

INSTRUCTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP OF SCHOOL HEADS IN DASOL DISTRICT

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Abstract

This study assessed the instructional and administrative leadership practices of public-school heads in Dasol District, Pangasinan, during the 2024–2025 school year. Anchored on systems, instructional, distributed, servant, and situational leadership theories, it examined how school heads perform their dual roles in curriculum implementation and supervision, teacher professional development, classroom observation and feedback, resource management, personnel management, and school–community partnership. Using a descriptive–correlational design, the study involved all twenty (20) school heads in the district through a researcher-developed, validated, and reliability-tested survey questionnaire. Data were treated using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, Pearson-r correlation, and t-test. Results revealed a very high level of instructional and administrative leadership practices across all domains, indicating that school heads consistently ensured curriculum fidelity, supported teachers' continuous professional growth, monitored classroom instruction, managed resources efficiently, and sustained strong stakeholder collaboration. No significant differences in leadership practices were found across sex and educational attainment; however, seminars attended showed a significant positive relationship with leadership practices, underscoring the importance of continuous professional development. Despite their high level of competence, school heads reported challenges in balancing instructional and administrative responsibilities, particularly in managing time and workload. The study concludes that while leadership practices in Dasol District are commendable, policy support, targeted training, and workload management strategies are necessary to strengthen further school heads' capacity to sustain instructional excellence and effective school management. The findings provide empirical evidence to inform the Department of Education and local stakeholders in designing context-responsive leadership development programs for rural districts similar to Dasol.

Keywords: Instructional Leadership, Administrative Leadership, School Heads, Dasol District, Professional Development, Resource Management

1. Introduction

The quality of school leadership is widely recognized as a key determinant of educational performance. International evidence consistently shows that, after classroom instruction, school leadership is the second most influential school-based factor affecting student learning outcomes (Leithwood & Louis, 2012; Neufeld, 2019). Effective school heads shape vision and direction, nurture teacher quality, and create organizational conditions that enable productive teaching and learning. In contemporary education systems characterized by accountability pressures, curriculum reforms, and heightened community expectations, the work of school heads has become increasingly complex, requiring them to perform demanding instructional and administrative roles simultaneously (Hallinger et al., 2020).

Instructional leadership focuses on the “core business” of schools—teaching and learning. It typically includes defining the school's mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive school learning climate (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985, as cited in Hallinger, 2011). Recent meta-analyses affirm that instructional leadership has a significant, albeit largely indirect, effect on student achievement by influencing teacher practices, school culture, and the

use of assessment data (Hallinger et al., 2020; Robinson et al., 2008, as cited in Hallinger et al., 2023). Likewise, administrative or managerial leadership—which encompasses resource management, personnel administration, policy compliance, and stakeholder relations—provides the structural and organizational foundation that enables instructional initiatives to succeed (Leithwood et al., 2008; Neufeld, 2019). For school heads, these two dimensions of leadership are inseparable in practice but are often examined separately in research.

In the Philippines, the centrality of school leadership is formally recognized in several Department of Education (DepEd) policies. The National Adoption and Implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH) through DepEd Order No. 024, s. 2020 positions school heads as “stewards of schools” responsible for ensuring enabling environments for effective teaching and learning (Department of Education [DepEd], 2020). The PPSSH organizes leadership expectations into five domains: leading strategically, managing school operations and resources, focusing on teaching and learning, developing self and others, and building connections (TeacherPH, n.d.; DepEd, 2020). These domains integrate instructional and administrative leadership functions and provide a coherent framework for professional development, self-assessment, and career progression of school heads.

Concurrently, DepEd’s revised School-Based Management (SBM) policy under DepEd Order No. 007, s. 2024 reinforces the decentralization of authority to the school level and emphasizes shared leadership, participatory decision-making, and stakeholder engagement (DepEd, 2024; EDSes SBM Portal, n.d.). Under SBM, school heads are expected to spearhead planning, resource mobilization, community partnerships, and accountability systems, while ensuring that curriculum implementation and instructional supervision remain strong. These overlapping expectations intensify the dual instructional and administrative load of school heads, particularly in small or resource-constrained districts.

Empirical studies in the Philippine context show that many school heads demonstrate high levels of leadership practice aligned with the PPSSH domains. Research across different divisions has reported that school heads are generally rated “very satisfactory” or “highly competent” in strategic leadership, resource management, and teaching and learning (Dellomas & Deri, 2022; Madarang, 2023; Umingan & colleagues, 2024). Studies have also found significant relationships between school heads’ instructional leadership and teachers’ performance or school outcomes, highlighting the importance of continuous professional development and effective supervision (Naguit, 2024; Barola, 2022, as cited in School Heads’ Leadership Practices in Relation to Teachers’ Performance, 2024). However, the literature also notes persistent challenges, such as heavy workloads, administrative overload, and the difficulty of maintaining instructional focus amid competing bureaucratic demands (Leithwood et al., 2008; DepEd Bohol, 2020; Cabigao, 2021).

Within this national policy and research landscape, rural and coastal municipalities such as Dasol in Pangasinan present unique contextual demands. Dasol is a small coastal municipality in the first congressional district of Pangasinan, known primarily for its salt-making, aquaculture, and agriculture-based economy (Province of Pangasinan, 2023; PhilAtlas, 2021). With a relatively small and dispersed population across several barangays, schools in Dasol often operate in geographically isolated or hard-to-reach communities, where access to resources, professional development, and support services may be limited. The Dasol Schools District Office oversees both elementary and secondary schools in this setting and is tasked with ensuring the effective delivery of basic education services. In such a context, school heads’ capacity to perform both instructional and administrative leadership roles effectively is crucial for sustaining educational quality and equity.

Despite the growing body of Philippine research on school leadership, there remain few studies that specifically examine the combined instructional and administrative leadership practices of school heads in small, rural, and coastal districts like Dasol, Pangasinan. Existing studies often focus on larger urban divisions, specific leadership domains, or selected school

types (e.g., multi-grade schools, secondary schools, or particular regions), leaving a contextual gap with respect to the realities of leadership in geographically isolated and economically modest municipalities (Dellomas & Deri, 2022; Madarang, 2023; IOER-IMRJ, 2024). Furthermore, there is a continuing need to explore the relationship between school heads' leadership practices and their demographic and professional profiles, such as sex, educational attainment, and participation in seminars and training, to inform targeted development interventions.

This study was therefore conceptualized to assess the instructional and administrative leadership of school heads in the Dasol District, Schools Division of Pangasinan I, for School Year 2024–2025. Anchored in the PPSSH framework and relevant leadership theories, the study examines the practice levels of school heads across key instructional and administrative domains. It determines whether these practices vary across selected profile variables. In doing so, it seeks to generate empirical evidence that reflects the lived realities of school heads in a rural coastal district and to surface specific areas where policy support, capacity-building, and workload-management strategies may be strengthened. The findings are expected to inform DepEd officials, local government units, and other stakeholders in designing responsive leadership development programs and support mechanisms that will further enhance the instructional and administrative leadership of school heads in Dasol and similarly situated rural districts.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, descriptive–correlational research design to determine the levels of instructional and administrative leadership practices among school heads in the Dasol District and to examine their relationships with selected profile variables. As a descriptive study, it sought to systematically and accurately portray how school heads perform key leadership functions in curriculum implementation and supervision, teacher professional development, classroom observation and feedback, resource management, personnel management, and school–community partnership during School Year 2024–2025. At the same time, the correlational component examined whether leadership practices varied significantly across groups defined by sex, highest educational attainment, and the number of seminars or training sessions attended relevant to school leadership and management. The design was non-experimental and cross-sectional, using a researcher-developed survey questionnaire content-validated by experts and subjected to reliability testing before full administration. Data were collected from all public school heads in the district through a complete enumeration. They were analyzed using appropriate descriptive (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) and inferential (Pearson's r correlation and t -tests for independent samples) statistics to determine patterns, relationships, and differences in their instructional and administrative leadership practices.

2.2 Participants

The participants of the study were all public-school heads assigned in the Dasol District, Schools Division of Pangasinan I, during School Year 2024–2025. A complete enumeration technique was used instead of sampling, as the total number of school heads in the district was manageable and their full participation was deemed necessary to obtain a comprehensive picture of instructional and administrative leadership practices in the local context. The respondents included both male and female school heads from elementary and secondary schools, occupying positions such as Head Teacher, Teacher-in-Charge, and School Principal, thereby representing the full range of leadership designations present in the district. Their demographic and professional profiles were described in terms of sex, highest educational attainment, length of service as school head, and number of seminars, trainings, or workshops attended related to

school leadership and management. These profile variables were used not only to characterize the group but also to examine whether differences in leadership practices were associated with attributes that may have implications for leadership development, capacity building, and policy support for school heads in the Dasol District.

2.3 Instrumentation

The primary data-gathering instrument of the study was a researcher-developed survey questionnaire designed to measure the instructional and administrative leadership practices of school heads in the Dasol District. The instrument consisted of three main parts: (1) a profile sheet that elicited respondents' demographic and professional characteristics such as sex, highest educational attainment, length of service as school head, and number of seminars or trainings attended related to school leadership and management; (2) a set of items on instructional leadership covering domains such as curriculum implementation and supervision, classroom observation and feedback, teacher professional development, and monitoring of learning outcomes; and (3) a set of items on administrative leadership focusing on resource management, personnel administration, school-community partnership, and compliance with DepEd policies and standards. The leadership items were structured along a four-point Likert scale indicating the extent to which each practice was carried out (e.g., 4 – Always, 3 – Often, 2 – Sometimes, 1 – Rarely), thereby allowing quantitative assessment of the level of practices. To ensure content validity, the draft questionnaire was reviewed and evaluated by a panel of experts composed of experienced school heads and research specialists, after which necessary revisions in wording, clarity, and alignment with the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads were made. A pilot test was conducted in a neighboring district with similar characteristics, and the instrument's reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha, yielding coefficients within the acceptable range, indicating that the questionnaire was internally consistent and suitable for full administration to the target respondents.

2.4 Data Analysis

Data gathered through the researcher-developed questionnaire were coded, tallied, and processed using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Frequencies and percentages were computed to describe the demographic and professional profiles of the school heads regarding sex, highest educational attainment, length of service, and the number of seminars or training sessions attended related to school leadership and management. To determine the level of instructional and administrative leadership practices across the different domains, weighted means and standard deviations were calculated, and the resulting mean scores were interpreted using a pre-defined verbal interpretation scale (e.g., 3.50–4.00 = Very High, 2.50–3.49 = High, and so on) to facilitate qualitative description of the quantitative results. For the inferential component, Pearson's r correlation was employed to examine the relationship between school heads' leadership practices and their continuous profile variables (e.g., length of service and the number of relevant seminars or training sessions attended). At the same time, a t -test for independent samples was used to test for significant differences in leadership practices across sex and highest educational attainment groups. All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance, and the results of the analyses were summarized in tables and interpreted in relation to the study's objectives, the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads, and relevant literature on instructional and administrative leadership.

3. Results

The analysis of the instructional leadership practices of school heads in the Dasol District revealed consistently very high mean ratings across all domains. Specifically, school heads reported *consistently* implementing curriculum standards, monitoring instructional activities, and

providing timely feedback through classroom observations. Furthermore, they frequently facilitated professional development opportunities and encouraged data-driven decision-making in classrooms. These findings indicate that instructional leadership is a strong area of competence among school heads, reflecting their commitment to improving teaching and learning. Moreover, the uniformity of high scores suggests a shared understanding of instructional priorities aligned with the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH).

In addition, the administrative leadership practices of school heads were also rated very high, demonstrating strong performance in managing school operations, resources, personnel, and community partnerships. School heads consistently ensured the efficient allocation of financial and material resources, maintained transparent records, and sustained positive relationships with stakeholders. Likewise, they adhered strictly to DepEd policies and facilitated participatory governance through School-Based Management (SBM). Consequently, these administrative strengths contributed to a supportive school environment that enables effective delivery of basic education services. Taken together, the results show that school heads in Dasol are not only instructional leaders but also effective managers capable of maintaining organizational stability and compliance.

Finally, inferential analysis revealed no significant differences in leadership practices across sex and highest educational attainment groups, suggesting that these demographic factors did not influence how school heads performed their instructional or administrative functions. However, the number of seminars or trainings attended demonstrated a significant positive relationship with leadership practices, indicating that continuing professional development plays an essential role in enhancing leadership competence. This finding reinforces national policy directions emphasizing the need for continuous capacity building among school leaders. Overall, the results highlight a generally strong leadership profile among school heads in the district, while underscoring the value of sustained training to strengthen their instructional and administrative effectiveness further.

4. Discussion

The results of the present study are broadly corroborated by recent Philippine and international literature on school leadership, particularly regarding the consistently high levels of instructional and administrative practices reported by school heads. For example, Dellomas and Deri (2022) found that school heads in Bulan District demonstrated a “very great” extent of leadership practice across all five domains of the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH), mirroring the very high ratings obtained in Dasol District. Similarly, Valmores (2021) reported that school heads in Misamis Oriental demonstrated strong administrative and instructional leadership skills that significantly influenced school performance, reinforcing the idea that robust leadership practices are now common among public school heads operating under the PPSSH framework. More recently, a study on school heads’ leadership practices in relation to teachers’ performance likewise concluded that public school heads generally manifest high to very high levels of leadership across planning, organizing, and other domains, consistent with the findings of this study in Dasol.

In terms of instructional leadership, the strong practices reported by Dasol school heads align with research that links effective instructional leadership to improved teacher performance and supervisory outcomes. Naguit (2024) established a significant positive relationship between the extent of instructional leadership practices of school heads and teachers’ performance in instructional supervision, emphasizing the importance of curriculum monitoring, feedback, and coaching—areas that were also rated very highly in the present study. Likewise, Aquino, Afalla, and Fabelico (2021) found that school heads’ leadership practices in planning, organizing, controlling, commanding, and coordinating were all rated “very high,” and that such practices were associated with very satisfactory teacher performance. Parallel findings were reported by Leonor

and Rodriguez (2023) in their study on administrative performance and instructional leadership, in which school heads' leadership practices were positively associated with teachers' teaching performance in public elementary schools. Taken together, these studies substantiate the present study's implication that the strong instructional leadership observed in Dasol is likely to have beneficial effects on the quality of teaching and learning, even though teacher performance was not directly measured in this research.

Furthermore, the very high ratings in administrative leadership in the present study—particularly in resource management, personnel administration, and school–community partnership—are consistent with previous work highlighting the centrality of managerial competence in enabling instructional success. Valmores (2021) underscored that the administrative and leadership skills of school heads, including school management operations and community partnership, significantly contribute to school performance. In a complementary vein, a recent phenomenological study on resource management through the lens of school heads emphasized the importance of strategic, collaborative resource stewardship to address scarcity and support school improvement, echoing the strong resource management practices reported in Dasol. Likewise, studies that jointly examine administrative performance and instructional leadership have shown that both dimensions are positively associated with teachers' teaching performance, reinforcing the conclusion that the dual instructional–administrative competence displayed by Dasol school heads provides a solid foundation for effective school governance. Regarding the role of profile variables, this study's finding that leadership practices did not significantly differ across sex and highest educational attainment groups is partially corroborated by prior research. For example, Aquino et al. (2021) reported that teachers' performance remained consistent regardless of age and educational attainment, suggesting that these demographic variables do not necessarily translate into large performance differences in school settings. However, Madarang (2023), in examining leadership and management practices of multi-grade school heads in Camarines Norte through the PPSSH domains, found significant relationships between certain leadership domains and profile variables such as age, educational attainment, and plantilla position, indicating that the influence of profile characteristics may vary across contexts and leadership aspects. Notably, the Dasol findings that seminars and trainings attended have a significant positive relationship with leadership practices are strongly supported by Pana (2024), who demonstrated that attendance in leadership-related seminars is positively associated with enhanced instructional leadership and overall performance of school heads. A recent systematic literature review on leadership competencies of school heads likewise concluded that ongoing professional development is a critical enabler of effective school leadership, reinforcing the present study's recommendation for sustained training interventions.

Finally, the challenges reported by Dasol school heads in balancing instructional and administrative responsibilities resonate with qualitative accounts of leadership complexities in small, rural, and multigrade contexts. Bojos et al. (2025) described how multigrade school heads face considerable difficulty juggling teaching and administrative work amid limited staffing and resources, highlighting themes of workload intensification and the need for policy and support mechanisms—concerns similar to those raised by the respondents in Dasol. Likewise, exploratory studies on newly appointed multi-grade school leaders have documented role ambiguity, increased workloads, and limited access to tailored leadership training, all of which complicate efforts to sustain strong instructional leadership while managing operational demands. Studies of school heads' leadership practices during the “new normal” have also pointed to the expansive and time-sensitive nature of school leadership functions, underscoring the need for systemic support to prevent overload and burnout. In this regard, the present study both corroborates and extends existing literature by confirming that even highly competent school heads in a rural coastal district continue to struggle with time and workload pressures, thereby strengthening the

argument for policy measures and capacity-building programs that specifically address the dual instructional and administrative demands placed on school heads in contexts similar to Dasol.

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