Correlational Study on the Performance of School Heads and their Instructional Leadership Practices

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ABSTRACT	Published Online: March 14, 2024

Purpose: School leaders are now required to not only administer the school but also to improve teacher effectiveness and student success due to continuing education system reforms. The purpose of this research is to elucidate the correlation between the performance of school heads and instructional leadership.

Methodology: The study employed a descriptive-correlational research method using a questionnaire checklist for data collection. The research sample comprises 53 school principals from the four districts in the municipality of Donsol, Sorsogon, Philippines. Validated researcher-made questionnaires were distributed to collect data for this investigation.

Findings: The results show that most school administrators conducted up to three LAC sessions, developed up to four instructional supervision plans, observed a maximum of 10 instructors, and created between one and three quality-assured learning assessment methods. The school, under their supervision, received a maximum of two stars in the WINS program. Most of the students who took the PHIL-IRI exam scored 20 points or below. The school conducted three to four earthquake drills, has a maximum of 10 classrooms, provides a student handbook, and conducted at most one orientation before the start of the school year. School principals demonstrate excellence in their instructional leadership practices across the eight strands of PPSSH-Domain 3. However, most of the calculated chi-square values for the correlations between their performance and practices were below the crucial value when assessed at a significance threshold of .05.

Conclusion: School principals showed impressive results in their performance and displayed exemplary practices in instructional leadership across the eight strands of Domain 3. However, most of their performances were not significantly correlated with their practices in instructional leadership.

KEYWORDS:
instructional leadership, instructional practices, school heads, correlational study

I. INTRODUCTION

The perception of leadership as a crucial component of any organization is growing. Due to the global trend of ongoing education system reforms, school heads' roles have changed over time in the realm of education. Before, their role focused only on being school managers, but today they are also held responsible for improving teachers' competence and student achievement. These changes have led to a dramatic growth in the importance of the role assigned to school heads as instructional leaders (Hallinger, & Huber, 2012).

Instructional leadership, as defined by Gumus et al. (2021), is a form of school leadership that places teaching and learning at the forefront of school decision-making; it is a model in which a principal works alongside teachers to provide support and guidance in establishing best practices in teaching (Brolund, 2016). Thus, one of the most important roles of school heads as instructional leaders is to guarantee a conducive environment for efficient teaching and learning.

The positive effects of instructional leadership on teachers' competence (Ahmad, & Ali, 2021; Ahmad et al., 2021), teacher's work engagement (Mora-Ruano, Schurig, & Wittmann, 2021), teacher efficacy (Liu, & Gümüs, 2021; Ma and Marion, 2019), and student outcome (Tremont, & Templeton, 2019) have been established around the world. Between 1940 and 2018, 75% of instructional leadership studies were published in a group of countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and

countries in continental Europe, while Asia, Africa, and Latin America accounted for 25% of the research on instructional leadership published during that period (Hallinger, Gümüş, & Bellibaş, 2020).

Recognizing the significance of school heads' roles as instructional leaders, the Philippine government established a framework for school head empowerment in August 2001 with Republic Act No. 9155, also known as the Governance of Basic Education Act. The goal of this framework is to enhance school-based management and leadership roles while maintaining transparency and local accountability. Further, the Department of Education (DepEd) issued an order on September 7, 2020, titled National Adoption and Implementation of the Philippine Standards for School Heads (PPSSH), which is in line with the commitment of the Department to support school heads so they can better perform their roles in schools, including the improvement of teacher quality and, eventually, learner achievement (DepEd Order No. 24, s. 2020). DepEd is also committed to fostering the professional development and progress of school heads through the PPSSH, focusing on career-long learning and self-assessment to support their pursuit of professional growth. Moreover, this will be more meaningful if the development of educational leaders as instructional leaders will form part of the strategic plans of the teacher education programs in higher education institutions (Digo, 2022).

This study asserts that high-quality student learning is contingent upon high-quality instructors supported by high-quality school administrators. Therefore, it is crucial to evaluate the instructional leadership methods of school principals and ascertain if they are linked to their effectiveness. This study focuses on the school heads in the Municipality of Donsol, Sorsogon, Philippines, and how their performance on key performance metrics relates to their instructional leadership strategies.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to describe the relationship between the performance of school heads and their instructional leadership in the Municipality of Donsol, Sorsogon, Philippines. This study specifically looked for answers to the following questions: (1) What is the performance of the school heads along the following key performance indicators: number of Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions conducted, number of crafted instructional supervisory plans, number of teachers observed Classroom Observation Tool (COT), learner achievement, number of quality-assured learning assessment tools, number of stars received in Wash in School Systems (WINS), number of earthquake drills conducted, number of classrooms utilized for instruction, number of trainings attended, number of crafted student handbooks, and number of orientations conducted? (2) What are the instructional practices of the

school head along: school-based review, contextualization and implementation of learning standards, teaching standards and pedagogies, teacher performance feedback, learner achievement and other performance indicators, learning assessment, learning environment, career awareness and opportunities, learner discipline? (3) Is there a significant relationship between the instructional leadership and practices of the school heads and their performance along the identified variables?

Conceptual Framework

The study ascertained the correlation between the performance of the school heads in the municipality of Donsol, Sorsogon, and their instructional leadership techniques along defined criteria. The areas of the study included the profiles of the elementary and secondary school principals their performance along key performance indicators, the school heads' instructional leadership practices along the 8 strands of PPSSH-Domain 3, and the relationship among these two variables. The results of this research served as the basis for providing support for school heads' professional learning and development as well as promoting quality teaching and learning in the municipality.

Through the findings and written policy brief, the instructional leadership practices of school heads may be improved. As instructional leaders, they are the actors and have a pivotal role in influencing and improving the teaching and learning process. In effect, a strong school culture will be developed with a high level of students' performance and teachers' commitment.

Wit the development of more instructional leaders, more teachers will be supported and more students will be developed as productive members of the community. More productive members can lead to improved lives and livelihoods for individuals within a community, consequently aiding in the growth of their nation and community.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study's respondent group was exclusively chosen from the municipality of Donsol, Sorsogon, Philippines. Specifically, from the four districts within the Schools Division Office of Sorsogon Province. There were 11 participants from Donsol East I, 13 from Donsol East II, 15 from Donsol West I, and 14 from Donsol West II. A total of 53 participants were classified as Head Teacher (HT), Teacher-in-Charge (TIC), and Principal, and a complete enumeration method was used.

This study utilized a validated researcher-developed questionnaire that was designed based on the issues outlined in the problem statement. The research tool for the school heads consisted of two sections. Part I assessed their performance based on key performance indicators connected with the 8 strands in Domain 3 of the PPSSH. Part II evaluated their instructional leadership in enhancing teacher

competency and student outcomes. The variables used to evaluate their instructional leadership level were derived from the 8 strands under Domain 3 of the PPSSH and the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001. An online version of the validated survey questionnaire was created using the Google Forms program for convenient access by respondents and automated response collection.

The instrument's reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. The Cronbach's alpha of 0.85 indicates that the instrument is reliable and suitable for use in the study. In Strand 3.1, items 3 and 6 were eliminated because they decreased Cronbach's alpha values, whereas the remaining items in the questionnaire were kept. Once the questionnaire was validated, respondents were given the option to complete it in either a hard copy or a soft copy, based on their preference. The survey questionnaire was sent online using the Google Forms application via email and messaging platforms. Data collection for this project commenced on September 18, 2023, and concluded on October 13, 2023, achieving a 100% retrieval rate.

The following statistical tools were used in this study: frequency count, percentage, weighted mean, and the Chi-square test. The performance of the school head along key performance indicators was determined using frequency counts and percentages. The eight strands under PPSSH Domain 3 and the practices of school heads on instructional leadership were determined using a weighted mean. This utilized a 4-point Likert scale with the following description: 3:50–4:00: Excellent; 2.50–3.49: Very Satisfactory; 1.50-2.49: Satisfactory; and 1.00–1:49: Needs Improvement. And to determine the significant relationship between the performance and practices of school heads and instructional leadership, the Chi-square test was employed.

III. RESULTS

Performance of the School Heads

The following key indicators provided information that the school heads demonstrated evidence relative to their instructional leadership. These include the number of LAC sessions conducted, the number of crafted instructional supervisory plans, the number of teachers observed (COT), learner achievement, the number of quality-assured learning assessment tools, the number of stars received in Wash in School Systems (WINS), the number of earthquake drills conducted, the number of classrooms utilized for instruction, the number of trainings attended, the number of crafted student handbooks, and the number of orientations conducted.

Table I reveals the school heads' performance along with the number of LAC sessions conducted. It can be seen from the table that there are 39 LAC sessions conducted during the school year 2021–2022. The table also shows that among the 53 schools, 41, or 77%, conduct and participate in

at least 3 LAC sessions, and 12 of the schools, or 23%, conduct 4 or more sessions. The data shows that most of the schools conducted the least number of LAC sessions during the school year, and only a few conducted the largest number of sessions.

Table I. Number of LAC Sessions Conducted

Number of LAC Sessions conducted	Frequency	Percentage
3 and below	41	77%
4 and above	12	23%
Total	**53**	**100%**

Table II presents the number of supervisory plans crafted by the school heads. It can be noted that 29 or 55% of the school heads have crafted at least 4 supervisory plans; there are also 5 to 8 plans that were crafted by 11 or 21% of the school heads; and 13 or 24% have crafted at least 9 to 12 plans. It is noteworthy that most of the school heads have the fewest crafted supervisory plans. A higher number of supervisory plans were crafted by a smaller number of school heads.

The data shows that almost half of the school heads did not meet the requirement as to the crafting of a supervisory plan considering that they are required to prepare one (1) supervisory plan each month, which means a total of ten plans for ten months, equivalent to one school year. Thus, most of the school heads have crafted the least number of supervisory plans in one school year.

Table II. Number of Crafted Instructional Supervisory Plans

Number of crafted Supervisory Plans	Frequency	Percentage
1-4	29	55%
5-8	11	21%
9-12	13	24%
Total	**53**	**100%**

Table III revealed the performance of the school heads along with the number of teachers observed. As reflected, there were 36, or 68%, of the school heads who conducted classroom observations with at least 10 teachers. Similarly, there were 10 or 19% of school heads who conducted observations of teachers ranging from 11 to 20 in number, and another set of 7 school heads conducted observations of teachers with 21 or more in number. This reveals that most of the school heads conducted their observations on the smallest group distribution of teachers, while very few of them conducted the observations on a larger group of teachers' distributions.

Table III. Number of Teachers Observed

Number of Teachers Observed	Frequency	Percentage
10 and below	36	68%
11-20	10	19%
21 above	7	13%
Total	**53**	**100%**

The information about the learners' performance in the Phil-IRI under frustration level, as one of the performance indicators of school heads , is presented in Table IV. As shown, there were 38 schools or 72% among the total school population garnered the learner's scores of 20 and below, there are 12 or 22% of the schools got the learner's scores from 21-50 and 3 or 6% of the schools gained 51 and above as their total scores. The data shows that there were more learners who got very low scores in the said test.

Table IV. Phil-IRI Results for S.Y 2021-2022

Scores	Frequency	Percentage
20 and below	38	72%
21-50	12	22%
51 and above	3	6%
Total	**53**	**100%**

Seen from Table V is the performance of the school heads along with the number of quality-assured learning assessment tools, which clearly indicates that there were learning assessment tools that were generated through the effort of the school heads. However, as gleaned from the table, there are still 16 or 30% of the school heads who have not yet made any learning assessment tools. Similarly, there are 19 or 36% of each of the school heads, which is the highest number of school heads who have crafted the most learning assessment tools.

Further, 8 or 15% of the school heads have created learning materials ranging from 4 to 6 assessment tools, and only 10 or 19% of the whole population of the school heads have produced at least 7 to 10 learning assessment tools.

Table V. Number of Quality-Assured Learning Assessment Tools

Learning Assessment Tools	Frequency	Percentage
0	16	30%
1-3	19	36%
4-6	8	15%
7-10	10	19%
Total	**53**	**100%**

Table VI discloses the performance of the school heads along with the number of stars received by their respective schools in recognition of their high performance in the conduct of WINS. It reveals that 14 or 26% of the schools did not receive any stars, which means that they may not have observed the idea and essence of what a wash-in-school system is all about. On the other hand, 18 or 34% of the schools received at least 1 star, another 18 received at least 2 stars, and 3 or 6% of the schools obtained at least 3 stars as their award. By close analysis, most of the schools received at least 3 stars for their commendable performance in observance of the system.

Table VI Number of Stars Received by the School in WINS

Number of Stars Received	Frequency	Percentage
0	14	26%
1	18	34%
2	18	34%
3	3	6%
Total	**53**	**100%**

Table VII shows the number of earthquake drills conducted by the schools managed by the school heads under study. Earthquake drills should be conducted once every quarter. Findings revealed that 4 or 8% of schools conducted at least 1 earthquake drill, 7 or 13% of the schools conducted at least 2 drills, 5 schools or 9% conducted 3 drills, and 36 or 68% conducted 4 drills. It is good to note that most of the schools conducted the earthquake drills required by DepEd. It is also found that there is one school that conducted six drills during the school year, exceeding the required number of earthquake drills to be conducted.

Table VII. Number of Earthquake Drills Conducted

Number of Earthquake Drills Conducted	Frequency	Percentage
1	4	8%
2	7	13%
3	5	9%
4	36	68%
Total	**53**	**100%**

Shown in Table VIII is the performance of the school heads according to the number of classrooms constructed and utilized for instruction. It shows that 36, or 68%, out of the 53 schools have constructed and utilized at least 10 classrooms for instruction. Moreover, 17 of them, or 32%, have obtained 11 classrooms and more. Significant findings show that these schools with 10 and below classrooms are considered small schools; hence, it can be justified to have enough classrooms for instruction.

Table VIII. Number of Classrooms

Number of Classrooms Utilized for Instruction	Frequency	Percentage
10 and below	36	68%
11 and above	17	32%
Total	**53**	**100%**

Table IX divulges the performance of the school heads with regards to the number of trainings they have attended. It reveals that 41, or 77%, of the school heads have attended at least five trainings, and there are 12 school heads who have attended at least six trainings. The results showcase that most of the school heads still need to undergo and attend training for their personal and professional development. The smallest number of them may still attend trainings for additional knowledge and upskilling.

Table IX. Number of Trainings Attended

Number of Trainings Attended	Frequency	Percentage
5 and below	41	77%
6 and above	12	23%
Total	**53**	**100%**

Table X is concerned with the performance of the school heads along with the number of student handbooks crafted by each of the schools in the district. As shown, there are still 24 or 45% of the schools with their respective school heads that do not in any way create their student handbook. This data may have been caused by an unawareness of the procedures for making the handbook. Another thing is that there may be no school personnel assigned to initiate creating the handbook.

On the other hand, at least 29 or 55% of the schools in the district have already created a student handbook. This means that these schools may have awareness of and know the purpose and benefits of the student handbook, which will guide them about the policies in both academic and administrative aspects. This may suggest that with the presence of the student handbook, the schools will operate effectively and efficiently and may be provided with valuable information relating to administrative and student affairs.

Table X. Number of Crafted Student Handbook

Number of crafted Student Handbook	Frequency	Percentage
0	24	45%
1 or more	29	55%
Total	**53**	**100%**

Table XI presents the number of orientations conducted by the school heads at the start of the school year. As presented, 35, or 66%, of the school heads initiated at least one (1) orientation in their respective schools. Moreover, 18 or 34% of the school heads conducted at least two orientations during the school year. This number represents the minority of school heads who have at least conducted two orientations for their learners and other stakeholders.

Table XI. Number of Orientation Conducted

Number of Orientation conducted	Frequency	Percentage
0-1	35	66%
2-3	18	34%
Total	**53**	**100%**

Practices of the School Heads

Table XII attests that the school heads are exceptional in fulfilling their duties as instructional leaders, as manifested by the average weighted mean obtained along the school-based review, contextualization, and implementation of learning standards (3.49), teaching standards and pedagogies (3.50), teacher performance feedback (3.56), learner achievement and other performance indicators (3.51), learning assessment (3.48), learning environment (3.65), career awareness and opportunities (3.58), and learner discipline (3.55). A general average weighted mean of 3.54 was obtained, which is described as excellent.

Table XII. Practices of the School Heads

Practices	AWM	Description
a. School-based review, contextualization, and implementation of learning standards	3.49	Very Satisfactory
b. Teaching standards and pedagogies	3.50	Excellent
c. Teacher performance feedback	3.56	Excellent
d. Learner achievement and other performance indicators	3.51	Excellent
e. Learning assessment	3.48	Very Satisfactory
f. Learning environment	3.65	Excellent
g. Career awareness and opportunities	3.58	Excellent
h. Learner discipline	3.55	Excellent
GAWM	**3.54**	**Excellent**

Relationship Between the Instructional Leadership Practices of the School Heads and their Performance Along the Identified Variables

Only the school heads' performances are shown in Table XIII, and at least one of their instructional leadership

strategies is significantly correlated with their performances. Other performances not included on the table were found to have no significant relationship with all the practices of school heads along with instructional leadership. As shown, significant relationships were established between the following: teaching standards and pedagogies and the number of LAC session conducted; learner achievement and other performance indicators and number of crafted instructional supervisory plans; school-based review, contextualization and implementation of learning standards and number of quality-assured learning assessment tools; and also school-based review, contextualization and implementation of learning standards, including learning environment, and career awareness with the number of stars received in WINS, with computed Chi-square values of 11.009 (df=2, > 5.991), 10.157 (df=2, > 5.991), 11.735 (df=4, > 9.488), 11.334 (df=3, >7.815), 8.696 (df=3, >7.815), and 8.282 (df=3, >7.815), respectively. There is a substantial correlation between the performance of the school heads in Donsol, Sorsogon, and the instructional leadership methods, as all of them were examined at the .05 level of significance. Consequently, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Tables XIII. Relationship between the Instructional Leadership Practices of the School Heads and their Performance

Instructional Leadership Practices of School Heads	Performance of School Heads			
	No. of LAC session conducted	No. of crafted instructional supervisory plans	No. of quality-assured learning assessment tools	No. of Stars received in WINS
3.1. School-based review, contextualization, and implementation of learning standards	3.592 Not Sig.	1.813 Not Sig.	11.735 Sig.	11.334 Sig.
3.2. Teaching standards and pedagogies	11.009 Sig.	4.484 Not Sig.	3.165 Not Sig.	8.806 Not Sig.
3.3. Teacher performance feedback	1.356 Not Sig.	6.083 Not Sig.	3.331 Not Sig.	10.469 Not Sig.
3.4 Learner achievement and other performance indicators	5.786 Not Sig.	10.157 Sig.	3.505 Not sig.	8.596 Not Sig.
3.5. Learning assessment	5.350 Not Sig.	8.894 Not Sig.	2.899 Not sig.	8.391 Not Sig.
3.6. Learning environment	2.069 Not Sig.	5.545 Not Sig.	5.065 Not sig.	8.696 Sig.
3.7. Career awareness and opportunities	2.391 Not Sig.	4.617 Not Sig.	1.831 Not sig.	8.282 Sig.
3.8. Learner discipline	2.144 Not Sig.	7.247 Not Sig.	7.444 Not Sig.	7.296 Not Sig.

IV. DISCUSSION

Instructional leadership is essential for educational institutions as it provides a framework for evaluating the present methods and strategies of leadership. It can also be utilized to steer prospective modifications to courses, such implementing or enhancing leadership strategies, to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in educational environments. Improving comprehension of instructional leadership tactics can help align task focus with evidence-based practices and foster enhancement. One key way to enhance effective leadership in schools is to ensure that current school leadership is closely linked with these tactics and practices.

The responsibility for carrying out tasks related to developing learning assessment tools was directly assigned to the heads of the schools. This suggests that school administrators play a crucial role in developing assessment methods that will help teachers provide their students with new information and abilities. In a similar vein, it might enable educators to monitor and assess students' development, modify their curriculum as necessary, and update students, their parents, and guardians on their progress. Moreover, school heads may acquire more important knowledge and insight from further training that they can impart to their peers and subordinates in relation to their employment (Agravante et al., 2023). To put it another way, attending trainings could increase the effectiveness of school administrators and guarantee that they have the resources and expertise necessary to promote success.

To connect with students, parents, and instructors, school administrators may have given time to make the orientation one of their top objectives. This also implies that the school heads may provide important information about their schools to students, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders during the orientation, giving them a chance to

become acquainted with the resources and supports offered by the institution as well as its policies and procedures. Additionally, it might facilitate peer connections.

Moreover, the results showed that the school heads have the necessary skills and abilities and are putting these into practice when performing their duties and responsibilities for the welfare of the teachers and the learners. They have shown to be a good provider to teachers that would improve their teaching practices and strategies. Moreover, school heads like them may contribute to achieving success and may help develop teachers' performance to improve the learning and teaching environment. On the other hand, the school heads show competence in using validated feedback obtained from learners, parents, and other stakeholders to help teachers improve their performance. Thus, if school heads provide clear and comprehensive learning outcomes, teachers may begin to provide a transparent pathway for learners' success.

Conducting regular LAC sessions may cover the significant feedbacks of the teachers about the challenges in teaching and their strategies which may be the basis of the school heads that may encourage best practices in teaching as the role of the school principal to promote meaningful performance. The performance and practices of the school heads along crafting of instructional supervisory plans may have some similarities and relatedness in terms of themes, subjects, procedures, objectives and goals. Further, learners' achievement, teachers' strategies and performances were also included in the supervisory plans and were also emphasized in the mentioned strand.

The findings also indicate that in the educational process, when learning assessment tools are created with quality and conform with educational standards, it would result to a better and meaningful significant contribution to the performance of the teachers and learners. The assessment tools that have been created may have been the foundation of the school heads to perform well in the review of the curriculum and in contextualizing and implementing the standards of learning.

School leaders may prioritize providing strategic leadership (Barola & Digo , 2022) and instructional leadership in domains two and three of the PPSSH to improve teacher skills and student outcomes. They are supposed to offer technical support for curriculum, practice, and performance-related training, creating a learner-centered environment that ensures access to high-quality, inclusive, and empowering education for all. Moreover, school heads may also enhance their leadership processes and practices to improve their leadership function as school leaders (Buban, & Digo, 2021).

And lastly, the results on the stars received in the conduct of WINS may mean that the exemplary practices of the school heads along the four strands may have been the reasons of the receiving of the awards by their respective

schools. This may imply that best leadership practices may serve as the means of the school heads for recognition. This may also indicate that with the observance of the mechanics of WINS, there may be a reward that may be expected.

V. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the school leaders demonstrated exceptional performance in instructional leadership by implementing exemplary practices in accordance with the 8 strands of Domain 3 of the PPSSH. Most school principals' performance, as evaluated by key performance metrics, did not show a meaningful correlation with their instructional leadership approaches. Various factors such as learner achievement, performance metrics, learning environment, career awareness, school-based review, contextualization, implementation of learning standards, teaching standards, and pedagogies strongly influence student performance.

VI. DISCLOSURE

We confirm that we have no financial or other interest in this work in which we are involved, which may be considered as constituting a real, potential, or apparent conflict of interest.

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