
Leadership Competence of Selected School Heads in Public Schools Towards an Evidence- Based Localized Management Policy

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Abstract — This research examined the leadership competence of selected public school heads, focusing on their ability to create and implement evidence-based localized management policies. It highlighted the significance of informed, context-specific approaches to educational administration, using the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH) as a framework. The study found a medium effect of sex on leadership and management competence, while position, highest educational attainment, and years of experience had small effects. Recommendations for evidence-based localized management policies in Cavite's public schools include implementing professional development programs to enhance leadership and management competencies, establishing a mentorship and coaching system for continuous learning, and developing localized policy guidelines tailored to the specific needs of Cavite's schools. These guidelines should involve local stakeholders and be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure ongoing improvement in school management and operations.

Keywords: *Philippine Professional Standard for School Heads, Evidence-Based Localized Management , Leadership Competence, Management Competence*

I. INTRODUCTION

Effective leadership is essential to determining how our children, schools, and communities will develop in the future. The front-line leaders of the educational system and school principals have a significant number of responsibilities. Their leadership skills are crucial for the long-term success of educational institutions as well as for the everyday operation of schools. This research explores the leadership skills of selected School Heads in public schools, concentrating on their capacity to develop and put into practice evidence-based localized management policies. By emphasizing the need for well-informed, context-specific approaches to educational administration, this research intends to shed light on the crucial relationship between competent school leadership and the formulation of policies based on empirical evidence. The researcher aims to contribute to the continuing discussion on enhancing educational leadership, policy development, and ultimately the quality of education in public schools by looking at the capacities of school leaders in this area.

Background of the Study

In a learning environment, school administrators are entrusted with supervising and directing all students in accordance with their individual needs. Also, school administrators act as liaisons to carry out policymakers' and stakeholders' mandates, such as those pertaining to the Ministry of Education, State Education Offices, and District Education Offices. School administrators must be competent and capable of managing the school to carry out this duty (Mahmud, 2010). Making the incorrect choice could be fatal for the police or another individual, claim Bohm & Haley (2005). Additionally, decision-making is the cornerstone of management and strives to choose the best option to accomplish a purpose, according to Gorry & Scott Morton (1971). Leadership and performance at the school are linked. The heads of the schools were overwhelmed with anxiety. A school head's responsibility is to make the best possible use of the school's resources to help the institution perform at a high level. There is a dearth of literature on this subject given the nature of the research. The school head, who simultaneously serves as a leader and a supervisor, is expected to possess the knowledge, abilities, and leadership qualities necessary to support student success by organizing, running, and allocating the school's resources in a way that fosters a safe, effective learning environment. By articulating a shared goal that distributed leadership be created within a collaborative school climate, the school heads play a crucial role in supporting the school. School leaders set an example of leadership by employing tools and procedures, and situational decision-making necessitates independent decision-making on the part of principals. Aside from possessing leadership competence, school heads should also practice evidence-based management. One of the practices of every school in the Philippines is aiming to achieve Level 3 of practice in their School-Based Management System. In this study, the researcher wanted to integrate evidence-based management policy in all public schools in Cavite. This adheres to quality policy of the Department of Education to have quality education with evidence-based management policy. Evidence-based management is an approach that involves consciously setting aside the accepted conventions and hierarchy of opinion, and instead, using critical thinking and the best available evidence to make decisions. Evidence-based management is a practice of management and decision-making based on critical thinking and reliable evidence.

Literature Review

Traditionally, the principal resembled the middle manager suggested in William Whyte's 1950's classic *The Organization Man* - an overseer of buses, boilers, and books. Today, in a rapidly changing era of standards-based reform and accountability, a different conception has emerged - one closer to the model suggested by Jim Collins' 2001 *Good to Great*, which draws lessons from contemporary corporate life to suggest leadership that focuses with great clarity on what is essential, what needs to be done and how to get it done. This shift brings with it dramatic changes in what public education needs from principals. They can no longer function simply as building managers, tasked with adhering to district rules, carrying out regulations and avoiding mistakes. They must be (or become) leaders of learning who can develop a team delivering effective instruction.

For the implementation of SBM to be successful it requires the participation of the school head who can manage the school in accordance with SBM principles. The school head is the instructional, first and foremost leader. As a principal, he/she needs to have skills in planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising. If the school head has good management skills, he will be able to arrange for teachers and students to work as a team. This encourages effective implementation of school programs that lead to improved performance to achieve the targets set. If management skills are utilized effectively there will be a clear performance management system and a cooperative environment in the school. (Zaveria & Thinguri, 2017). The school heads as managers and leaders set the direction the schools are going. They are basically 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.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to determine the leadership and management competence of school heads in relation to Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH) and recommend policies/programs that will address the needs of the schools to better perform their duties and responsibilities.

The researcher sought to determine the leadership and management competence of school heads towards the evidence-based localized management policy.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the school heads in terms of:
 - a. Sex
 - b. Position
 - c. Highest Educational Attainment
 - d. Years of Experience
2. To what extent is the leadership competence of school heads as to:
 - 2.1 leading strategically
 - 2.2 developing self and others
 - 2.3 building connections
3. To what extent is the management competence of school heads as to:
 - 3.1 managing school operations and resources
 - 3.2 focusing on teaching and learning
4. To what do the demographic profile affect significantly the:
 - 4.1 leadership competence
 - 4.2 management competence of school heads?
5. Based on the findings, what evidence-based localized management policy can be proposed?

Significance of the study

The completion of this study is necessary to gain insights from school head's own perspective on their leadership and management competence . Specifically, the outcome of the study can be beneficial to the following:

School Heads. The ultimate phenomenon in today's schools is the need for school leaders with competent and adequate leadership competencies precisely to always advance quality education. As institutional leaders, they must continuously empower themselves to achieve the best performance of their schools. Not only for their personal development but also for professional growth.

Teaching Personnel. The empowerment of school heads will lead to evidence- based management policy that will provide benefits to teaching personnel. Administration task will be minimal, and they can focus on teaching-learning process as well as the prevention of repeating submission of reports. There are many instances where superiors tend to ask reports multiple times because of missing files in their computers and online repositories.

Non-Teaching Personnel. Staff members also looked at aligning organizational elements to implement school-based innovations around the school's vision. Difficult questions about shared leadership, teacher culture, communication channels, and participative processes were addressed, along with how students were grouped, and resources were allocated. With this study, non-teaching personnel will be part of institutionalizing evidence-based management policy by their school heads. Transparency in managing resources and helping teaching personnel with their HR concerns is one of their tasks. Moreover, to lessen the admin task of teachers, non-teaching personnel were also utilized especially during pandemic. They are the partners of their school head in organizing records and inventories of school facilities; hence they have a vital role in the implementation of evidence-based management policy.

Students learn in a child-friendly, gender-sensitive, safe, and motivating environment. Their teachers facilitate learning and constantly nurture them to become globally-competitive learners and possess the DepEd core values, Maka-Diyos, Makatao at Makabansa. The study will provide broader information to school heads on how they will manage educational institutions and apply evidence-based management policy to ensure the quality of education to be offered to learners.

Parents and Other Stakeholders. They are the partners of the school heads in generating funds that will help the school to accomplish the programs and projects within the school year. They are also the ones who ensure transparency in utilizing the resources of the school.

Researcher. The main indicator of quality for evidence-based localized management policy (including specific interventions, activities, and strategies implemented at the school or district levels) should be clear evidence of impact based on rigorous research. In short, proven impact in rigorous research should be the main indicator of quality for EBMs used to support schools and districts in improving student achievement.

Future Researchers. By conducting similar studies, they could possibly explore and discover other variables that might improve the school management system that will help the school heads achieve the vision and mission of the Department of Education that adheres to DepEd Quality Policy.

Scope and Limitation

This study will be limited to the leadership and management competence of selected school heads perceived by themselves. Elementary and Secondary School Heads will be included as respondents therefore the voice of supervisors, teachers, students, and stakeholders will not be considered as part of this research. Furthermore, this study will be conducted in 196 school heads both elementary and secondary level in Division of Cavite Province. School heads will be given ample time to answer the survey questionnaires. Due to this, the motives of those completing the survey cannot be investigated. This data provides a large sample but does not include the entire population.

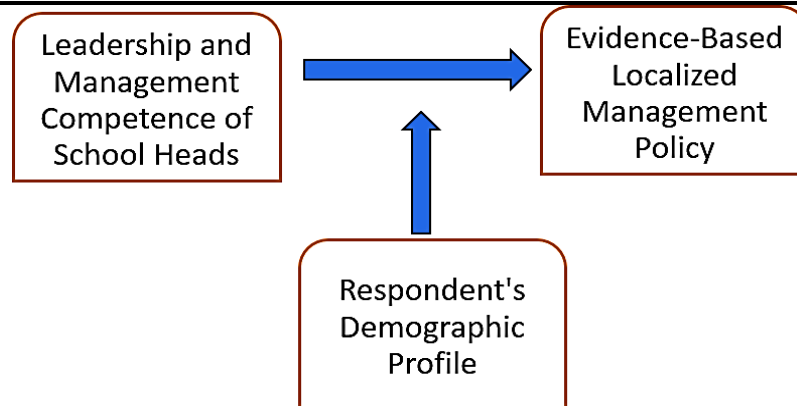


Figure 1. Research Paradigm Showing the Relationship of the Variables

Theoretical Framework and Related Theories

The conceptual framework of this study examines the impact of demographic profiles of public school heads on their leadership and management competencies, using insights from several key theories. Transformational leadership theory, which focuses on inspiring and motivating followers through vision and a strong organizational culture, is crucial for driving positive change in schools. This theory highlights the importance of school heads being able to engage teachers, students, and the community to foster an environment conducive to educational improvement.

Situational leadership theory, developed by Hersey and Blanchard, suggests that leaders must adapt their style based on the readiness level of their team members. This means that school heads need to tailor their approach according to the specific needs and competencies of their staff, ranging from directive to supportive behaviors. By doing so, they can ensure that their leadership is effective and responsive to the varying developmental stages of their team.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study used the Descriptive Survey Method aimed at portraying accurately the characteristics of a particular group or situation. This method entailed gathering data to test hypotheses or answer questions. Kumar (2014) defined this method as systematically describing a situation, problem, phenomenon, service, or program, as well as providing information or describing an attitude toward an issue. It was used to identify and obtain information on the leadership skills of school heads in performing their duties and responsibilities consistent with the national educational policies, plans, and standards in relation to Republic Act 9155 and the new Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH) specified in DepEd Order No. 24, s. 2020.

Population Samples and Sampling Techniques

This study was conducted in 196 school heads for both elementary and secondary level in the Division of Cavite Province. School heads were given ample time to answer the survey questionnaires. Consequently, the motives of those completing the survey could not be investigated. While this data provided a large sample, it did not include the entire population of public high school heads. The researcher used purposive sampling, which is a non-probability sampling design that selected a sample based on the characteristics of the population and objectives of the study.

Locale of the Study

The location of the study was in the Province of Cavite, Region IV-A. The study was conducted in the Division of Cavite Province, which composed 18 municipalities; exempt from this were the cities of Dasmariñas, Cavite City,

Imus, Bacoor, and Gen. Trias. Because of its proximity, ease of access, distance considerations, time, and financial consequences, the said Province was chosen for this study. SDO Cavite Province was composed of 328 public elementary and secondary schools.

Research Instrument

A survey questionnaire with two (2) parts was used as the research instrument. Part I consisted of the demographic profile of the school head, which was a self-created questionnaire determining the profile of the school head in terms of sex, position, highest educational attainment, and years of experience as a school head. Meanwhile, Part II was adapted from the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH) stipulated in DepEd Order No. 24, s. 2020. Respondents were asked to rate the extent of their leadership and management competence in terms of leading strategically, managing school operations and resources, focusing on teaching and learning, developing self and others, and building connections. The researcher used PPSSH which was developed to assist National Educators' Academy of the Philippines (NEAP) design and delivery of in-service professional development and through integrated monitoring and evaluation procedures, provide for accountability.

Data Gathering Procedures

The data gathering process started with securing permits from proper authorities, particularly the Dean of the Graduate School. A letter of request was sent to the office of the School's Division Superintendent of Cavite Province to seek permission for the researcher to conduct the research in the selected schools within the division

Statistical Treatment

The following statistical tools were used in the analysis and interpretation of the data.

Frequency count and Percentage- Frequency statistics simply count the number of times that each variable occurs, such as the number of males and females within the sample. Frequency and percentage statistics should be used to represent most personal information variables. Percentages are easier to understand than frequencies, it is calculated by taking the frequency in the category divided by the total number of participants and multiplying by 100%.

Weighted Mean- A weighted average is sometimes more accurate than a simple average. In a weighted average, each data point value is multiplied by the assigned weight, which is then summed and divided by the number of data points. For this reason, a weighted average.

can improve the data's accuracy.

Standard Deviation- The standard deviation is the average amount of [variability](#) in your dataset. It tells you, on average, how far each value lies from the mean.

A high standard deviation means that values are generally far from the [mean](#), while a low standard deviation indicates that values are clustered close to the mean.

Eta-square - Eta-squared is a measure of effect size in ANOVA. It represents the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that is attributable to the independent variable(s). It ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 indicates no effect, and 1 indicates a complete effect. Eta-squared is used to assess the practical significance of the results beyond the statistical significance.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

INDICATORS	WEIGHTED MEAN	VERBAL INTERPRETATION
Leading Strategically	4.26	Very High Competent
Developing Self and Others	4.32	Very High Competent
Building Connections	4.23	Very High Competent
Overall Weighted Mean	4.27	Very High Competent

The table shows the summary of extent of leadership competence of school heads in terms of Leading Strategically, Developing Self and Others and Building Connections and its verbal interpretation. Majority of the respondents choose Developing Self and Others with weighted mean of 4.32 and verbal interpretation of very high competent, followed by Leading Strategically with the weighted mean of 4.26 and verbal interpretation of very high competent, lastly Building Connections with the weighted mean of 4.23 and verbal communication of very high competent. The overall weighted mean is 4.27 and verbal interpretation of very high competent in terms of the summary of extent of leadership competence of school heads in terms of leading strategically, developing self and others and building connections.

INDICATORS	WEIGHTED MEAN	VERBAL INTERPRETATION
Managing School Operations & Resources	4.18	Highly Competent
Focus on Teaching & Learning	4.35	Very High Competent
Overall Weighted Mean	4.26	Very High Competent

The table shows the summary of extent of management competence of school heads in terms of managing school operations and resources and focus on teaching and learning and its verbal interpretation. Majority of the respondents choose Focus on Teaching and Learning with weighted mean of 4.35 and verbal interpretation of very high competent, then Managing School Operations and Resources with weighted mean of 4.18 and verbal interpretation of high competent. The overall weighted mean is 4.26 and verbal interpretation of very high competent in terms of the summary of extent of management competence of school heads in terms of managing school operations and resources and focus on teaching and learning.

Several other studies corroborate the significance of prioritizing teaching and learning in educational contexts. For instance, a study examining the state of ICT infrastructure in secondary schools, conducted by Bariu (2020), emphasizes the growing importance of incorporating multimedia applications to engage students and enhance the teaching and learning process. This underscores the pivotal role of technology in augmenting the educational experience.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that the effectiveness of public school leadership and management hinges significantly on the competencies of school heads. Key areas of these competencies include strategic leadership, which involves setting and guiding long-term goals; personal and professional development, focusing on both self-improvement and the growth of staff; relationship-building, which is essential for fostering collaboration among stakeholders; and managing school operations and resources, crucial for maintaining an efficient and productive school environment. Demographic factor such as sex was found to have a medium impact on these competencies, indicating that they play a substantial role in shaping leadership effectiveness. In contrast, position, years of experience and highest educational attainment showed a smaller influence, suggesting that while these factors are relevant, they are less critical in determining leadership success. The findings highlight the need for targeted professional development programs designed to strengthen these competencies, as well as the establishment of mentorship and coaching systems to support the growth of less experienced leaders. Enhancing these leadership and management skills is deemed crucial for improving overall educational quality. Recommendations from the study include the development of specialized training programs, the implementation of mentorship and coaching initiatives, and the creation of localized policy guidelines that address the specific needs of public schools in Cavite. However, the study's limitations, such as its specific sample size and potential measurement constraints, may affect the generalizability of the results. To address these limitations and gain a deeper understanding of the long-term impacts of professional development, future research should involve broader and more diverse samples and consider longitudinal studies.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, several key recommendations are proposed to enhance evidence-based localized management policies for public schools in Cavite:

- 1. Professional Development Programs:** To bolster the leadership and management capabilities of school heads, it is essential to develop and implement targeted professional development programs. These programs should be comprehensive, including a mix of workshops, seminars, and online courses designed to address specific areas where improvement is needed. By focusing on these identified gaps, these training opportunities will not only strengthen existing skills but also equip school heads with new strategies and tools to enhance their leadership effectiveness. Tailoring the content to the specific needs of the participants will ensure that the training is practical and directly applicable to their roles.
- 2. Mentorship and Coaching:** Establishing a structured mentorship and coaching system is crucial for supporting less experienced school heads. This system should pair seasoned leaders with newer administrators to provide guidance, share best practices, and offer practical solutions to common challenges. The mentorship program should focus on key areas of leadership and management, promoting continuous learning and professional growth. Regular coaching sessions and peer-to-peer learning opportunities will help foster a culture of collaboration and ongoing development, enhancing the overall competency and effectiveness of school leaders.
- 3. Localized Policy Guidelines:** To ensure that management policies are relevant and effective, it is important to develop and implement guidelines tailored to the unique needs and context of Cavite's public schools. This process should involve a consultative approach with local stakeholders, including educators, parents, and community members, to ensure that the guidelines reflect local realities and address specific challenges. Furthermore, these policies should not be static; they should be reviewed and updated regularly to adapt to evolving needs and circumstances. This approach will support continuous improvement in school management and operations, ensuring that policies remain effective and responsive to the changing educational environment.

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