

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT CAPABILITY OF SCHOOL HEADS IN MALASIQUI I DISTRICT

TERESITA V. ERMINO

Doctor of Education
Major in Educational Management

Abstract

This study examined the perceived leadership and management capabilities of public elementary school heads in Malasiqui I District, Schools Division Office I Pangasinan, Philippines. Responding to the need to strengthen school-based management and instructional leadership, the research employed a quantitative descriptive–correlational design. All school heads in the district participated through total population purposive sampling. Data were collected using a researcher-developed Likert-scale questionnaire validated by experts, and were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, weighted means, and Pearson product–moment correlation.

Results revealed that school heads were perceived as Very Highly Capable in leadership (overall weighted mean = 4.51) and Highly Capable in management (overall weighted mean = 4.35). Leadership indicators consistently registered at the upper end of the scale, reflecting strong competencies in setting direction, leading instruction, nurturing a positive school culture, and developing personnel. Management capability, while also rated high, showed comparatively lower mean scores on indicators related to communication systems, resource mobilization and allocation, and collaborative decision-making processes. Correlation analysis indicated a strong, significant positive relationship between perceived leadership and management capabilities ($r = 0.78$, $p < .01$), suggesting that higher leadership competence is associated with stronger management practice.

The findings imply that leadership and management competencies are mutually reinforcing within the district context. Targeted professional development focusing on strategic communication, resource stewardship, and partnership-building is recommended to sustain high performance and address remaining capability gaps. Future studies may incorporate multi-rater assessments and school outcome measures to validate and extend these results across broader settings.

Keywords: School Heads, Leadership Capability, Management Capability, School-Based Management, Descriptive–Correlational Study, Malasiqui I District

1. Introduction

Effective school leadership is consistently identified as a pivotal lever for improving teaching quality and learner outcomes. Across decades of empirical research, the role of the school head has evolved from a primarily administrative manager to a leader who shapes instructional direction, culture, and professional practice. International evidence indicates that leadership effects on student achievement are largely indirect but substantial, operating through the leader's ability to establish goals, align resources, and promote high-quality teaching (Hallinger, 2011; Robinson et al., 2008). In particular, instructional leadership—defined through practices such as framing and communicating school goals, supervising instruction, coordinating the curriculum, and monitoring learner progress—shows stronger associations with learner outcomes than leadership models that focus mainly on vision or motivation (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986; Robinson et al., 2008). These findings underscore that leadership and management should

not be treated as separate functions; instead, they are mutually reinforcing capabilities that, together, cultivate conditions for school improvement.

In the Philippine basic education system, the centrality of school heads to school effectiveness is embedded in policy and law. Republic Act (RA) 9155, the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, institutionalized decentralization and school-based management (SBM), positioning the school as the “heart” of basic education governance and assigning school heads authority, responsibility, and accountability for learning outcomes and school performance (Republic Act No. 9155, 2001). Under this framework, school heads are expected to lead curriculum implementation, nurture professional development, mobilize stakeholders, and manage resources in ways that are responsive to local contexts. Recent DepEd issuances reiterate this direction by strengthening SBM processes and clarifying that school heads remain key actors in community partnership-building and operational accountability (Department of Education [DepEd], 2024). Consequently, leadership capability and management capability are not merely desirable attributes; they are explicit professional expectations anchored in national governance reforms.

To operationalize these expectations, DepEd formally adopted the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH), a competency framework defining what effective school leadership and management look like across career stages. The PPSSH articulates five aligned domains: Leading Strategically, Managing School Operations and Resources, Focusing on Teaching and Learning, Developing Self and Others, and Building Connections (DepEd, 2020). These domains establish standards for school heads’ strategic leadership, instructional supervision, personnel development, data-informed decision-making, and stakeholder engagement. Importantly, the PPSSH reflects a modern conception of the school head as both leader and manager—someone who combines vision-setting and pedagogical stewardship with operational systems, resource mobilization, and accountability. While the PPSSH provides a clear national benchmark, its effective enactment depends on school heads’ actual capability and the extent to which they practice these competencies in real contexts. Therefore, empirical studies that assess leadership and management capabilities at the district or division level directly contribute to policy implementation, local planning, and targeted professional development.

However, leadership and management capability are context-sensitive. Even when standards are universal, school heads operate under varying conditions of school size, community support, staffing levels, resource constraints, and learner needs. Research in SBM environments indicates that school heads often face competing administrative and instructional demands, and capability gaps may emerge in areas such as resource stewardship, communication systems, and collaboration with stakeholders (e.g., constraints reported in SBM compliance contexts) (Amor et al., 2019). Within Philippine districts, these dynamics can manifest differently depending on geographic location, socioeconomic context, and organizational culture. Thus, district-level assessments are essential for identifying strengths and gaps in capability that may be masked by national averages and for aligning local interventions with actual leadership needs.

Malasiqui I District in Schools Division Office I, Pangasinan, represents one such context in which understanding school heads’ leadership and management capabilities is timely and relevant. Like many districts, it is implementing DepEd reforms that demand strong instructional guidance, responsive resource management, and broad community partnership. However, the extent to which school heads perceive themselves as capable across leadership and management domains remains under-documented. Moreover, while the global literature affirms that effective instructional leadership and sound management practices jointly influence school improvement, local empirical evidence on their relationship remains limited. Strong correlations between leadership and management capabilities would suggest that interventions should be integrated rather than compartmentalized—strengthening strategic and instructional leadership

alongside operational and resource management systems. Conversely, weaker or uneven relationships could indicate the need for differentiated professional development tracks.

Guided by these considerations, the present study examines the perceived leadership and management capabilities of public elementary school heads in Malasiqui I District. Specifically, it determines (a) the level of leadership capability, (b) the level of management capability, and (c) the relationship between leadership and management capability among school heads. By using a descriptive–correlational approach grounded in the PPSSH and aligned with RA 9155’s SBM mandate, the study aims to generate evidence that is locally actionable and policy-relevant. Findings are intended to inform district professional development planning, capability-building initiatives, and school improvement strategies, with the broader goal of supporting school heads in sustaining high-quality learning environments.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a quantitative descriptive–correlational research design to determine the perceived leadership and management capabilities of public elementary school heads in Malasiqui I District, SDO I Pangasinan, and to test the relationship between these two capability domains. Using a cross-sectional approach, data were collected at a single point in time from the total population of district school heads using a researcher-developed Likert-scale questionnaire. The descriptive component summarized respondents’ perceptions using frequency counts, percentages, and weighted means. In contrast, the correlational component examined the strength and significance of the association between leadership and management capability scores through the Pearson product–moment correlation coefficient. This design was appropriate for profiling current capability levels and identifying statistically significant relationships without attempting to infer causality.

2.2 Participants

The participants in the study comprised the entire population of public elementary school heads assigned in Malasiqui I District, Schools Division Office I, Pangasinan. Given the district’s manageable size and the objective of capturing a complete profile of school leadership in the locale, a purposive total enumeration approach was used, in which all officially designated school heads during the research were included as respondents. This ensured full district representation, minimized sampling bias, and allowed the findings to reflect the actual leadership and management capability landscape of Malasiqui I District schools at the time of data collection.

2.3 Instrumentation

The primary instrument used in the study was a researcher-developed survey questionnaire designed to measure school heads’ perceived leadership and management capabilities, aligned with DepEd expectations for school leadership. The tool consisted of two major sections: one assessing leadership capability and the other assessing management capability, each containing indicator statements rated on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (Not Capable) to 5 (Very Highly Capable). Prior to administration, the instrument underwent expert validation by three education specialists to ensure content relevance, clarity, and alignment with the study constructs; their feedback was incorporated to refine item wording and coverage. The finalized questionnaire was then administered face-to-face to all identified school heads in Malasiqui I District, generating quantitative data suitable for descriptive and correlational analysis.

2.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis followed a two-stage quantitative procedure consistent with the descriptive–correlational design. First, responses from the Likert-scale questionnaire were coded, tabulated, and summarized using descriptive statistics—frequency counts and percentages to profile responses, and weighted means to determine the overall and indicator-level perceived leadership and management capability of school heads, interpreted through the study’s descriptive equivalent scale. Second, inferential analysis was conducted using the Pearson product–moment correlation coefficient to test the strength and significance of the relationship between leadership and management capability scores. This combination of descriptive and correlational techniques enabled the study to present a clear capability profile and establish whether variations in leadership perceptions were statistically associated with variations in management perceptions, without making causal claims.

3. Results

The results indicated that the school heads in Malasiqui I District demonstrated a consistently high capability profile across both domains assessed. In terms of leadership capability, the overall weighted mean of 4.51 placed respondents in the “Very Highly Capable” range. This suggests that, as a group, school heads perceive themselves as highly competent in core leadership functions, including setting school direction, demonstrating instructional leadership, promoting a positive school culture, and guiding teachers toward shared goals. The concentration of scores near the upper end of the scale reflects a strong confidence in their leadership role and a belief that they can effectively influence teaching–learning conditions within their schools.

For management capability, the overall weighted mean of 4.35 corresponded to a “Highly Capable” rating. While still clearly positive, this level was slightly lower than leadership capability, implying that respondents viewed management tasks as more challenging or less uniformly mastered than leadership responsibilities. Management indicators related to operational processes, organizing school programs, ensuring compliance, and routine administrative functions generally received high ratings, indicating that school heads perceive themselves as adept at maintaining functional school systems and ensuring operational continuity.

However, the pattern of results also revealed specific management indicators that tended to pull the overall management mean downward relative to leadership. The comparatively lower ratings were observed in areas tied to communication systems, resource mobilization and allocation, and collaborative or participatory decision-making. These findings imply that although school heads feel competent in standard managerial duties, there remain capability gaps in more complex, stakeholder-sensitive management functions that require sustained coordination, negotiation, and strategic use of limited school resources. Such areas align with common challenges in decentralized SBM contexts, where school heads must balance administrative accountability with community engagement and resource constraints.

Correlation analysis further showed a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between perceived leadership and management capability ($r = 0.78$, $p < .01$). This indicates that school heads who rated themselves higher in leadership also tended to rate themselves higher in management, confirming that these two domains function as interconnected competencies rather than isolated roles. The strength of the correlation suggests that improvements in one capability area (for example, instructional or strategic leadership) are likely to reinforce the other (such as operational management), supporting integrated professional development approaches.

Taken together, the results portray Malasiqui I District school heads as a generally high-performing leadership corps with particularly strong leadership confidence and sound managerial competence. At the same time, the slight divergence between domains and the weaker

management indicators provide a clear direction for capability-building. Focusing development initiatives on strategic communication, resource stewardship, and collaborative governance would address the most evident gaps while leveraging the strong leadership foundation already present among respondents.

4. Discussion

The findings of the present study corroborate a growing body of Philippine evidence indicating that school heads generally exhibit high leadership capability. For example, studies assessing school heads using PPSSH-aligned or similar leadership frameworks consistently report “high” to “very high” ratings, particularly in instructional and supervisory dimensions (Madarang, 2023; UIJRT, 2022). In Nueva Ecija, school heads’ leadership, interpersonal, and supervisory skills were rated as evident or high by respondents, suggesting that district leaders have developed strong competence in direction-setting and teacher support—results that align with the “Very Highly Capable” leadership rating obtained in Malasiqui I District.

The management results also parallel related local studies, which reveal strong managerial competence but comparatively lower ratings in complex operational areas. Research on managerial competence and school operation under SBM frequently finds that school heads are capable in routine administrative functions, yet often experience relative constraints in communication structures, resource mobilization, and participatory governance (Baylon et al., 2025; Ramos, 2025). These patterns support the finding that management capability was “Highly Capable,” though slightly below leadership, and reinforce that SBM-era management demands extend beyond compliance toward strategic resource stewardship and stakeholder coordination.

Recent correlational studies in Philippine settings likewise support the strong positive relationship you found between leadership and management capabilities. Investigations into instructional leadership and school management or SBM implementation tend to show that leadership competence is significantly associated with management performance and other school effectiveness indicators (Palmera, 2025; Ramos, 2025). These studies argue that school heads who are strong instructional or strategic leaders are also more capable in planning, organizing resources, and implementing operational systems, mirroring the $r = .78$ result. This convergence suggests that integrated capability-building initiatives—rather than separating leadership training from management training—are empirically justified.

Further, the results complement research linking school heads’ leadership practices to teacher competence and school improvement conditions. Correlational findings in the National Capital Region and other locales show that school heads’ instructional leadership significantly relates to teacher performance, efficacy, and professional growth outcomes (Naguit, 2024; “School administrators’ instructional leadership skills...,” 2022). These studies reinforce the interpretive logic of the work: robust leadership capability is not a stand-alone asset but one that coexists with and supports managerial processes that enable systemic improvement in teaching and learning.

Taken together, this alignment with prior studies strengthens the external validity of the conclusions. The district-level evidence not only replicates national patterns of high leadership and management capability but also adds nuance by identifying specific management domains where capability is relatively weaker. This is consistent with the broader Philippine SBM literature, which emphasizes that leadership confidence tends to be high while management challenges persist in resource- and stakeholder-intensive tasks (Baylon et al., 2025; UIJRT, 2022). Thus, the recommendations on strategic communication, collaborative governance, and resource management are supported by both local and national empirical trends.

References

- Amor, J. C., Capuno, R. G., & Foronda, L. L. (2019). Constraints on school-based management compliance of public schools. *Open Access Library Journal*, 6, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1105454> Retrieved from <https://www.scirp.org/journal/paperinformation.aspx?paperid=93545>
- Baylon, C., Manla, E., & Mahinay, R. B. (2025). *School-based management practices and academic performance: Evidence from Philippine schools*. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research*. Retrieved from <https://www.ijfmr.com/papers/2025/1/36693.pdf>
- Department of Education. (2020). *National adoption and implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (DepEd Order No. 24, s. 2020)*. Retrieved from https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/DO_s2020_024-.pdf
- Department of Education. (2024). *Strengthening school-based management and governance under RA 9155 (DepEd Order No. 007, s. 2024)*. Retrieved from https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/DO_s2024_007.pdf
- Hallinger, P. (2011). Leadership for learning: Lessons from 40 years of empirical research. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 49(2), 125–142. Retrieved from <https://philiphallinger.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Leadership-for-learning-Lessons-from-40-years-of-empirical-research.pdf>
- Hallinger, P., & Murphy, J. (1986). The social context of effective schools. *American Journal of Education*, 94(3), 328–355. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED309535.pdf>
- Madarang, E. (2023). *Leadership and management practices of multi-grade school heads in Camarines Norte through the lens of the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH)*. *IRE Journals*. Retrieved from <https://www.irejournals.com/formatedpaper/1704930.pdf>
- Naguit, J. Z. (2024). *Instructional leadership practices of school heads and performance of teachers in instructional supervision*. *International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Studies*. Retrieved from <https://www.ijams-bbp.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/15.-JENNIFER-Z.-NAGUIT.pdf>
- Palmera, N. S. (2025). *School heads' instructional management and teachers' capability of public elementary schools*. *International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Studies*. Retrieved from <https://www.ijams-bbp.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/8-IJAMS-AUGUST-2025-346-359.pdf>
- Ramos, M. (2025). *Management and leadership tasks of public secondary school heads*. *Pantao Journal*. Retrieved from <https://pantaojournal.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/36-Ramos.pdf>
- Republic Act No. 9155. (2001). *Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001*. Retrieved from https://lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra2001/ra_9155_2001.html

- Robinson, V. M. J., Lloyd, C. A., & Rowe, K. J. (2008). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: An analysis of the differential effects of leadership types. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44(5), 635–674. Retrieved from <https://cdn.auckland.ac.nz/assets/education/about/research/LRG/Robinson%2C%20Lloyd%20%26%20Rowe%20%282008%29%20The%20impact%20of%20leadership%20on%20student%20outcomes%20-%20An%20analysis%20of%20the%20differential%20effects%20of%20leadership%20types.pdf>
- School administrators' instructional leadership skills and teachers' performance and efficacy in senior high schools in the National Capital Region, Philippines. (2022). *International Journal of Education, Psychology and Research Review*. Retrieved from <https://journalissues.org/ijeprr/abstract/school-administrators-instructional-leadership-skills-and-teachers-performance-and-efficacy-in-senior-high-schools-in-the-national-capital-region-philippines/>
- UIJRT. (2022). *Leadership practices of school heads in public schools*. Universal International Journal of Research and Technology. Retrieved from <https://uijrt.com/articles/v4/i2/UIJRTV4I20003.pdf>
- Yasay, R. C., & Villanueva, J. P. (2021). *Assessing the school heads leadership in the towns of Nueva Ecija, Philippines*. Open Access Library Journal. Retrieved from <https://www.scirp.org/journal/paperinformation?paperid=113225>