Instructional Leadership Practices of School Heads inMalasiqui 2A District: Challenges, Competencies, and Professional Development Needs

Elvira O. Deldio,EdD
Lyceum-Northwestern University, Dagupan City. Philippines

Abstract

This study assessed the instructional leadership competencies of school heads in the Malasiqui 2A District, focusing on curriculum management, educational technology integration, and student achievement monitoring. Using a total population sampling method, all school heads in the district participated. Quantitative and qualitative data were gathered through surveys and interviews, and the results revealed strong competencies in curriculum management and student achievement monitoring. However, moderate proficiency in educational technology integration highlighted the need for improvement in adapting to digital advancements. Significant relationships were identified between leadership competencies and demographic variables, such as educational attainment and years of experience, underscoring the importance of tailored professional development.

The study's findings provide critical insights into the challenges faced by school heads in balancing instructional and administrative responsibilities. Recommendations include targeted training on technology integration, mentorship programs, and policy reforms to reduce administrative burdens, enabling school heads to focus more on instructional leadership. These outcomes contribute to understanding the role of leadership in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4, advocating for inclusive and equitable quality education. The study underscores the importance of strengthening leadership practices to enhance teacher performance and student outcomes, offering a replicable framework for other districts facing similar challenges.

Keywords: Instructional leadership, school heads, curriculum management, educational technology, professional development

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Introduction

Instructional leadership is widely recognized as a critical factor in improving educational outcomes, with school heads playing a dual role in managing both instructional and administrative tasks. According to Republic Act No. 9155 and various DepEd policies, school heads are tasked with overseeing curriculum implementation, conducting instructional supervision, and fostering a conducive learning environment. Studies highlight the global importance of instructional leadership, with research by Leithwood et al. (2019) emphasizing its strong correlation with enhanced student performance. Similarly, in the Philippines, research by Jimenez and Galicia (2023) and Guzon et al. (2022) underscores the essential role of school leaders in shaping teacher effectiveness and student outcomes.

Despite the recognized importance of instructional leadership, gaps remain in the practical application and training of school heads in the Philippines. Jimenez and Galicia (2023) identify inconsistencies in leadership practices due to inadequate professional development opportunities, while Guzon et al. (2022) highlight challenges in addressing leadership skills specific to emerging demands, such as technology integration and curriculum reforms. These gaps are particularly evident in regional contexts, where resources and support systems are often limited. Consequently, there is a pressing need for localized studies to understand the instructional leadership competencies of school heads and their impact on educational outcomes.

This study aims to assess the instructional leadership skills of school heads in the Malasiqui 2A District, focusing on their competencies in curriculum management, educational technology integration, and monitoring student achievement. By examining how these skills relate to specific profile variables, the research seeks to identify actionable insights for designing targeted professional development programs. The findings will contribute to strengthening instructional leadership practices, improving teacher performance, and enhancing student learning. Furthermore, this research provides a framework for addressing leadership challenges in similar educational contexts, supporting broader efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4, which advocates for inclusive and equitable quality education for all.

Methods

a. Research Design

This study adopts a **descriptive-correlational research design** to examine the instructional leadership skills of school heads in the Malasiqui 2A District. The descriptive aspect focuses on profiling the leadership competencies of school heads, including curriculum management, educational technology integration, and monitoring student achievement. By capturing these dimensions comprehensively, the study aims to present a clear picture of the current state of instructional leadership within the district. The correlational component explores the relationships between instructional leadership skills and specific demographic variables (e.g., age, educational background, years of service),

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providing insights into how personal and professional factors influence leadership practices.

b. Population and Sampling

The study employs a **total population sampling method**, where all school heads in the Malasiqui 2A District—both from elementary and secondary schools—serve as participants. This approach ensures inclusivity and comprehensiveness, capturing the perspectives of the entire population without excluding any subgroup. Total population sampling is particularly suitable given the small size of the district's school leadership population and aligns with the study's aim of obtaining a holistic view of instructional leadership.

c. Data Collection Instruments

A structured survey questionnaire will be the primary tool for data collection, comprising two main parts. The first part collects demographic information, such as age, gender, educational attainment, and years of experience. The second part assesses instructional leadership competencies using validated scales aligned with DepEd policies and the instructional leadership framework established by Leithwood et al. (2019). The survey will also include open-ended questions to capture qualitative insights on challenges and opportunities in leadership practices.

d. Data Analysis

Quantitative data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics (e.g., means, standard deviations) to summarize the instructional leadership competencies of school heads. Inferential statistical techniques, such as Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis, will be used to explore relationships between leadership skills and demographic variables. Qualitative responses will undergo thematic analysis to provide context-specific insights, adding depth to the quantitative findings.

e. **Ethical Considerations**

The study adheres to ethical research practices, ensuring voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality. Participants will be informed about the study's objectives and their right to withdraw at any time. Data will be anonymized to protect the identity of respondents.

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f. **Significance of the Study**

This study contributes to the growing body of research on instructional leadership by addressing gaps in training and practice among school heads in the Philippines. Its findings will inform the development of tailored professional development programs for school leaders in the Malasiqui 2A District, enhancing their ability to foster effective teaching and learning. Furthermore, the study's localized focus provides a replicable framework for assessing instructional leadership in other districts facing similar challenges, aligning with global efforts to improve educational quality and equity as outlined in Sustainable Development Goal 4.

Results

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The study included **35 school heads** from the Malasiqui 2A District, comprising **22 elementary school heads** (63%) and **13 secondary school heads** (37%). Among the respondents:

- **60% were female**, and **40% were male**.
- The majority (71%) were aged **41–50 years**, while 20% were aged **51 and above**, and 9% were aged **40 and below**.
- **85% held master's degrees**, and **15% held bachelor's degrees**.
- Most had **6–15 years of leadership experience** (68%), followed by **16 years or more** (20%), and **1–5 years** (12%).

Instructional Leadership Skills

The respondents' self-assessed instructional leadership competencies were measured across three domains: **curriculum management, educational technology integration, and student achievement monitoring**.

1.Curriculum Management

- **Average Rating**: 4.2/5 (Strongly Competent)
- Key Strengths: Aligning curriculum with DepEd standards, supporting teachers in lesson planning.
- Key Challenges: Limited time for classroom observations and feedback due to administrative responsibilities.

2.Educational Technology Integration

- **Average Rating**: 3.6/5 (Moderately Competent)
- Key Strengths: Encouraging teachers to integrate technology in instruction.

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- Key Challenges: Lack of training in advanced educational technologies and inconsistent internet connectivity in schools.

3.Student Achievement Monitoring

- **Average Rating**: 4.0/5 (Strongly Competent)
- Key Strengths: Analyzing student performance data and implementing targeted interventions.
- Key Challenges: Balancing monitoring tasks with other leadership duties.

Relationship Between Demographic Variables and Leadership Skills

Correlation analysis revealed significant relationships between demographic factors and instructional leadership competencies:

- **Educational Attainment** was positively correlated with curriculum management skills ($r = 0.48$, $p < 0.05$).
- **Years of Leadership Experience** showed a moderate positive correlation with student achievement monitoring skills ($r = 0.45$, $p < 0.05$).
- **Age** had no significant correlation with overall leadership competency.

Qualitative Insights

Open-ended responses highlighted several key themes:

- **Professional Development Needs**: Respondents expressed a desire for workshops on advanced educational technology and data-driven leadership strategies.
- **Challenges in Balancing Roles**: Many school heads noted difficulties in balancing instructional and administrative responsibilities.
- **Community Support**: Strong collaboration with teachers and parents was cited as a critical factor for success.

Summary of Key Findings

1.School heads in the Malasiqui 2A District demonstrate strong competencies in curriculum management and student achievement monitoring but moderate competency in educational technology integration.

2.Professional development and support systems are needed to address gaps in technology use and balance between instructional and administrative roles.

3.Leadership skills are influenced by educational attainment and experience, highlighting the importance of continuous professional development tailored to the specific needs of school heads.

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Discussion

1. Summary of Results
   The findings of this study revealed that school heads in the Malasiqui 2A District exhibit strong competencies in **curriculum management** and **student achievement monitoring**, with average self-assessment scores of 4.2/5 and 4.0/5, respectively. However, their competencies in **educational technology integration** were moderately rated at 3.6/5. Significant correlations were observed between educational attainment and curriculum management skills ($r = 0.48$, $p < 0.05$) and between years of leadership experience and student achievement monitoring ($r = 0.45$, $p < 0.05$). Qualitative insights emphasized the need for professional development, especially in the integration of educational technology, and highlighted the challenges of balancing instructional and administrative responsibilities.
2. **Cross-Referencing with Previous Studies**
   The findings align with the research of Leithwood et al. (2019), which established a strong link between instructional leadership and student achievement, as school heads in this study demonstrated proficiency in monitoring and supporting student outcomes. Similarly, Jimenez and Galicia (2023) identified gaps in professional development for Philippine school leaders, resonating with this study's findings on the moderate competency in educational technology integration. The challenges in balancing instructional and administrative roles also echo the findings of Guzon et al. (2022), who reported that competing demands often limit school heads' capacity to effectively perform their instructional leadership functions.
3. **Attempts to Explain the Findings**

   The strong competencies in curriculum management and student achievement monitoring can be attributed to the structured guidelines and expectations set by Republic Act No. 9155 and DepEd policies, which emphasize these roles. However, the moderate competency in educational technology integration reflects broader systemic challenges, such as inconsistent infrastructure and insufficient training opportunities in emerging technologies, as noted in previous studies. The significant influence of educational attainment and years of experience on leadership skills suggests that advanced education and practical exposure play crucial roles in developing instructional leadership competencies.
4. **Implications of the Results**
   The results have several important implications for policy and practice. First, they highlight the need for targeted professional development programs, particularly in **educational technology integration**, to equip school heads with the skills necessary to lead in a digital age. Second, the findings suggest that leadership training should be differentiated based on the educational background and experience levels of school heads to address specific competency gaps effectively. Lastly, the study underscores the importance of creating systemic support mechanisms, such as reducing administrative burdens, to allow school heads to focus more on instructional leadership.

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In a broader context, these results contribute to the ongoing discourse on strengthening instructional leadership in the Philippines, aligning with Sustainable Development Goal 4 by advocating for inclusive and equitable quality education. They also provide a framework for similar districts to identify and address leadership challenges, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and professional growth.

Conclusion

The study concluded that school heads in the Malasiqui 2A District exhibit strong instructional leadership skills in **curriculum management** and **student achievement monitoring**, underscoring their critical role in enhancing educational outcomes. However, their moderate competency in **educational technology integration** highlights the urgent need for targeted training to meet the demands of modern, technology-driven education. Furthermore, the relationships between leadership competencies and demographic factors, such as educational attainment and years of experience, emphasize the importance of tailored professional development programs. Challenges in balancing instructional and administrative duties also point to systemic barriers that require intervention to optimize leadership effectiveness.

These findings contribute to a nuanced understanding of instructional leadership within regional contexts, offering a framework for improving leadership practices that align with global educational goals, including Sustainable Development Goal 4 on quality education for all.

Recommendation

To address these findings, the study recommends:

1. **Professional Development**: Implement training programs on educational technology integration and differentiated leadership workshops based on the needs of school heads.
2. **Administrative Support**: Reduce administrative burdens through policy adjustments and resource allocation to allow school heads to focus on instructional leadership.
3. **Mentorship and Peer Learning**: Foster mentorship and peer-learning initiatives to enhance leadership competencies through experience sharing and collaboration.

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