as very high.

The lowest mean score of 4.39, interpreted as high, was in Item 4, stating that the school head sends teachers to DepEd-recognized trainings, seminars, and workshops and allows teachers to attend educational-related trainings, seminars, and workshops that are of personal expense. This is the only item that is rated low among all items in leadership skills. This implies that school heads encourage the teachers to apply the learning they get from professional engagements. However, due to the school's prioritized programs, projects, and activities (PPAs), not all teachers were given training other than the school-initiated training. Thus, teachers sometimes spend their money to attend trainings they want to attend. This supports the study of Ulah et al. (2021) that teachers do not receive financial support for professional development activities.

Table 2
School Heads' Level of Leadership Skills in terms of coaching

Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>My school head...</i>		
1. holds periodic meetings to show support for the organization's policy and mission and to discuss the needs of the staff.	4.75	Very High Level
2. facilitates the staff in assessing the goal, reality, and actions to be taken	4.69	Very High Level
3. helps the staff realize and evaluate the pros and cons of their actions to be taken.	4.62	Very High Level
4. provides quality inputs/coaching to improve professional	4.66	Very High Level



practice among teachers

5. focuses on opportunities and not problems.

4.54

Very High Level

Overall Mean

4.65

Very High Level

Table 2 shows school heads' level of leadership skills in coaching. The table shows that the school heads' leadership skills are very high, as evidenced by the overall mean score of 4.65. This implies that the school heads possess skills and competencies of good leadership. This contrasts with the findings of Linn and Vinitwatanakhun (2018), who found that school heads had moderate leadership skills.

The data also disclosed that the school heads were rated the highest mean score of 4.75, interpreted as very high in Item No. 1 on school heads holding periodic meetings to show support for the organization's policy and mission and to discuss the needs of the staff. This implies that school heads regularly meet with the school staff to discuss matters the school needs to address. This is in contrast to Valmores (2021), who states that school heads are only partially available to address the needs of teachers.

On the other hand, the lowest mean score of 4.54, interpreted as very high in Item No. 5 on the school head focusing on opportunities, not problems. This implies that school heads do not easily get swayed by the problems but keep on doing their tasks. This is in contrast to Valmores (2021), who states that school heads work on obtaining feedback from staff to manage challenges and resolve conflicts.

Table 3
School Heads' Level of Leadership Skills in terms of Delegating

Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>My school head...</i>		
1. provides staff with clear responsibilities and allows them to decide how to accomplish them.	4.60	Very High Level
2. discusses the organization's strategic mission with staff.	4.62	Very High Level
3. asks staff to think ahead and develop long-term plans for their areas.	4.60	Very High Level
4. emphasizes the importance of quality but allows his/her staff to establish control standards.	4.63	Very High Level
5. ensures that information systems are timely and accurate and that information is fed directly to staff.	4.54	Very High Level
Overall Mean	4.60	Very High Level

Table 3 shows school heads' level of leadership skills in the area of delegating. As shown in the table, the school heads' leadership skills are very high, as evidenced by the overall mean score of 4.60. This implies that the school heads possess skills and competencies of good leadership. This contradicts Aruzie, Adjei, Mensah, Nkansah, Anorkyewaa, & Frimpong (2018) when they found out that teachers perceived the use of some leadership skills as ineffective.

Moreover, the data also revealed that the school heads got the highest mean score of 4.63, interpreted as very high in Item No. 4 on school heads emphasizing the importance of quality but allowing his/her staff to establish control standards.

The lowest mean score was 4.54, interpreted as a very high level in Item No. 5 on school heads ensuring that information systems are timely and accurate, and that information is fed directly to the staff. This implies that the school heads emphasized the quality of work among their staff. However, they only sometimes ensure accuracy and timeliness of processing and distribution of information to teachers and other staff.

Table 4
Difference in the School Heads' Level of Leadership Skills in terms of Training When Grouped According to the Demographic Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann U	Whitney	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	103	105.24	5484.00		0.378	0.05	Not Significant
	Older	114	112.39					
Length of Service	Lower	102	105.35	5492.50		0.396		Not Significant
	Higher	115	112.24					



Plantilla Position	Lower	55	115.38	4104.00	0.359	Not Significant
	Higher	162	106.83			

Table 4 shows the difference in the school heads' level of leadership skills in the area of training when grouped and compared according to age, length of service, and plantilla position. This is supported by their respective p-values of 0.378, 0.396, and 0.359, respectively, that are greater than 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in leadership skills in terms of training when grouped and compared according to the selected variables was not rejected.

The findings imply that school heads were viewed as effective in training teachers and possessed almost the same style in training their personnel since school heads belonged to one division and practiced almost the same culture. This supports Aquino et al.'s (2017) claim that school heads' leadership skills are similar when they are grouped according to age and length of service.

Furthermore, the school heads see that teachers are provided with appropriate professional training aligned to their needs and priorities. Moreover, the school heads observed that the training provided for teachers is those training needs reflected in the Self-Assessment Tool, which was allocated from the school's funds. School heads also allow teachers to attend DepEd and non-DepEd recognized professional development. This is in contrast to Ullah et al. (2021), who state that school heads support teachers in their skills development rather than financially.

Table 5
Difference in the School Heads' Level of Leadership Skills in terms of Coaching When Grouped According to the Demographic Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	103	107.12	5677.50	0.655	0.05	Not Significant
	Older	114	110.70				
Length of Service	Lower	102	106.77	5638.00	0.600	0.05	Not Significant
	Higher	115	110.97				
Plantilla Position	Lower	55	113.63	4200.50	0.500	0.05	Not Significant
	Higher	162	107.43				

Table 5 shows the difference in the school heads' level of leadership skills in the area of coaching when grouped and compared according to age, length of service, and plantilla position. This is supported by their p-values of 0.655, 0.600, and 0.500, respectively, that are greater than 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in leadership skills in terms of coaching when grouped and compared according to the selected variables was accepted.

The findings imply that school heads practice almost the same coaching styles and that their level of coaching in leadership skills does not significantly differ. If school heads belong to one group, like a division, most likely, they will have the same set of cultures and practices. This supports Bejer (2019) claim that school heads' leadership skills are similar when grouped according to length of service and plantilla position.

Furthermore, school heads ensure that all school personnel are kept updated with the policies and guidelines they should observe so that the school personnel will be directed to the organization's goals and objectives. School heads conduct regular meetings and give feedback to improve their current practices and policies. This is to ensure that they evaluate the school's situation well and to address issues and challenges that arise along the way. This supports Valmores (2021) that school heads conduct meetings and Learning Action Cell to serve as a platform for discussing problems, matters, and uncertainties.

Table 6
Difference in the School Heads' Level of Leadership Skills in terms of Delegating When Grouped According to the Demographic Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
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Age		Younger	103	102.29	5180.00	0.111	Not Significant
		Older	114	115.06			
Length of Service		Lower	102	102.68	5220.00	0.136	0.05
		Higher	115	114.61			
Plantilla Position		Lower	55	105.30	4251.50	0.590	Not Significant
		Higher	162	110.26			

Table 6 shows the difference in the school heads' level of leadership skills in the area of delegating when grouped and compared according to age, length of service, and plantilla position. This is supported by their respective p-values of 0.111, 0.136, and 0.590, respectively, that are greater than 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in leadership skills in delegating was accepted when grouped and compared according to the selected variables.

The findings imply that teachers, regardless of their age, length of service, and plantilla position, had the same view on the school heads' level of leadership skills in terms of delegating. Most of them viewed their school heads assigning tasks to a committee form in every activity or program. Most likely, school heads will delegate tasks as they are also quite busy with other required tasks. This supports Panezai and Shah (2021) that the majority of school heads use delegating leadership skills. Additionally, this also corroborates the findings of Bercero (2019), that the leadership skills of school heads are similar in terms of the teaching position and length of service and Abdurahman and Omar (2021) found that school heads' leadership skills are similar in when respondents were compared in terms of age.

Conclusion

The school heads had a remarkably high level of leadership skills in all the areas covered in this investigation namely training, coaching, and delegating- a result that signifies several positive outcomes for the school and its stakeholders. More so, even when the teachers were grouped according to age, length of service, and plantilla position, they still possessed a very high level of leadership skills. This brings to the forefront the way school heads entrust their teachers with delegated responsibilities and build trust in the process. Furthermore, no significant difference was found in school heads' level of leadership skills when respondents were grouped by the same three demographic variables. These findings call for the inclusion of other variables like performance and educational attainment for the demographic profiles in similar studies in the future, the institution of a recognition system for school heads who are highly performing, and continued mentoring and coaching among school heads to further improve their level of leadership skills.

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Bio-notes:

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