

The Influence of School Heads on Student Literacy: A Study in Educational Management Practices

ANTHONY C. LIPAOPAO

Masbate Colleges Graduate Studies and
Research SDO Masbate, DepEd Philippines
ORCID ID No.: 0009-0000-6058-8086
anthony.lipaopao@deped.gov.ph

DAISY MAY Y. MIRANDILLA

Masbate Colleges Graduate Studies and
Research SDO Masbate, DepEd Philippines
ORCID ID No.: 0009-0005-8151-9289
Daisymay.ylanan@deped.gov.ph

MARILYN D. ROSAL

Masbate Colleges Graduate Studies and
Research SDO Masbate, DepEd Philippines
ORCID ID No.: 0009-0000-4556-9835
marilyn.rosal@deped.gov.ph

NANITA M. BATAGA

Masbate Colleges Graduate Studies and
Research
ORCID ID No.: 0000-0002-1292-5575
nanitabataga@gmail.com

CHERYL M. BENEMILI

Masbate Colleges Graduate Studies and
Research SDO Masbate, DepEd Philippines
ORCID ID No.: 0009-0009-9668-8535
chebenemili@gmail.com

EMILLIANO S. BULANON, PhD

Masbate Colleges Graduate Studies and
Research SDO Masbate, DepEd Philippines
ORCID ID No.: 0009-0005-0090-8136
emeliano.bulanon@deped.gov.ph

Abstract — This descriptive-analytic study explores the influence of school heads on student literacy, focusing on educational management practices within selected schools. The research examines how school leaders shape literacy programs, guide teacher engagement, and impact student performance. Data were collected through surveys and analyzed according to respondents' profiles, including variables such as age, gender, and position. The findings reveal that school heads play a critical role in enhancing literacy outcomes through effective leadership and strategic management. The study highlights the importance of collaborative approaches and informed decision-making in promoting literacy. Challenges encountered by school heads in implementing literacy initiatives are also identified, alongside recommendations for improving leadership practices. This research provides valuable insights into the significant role of school heads in fostering student literacy, emphasizing their contribution to the overall success of educational programs.

Keywords — **Educational Management, School Leadership, Student Literacy**

I. Introduction

The quality of education is a crucial determinant of a nation's socio-economic development, and literacy is at the core of this educational foundation. In the context of the Philippines, the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) results from 2018 and 2022 have underscored significant challenges in student literacy. These assessments revealed that

Filipino students ranked among the lowest globally in reading, mathematics, and science, with only about one in five students reaching basic proficiency levels in these subjects (OECD, 2019, 2023). This alarming data highlights a critical need for effective educational management practices to enhance student literacy outcomes.

The role of school heads in influencing student literacy cannot be overstated. As leaders within educational institutions, school heads are pivotal in shaping the learning environment, implementing curriculum changes, and fostering a culture of academic excellence. Effective school leadership has been linked to improved student performance and literacy rates, suggesting that the practices and management strategies employed by school heads can directly impact educational outcomes (Leithwood et al., 2020; Robinson et al., 2008).

Research indicates that school heads who adopt collaborative leadership styles, promote continuous professional development among teachers, and actively engage with the community tend to see better student literacy outcomes (Hallinger, 2011; Day et al., 2016). Moreover, the integration of data-driven decision-making and supportive instructional practices has been shown to enhance literacy rates and overall student achievement (Marzano et al., 2005; Waters et al., 2003).

This study aims to explore the influence of school heads on student literacy in the Philippines, particularly in light of the recent PISA results. By examining the educational management practices of school heads, this research seeks to identify key strategies that can enhance literacy among students. The study will focus on how school heads address challenges such as resource allocation, teacher training, and curriculum implementation, and how these factors contribute to student literacy levels.

Given the substantial gap in literacy skills as indicated by the PISA results, this research is timely and significant. It will contribute to the body of knowledge on educational management and provide practical recommendations for school heads and policymakers aiming to improve literacy outcomes. The findings of this study will also offer insights into how school leadership can be leveraged to address the broader educational challenges faced by the Philippines, ultimately helping to bridge the literacy gap and foster a more educated and capable youth population.

Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:

1.1 Age

1.2 Sex

1.3 Position

1.4 Years in service

2. How do school heads' leadership styles influence student literacy outcomes?
3. What specific management practices by school heads contribute to improved literacy rates?
4. How do school heads support teachers in enhancing student literacy?
5. What challenges do school heads face in promoting literacy, and how are these addressed?

II. Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive-analytic method of research to explore the influence of school heads on student literacy. The descriptive analytic survey method was chosen because it allows for the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data to understand the status and relationships among variables (Creswell, 2014). This method is appropriate for this study as it seeks to gather information about the leadership practices of school heads and their influence on student literacy outcomes.

Respondents

The respondents of this study are 60 teachers from three different schools in the Uson North District. The selected schools represent a cross-section of various educational environments to provide a comprehensive understanding of the influence of school heads on student literacy.

Sampling Method

The study employs purposive sampling to ensure the respondents are particularly knowledgeable and experienced in the area of interest. This method is chosen to select individuals most likely to provide valuable insights relevant to the research objectives.

Questionnaire for Teachers

The questionnaire is designed to gather data on teachers' perceptions of school heads' leadership practices and their impact on student literacy. The questionnaire will include both closed-ended and open-ended questions.

Sections of the Questionnaire:

- **Demographic Information:** This section collects information about the respondents' age, gender, years of teaching experience, and educational background.

- **Leadership Practices:** This section includes items that measure the various leadership practices of school heads, such as setting a vision, providing professional development, and fostering a positive school climate. These items will be rated on a Likert scale (e.g., 1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree).

Research procedure

The study began with an extensive review of related literature, which provided a solid foundation for formulating the research problem and specific research questions. This literature review was essential in understanding the leadership practices of school heads and their impact on student literacy outcomes. Following the research problem specific research questions were formulated. These elements were crucial in guiding the direction and focus of the study, ensuring that the research would address relevant and impactful issues related to school leadership and student literacy.

The next step involved preparing the manuscript for the title proposal. This manuscript included a detailed outline of the research objectives, questions, and proposed methods. The title proposal was submitted for approval, ensuring that it met academic standards and aligned with the research goals. The questionnaire was designed to gather information on demographic data, leadership practices of school heads, and their influence on student literacy. The literacy assessment tool aimed to measure students' reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing skills. To ensure the validity of these instruments, they were reviewed by the Dean and the Adviser. Their feedback was instrumental in refining and finalizing the questionnaire and literacy assessment tool, ensuring that they effectively captured the necessary data for the study.

After finalizing the instruments, permission to distribute the questionnaire and administer the literacy assessment was obtained from the school heads/principals of the selected schools in the Uson North District. This permission was crucial for conducting the research within the chosen educational settings. The questionnaire was then distributed to 60 teachers from three different schools in the Uson North District. These teachers were selected based on their experience and involvement in literacy programs, ensuring that they could provide valuable insights into the study. Data collection was carried out systematically. Teachers were given a set period to complete the questionnaires. Once collected, the completed questionnaires and assessment results were securely stored for analysis.

The collected data were tabulated and analyzed using statistical measures. Simple percentages were employed to summarize demographic data and response distributions, while means were calculated for each Likert-scale item to determine average perceptions.

Statistical Measures:

1. Simple Percentage

The simple percentage is used to describe the proportion of respondents who gave a particular response. It is calculated as:

$$\text{Percentage} = \left(\frac{\text{Number of respondents who gave a particular response}}{\text{Total number of respondents}} \right) \times 100$$

2. Mean (Average)

The mean is used to find the average score of responses on a Likert scale. It is calculated as:

$$Mn = \frac{\sum fx = f_1x_1 + f_2x_2 + f_3x_3 + \dots + f_nx_n}{\sum f = f_1 + f_2 + f_3 + \dots + f_n}$$

Where:

Mn = the weighted mean

$\sum fx$ = summation of the product

$\sum f$ = total number of frequencies

III. Results and Discussion

Respondents Profile

Table 1.1
Respondents' Profile as to Age

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
20-25	3	5%	7
26-30	16	26.67%	1
31-35	12	20%	2
36-40	5	8.33%	4
41-45	10	16.67%	3
46-50	5	8.33%	4
51-55	5	8.33%	4
56-60	2	3.33%	8
61-65	2	3.33%	8
Total	60	100%	

The analysis reveals that the majority of teacher respondents are concentrated in the 26-30 years age range (26.67%, rank 1st), followed by the 31-35 years (20%, rank 2nd) and 41-45 years

(16.67%, rank 3rd) groups. These three categories together make up a significant portion of the total respondent pool, indicating a youthful to mid-aged demographic predominance in the study.

The age groups 36-40 (8.33%, rank 4th), 46-50 (8.33%, rank 4th), and 51-55 years (8.33%, rank 4th) are moderately represented. Meanwhile, the youngest (20-25 years, 5%, rank 7th) and the older (56-60 years, 3.33%, rank 8th; 61-65 years, 3.33%, rank 8th) age groups show lower participation rates.

Table 1.2
Respondents' Profile as to Sex

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Male	24	40%	2
Female	36	60%	1
Total	60	100%	

The data in Table 1.2 illustrates the gender distribution of the respondents involved in the study out of a total of 60 respondents, the majority, 36 individuals (60%), are female. In contrast, 24 respondents (40%) are male.

This distribution indicates a higher participation rate among female respondents, who are ranked first in terms of frequency. The male respondents are ranked second, with a smaller proportion of the total sample. The gender imbalance reflected in this table could have implications for the study, particularly if the perceptions and practices related to school heads' influence on student literacy are influenced by gender-specific perspectives.

Table 1.3
Respondents' Profile as to Position

Position	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Teacher I	5	8.33%	4
Teacher II	5	8.33%	4
Teacher III	25	41.67%	1
Master Teacher I	15	25%	2
Master Teacher II	10	16.67%	3
Total	60	100%	

Among the 60 respondents, a significant majority are Teacher III, accounting for 25 individuals or 41.67% of the total sample, making this the most represented position in the study. This is followed by Master Teacher I, with 15 respondents (25%), and Master Teacher II, with 10 respondents (16.67%), who rank second and third, respectively. Teacher I and Teacher II have equal representation, each with 5 respondents, comprising 8.33% of the total sample and sharing the fourth rank.

This distribution suggests that the study's findings are largely informed by more experienced educators, particularly those in the Teacher III and Master Teacher positions, who are likely to have more substantial insights into instructional practices and leadership influences on

student literacy. The presence of these higher-ranking positions may contribute valuable perspectives, given their extended experience, greater responsibilities, and involvement in decision-making processes within the school setting.

Table 1.4
Respondents' Profile as to Years in Service

Years in Service	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Teacher I	5	8.33%	4
Teacher II	5	8.33%	4
Teacher III	25	41.67%	1
Master Teacher I	15	25%	2
Master Teacher II	10	16.67%	3
Total	60	100%	

Among the 60 respondents, the majority are Teacher III, making up 41.67% of the sample. This group holds the highest rank in terms of years in service, suggesting that many of the respondents are seasoned educators with a substantial background in teaching.

Master Teacher, I follow as the second-largest group, accounting for 25% of the respondents, while Master Teacher II ranks third with 16.67%. These groups consist of more experienced educators who have likely taken on leadership roles or have been involved in various instructional strategies over their careers. Their insights are crucial in examining the influence of school heads on student literacy since they are likely more familiar with the management practices and literacy initiatives implemented in schools.

On the other hand, Teacher I and Teacher II respondents each represent 8.33% of the sample, tying for the fourth rank. These positions typically consist of educators who are earlier in their careers and may have different perspectives compared to their more experienced counterparts. The relatively lower frequency of these groups suggests that their influence on the overall findings may be less pronounced, with more weight given to those in advanced teaching positions.

Table 3.1
Leadership Style and Literacy

Indicators	Mean	Rank
1. The school head's leadership style positively influences students' literacy achievements.	3.85	4
2. The school head effectively communicates the importance of literacy to the school community.	3.67	10
3. The school head regularly reviews student literacy performance data. The school head sets clear goals for literacy improvement.	3.92	1
4. The school head promotes a culture of reading within the school.	3.82	6
5. The school head provides motivational support to students to enhance their literacy skills.	3.72	9
6. The school head provides motivational support to students to enhance their literacy skills.	3.88	2
7. The school head's leadership encourages parental involvement in literacy activities.	3.83	5
8. The school head supports innovative teaching methods to improve literacy.	3.80	7
9. The school head creates a collaborative environment among teachers to enhance literacy.	3.77	8
10. The school head's leadership style inspires students to read more.	3.80	7
Weighted Mean	3.81	

The results in Table 3.1 highlight the respondents' perceptions of how the leadership style of school heads influences literacy outcomes. The indicators were evaluated on a 4-point Likert scale, with the majority of responses falling within the "Strongly Agree" (4) and "Agree" (3) categories.

The highest-ranked indicator is Indicator 3, with a weighted mean of 3.92, reflecting the respondents' strong agreement that certain leadership styles are particularly effective in promoting literacy initiatives. Closely following are Indicators 6 (mean of 3.88) and 1 (mean of 3.85), emphasizing that specific practices, such as fostering a positive learning environment and providing clear guidance, play a critical role in enhancing student literacy.

On the other hand, Indicator 2, with a weighted mean of 3.67, ranked the lowest among the indicators. This suggests that while still viewed positively, some leadership practices may be perceived as less impactful compared to others.

Overall, the data indicates that the leadership styles employed by school heads are largely seen as contributing positively to literacy improvement. The consistently high means across the indicators show that respondents generally believe that effective leadership directly correlates with successful literacy outcomes, aligning with the overall goals of educational management practices.

Table 3.2
Support for Teachers

Indicators	Mean	Rank
1. The school head implements effective literacy programs.	3.48	8
2. The school head ensures that sufficient resources are allocated to literacy activities.	3.55	6
3. The school head regularly monitors the implementation of literacy initiatives.	3.72	3
4. The school head provides professional development opportunities focused on literacy.	3.75	2
5. The school head encourages the use of evidence-based literacy practices.	3.90	1
6. The school head ensures that the school library is well-stocked and accessible.	3.70	5
7. The school head supports the integration of literacy across different subjects.	3.72	4
8. The school head actively seeks feedback on literacy programs from teachers and students.	3.55	7
9. The school head fosters partnerships with local organizations to support literacy.	3.25	10
10. The school head uses student performance data to guide literacy instruction.	3.32	9
Weighted Mean	3.59	

The data in Table 3.2 reflects respondents' perceptions regarding the level of support provided to teachers. The weighted means, ranging from 3.25 to 3.90, indicate a predominantly positive view of the support offered by school leadership. Indicators 5, 4, and 3 received the highest weighted means of 3.90, 3.75, and 3.72, respectively, reflecting strong agreement among respondents that these areas are effectively addressed. These indicators likely correspond to critical aspects such as professional development, access to resources, and leadership support.

Conversely, Indicator 9, with a weighted mean of 3.25 and ranking last, suggests slightly lower satisfaction in this area, though it still remains within the “agree” range. Overall, the data implies that teachers generally feel well-supported, with a focus on fostering a positive teaching environment through adequate resources, guidance, and professional growth opportunities.

The strong support mechanisms in place likely contribute to more effective teaching practices and better student outcomes, underscoring the importance of continuous support for educators.

Table 3.3
Effective Management Practices

Indicators	Mean	Rank
1. The school head provides teachers with adequate resources for literacy instruction.	3.65	7
2. The school head offers regular training on effective literacy teaching strategies.	3.85	4
3. The school head encourages teachers to collaborate on literacy initiatives.	3.82	5
4. The school head provides constructive feedback to teachers on their literacy teaching.	3.80	6
5. The school head supports teachers in addressing diverse literacy needs.	3.82	5
6. The school head facilitates peer observation sessions focused on literacy instruction.	3.92	2
7. The school head recognizes and rewards teachers for successful literacy initiatives.	3.98	1
8. The school head promotes professional learning communities focused on literacy.	3.70	8
9. The school head ensures teachers have access to up-to-date literacy research.	3.43	10
10. The school head provides teachers with adequate resources for literacy instruction.	3.65	9
Weighted Mean	3.76	

The data in Table 3.3 reflects respondents’ perceptions of effective management practices within schools. The weighted means range from 3.43 to 3.98, indicating that respondents generally view the management practices implemented by school heads favorably. Indicator 7 has the highest weighted mean (3.98), followed by Indicators 6 (3.92) and 2 (3.85), suggesting that these aspects of management are perceived as most effective. These indicators likely involve crucial management areas such as clear communication, well-organized programs, and consistent leadership actions.

On the other hand, Indicator 9, with a weighted mean of 3.43, ranks last, although it remains within the “agree” range. This suggests that while most management practices are deemed effective, there are areas with slightly lower satisfaction, which could benefit from further enhancement.

Overall, the data suggests that the management practices in place are generally seen as effective and contribute to smooth school operations, teacher support, and successful program implementation. The alignment between leadership strategies and effective management practices underscores the importance of consistent and well-organized leadership in achieving positive educational outcomes.

Table 3.4
Challenges and Strategies

Indicators	Mean	Rank
1. The school head addresses teachers' concerns related to literacy instruction.	3.72	8
2. The school head effectively addresses the lack of resources for literacy programs.	3.85	1
3. The school head overcomes resistance to change in literacy teaching practices.	3.72	8
4. The school head manages time constraints to focus on literacy initiatives.	3.78	5
5. The school head addresses the diverse literacy needs of students.	3.83	3
6. The school head effectively handles staff turnover affecting literacy programs.	3.80	4
7. The school head secures funding for literacy programs despite budget constraints.	3.78	5
8. The school head engages parents in supporting literacy at home.	3.82	4
9. The school head addresses challenges related to students' varying reading levels.	3.70	10
10. The school head navigates administrative burdens to prioritize literacy.	3.70	10
Weighted Mean	3.77	

Table 3.4 shows the respondents' perceptions of the challenges and strategies related to managing school operations and literacy initiatives. The weighted means range from 3.70 to 3.85, indicating that respondents generally agree that the strategies in place effectively address the challenges encountered by school heads.

Indicator 2, with a weighted mean of 3.85, ranks first, highlighting that the strategy related to this aspect is considered highly effective. Indicators 5 (3.83) and 6 (3.80) are also highly rated, reflecting confidence in the strategies being applied in these areas. These high rankings suggest that school heads have implemented effective methods for overcoming common challenges, ensuring smooth operations and successful literacy programs.

Indicators 9 and 10, both with a weighted mean of 3.70, rank last, indicating a slight need for improvement in these areas. Although the scores still fall within the "agree" range, they are relatively lower compared to the other indicators.

Overall, the data suggests that the respondents view the challenges faced by school heads as being effectively managed through well-planned strategies. This alignment between challenges and solutions is critical to ensuring that the school's educational objectives are met despite any obstacles.

IV. Conclusion

The demographic analysis of the respondents highlights a predominantly mid-aged and experienced teaching force, with the majority falling within the 26-35 age range and occupying higher-ranked positions such as Teacher III and Master Teacher I. The findings indicate a gender imbalance, with more female participants (60%) than males (40%). The distribution of positions and years in service suggests that the study is informed by educators with substantial teaching experience and deeper involvement in school leadership and instructional practices. These characteristics may enhance the reliability of insights into how school heads influence student literacy, as experienced teachers are likely to have more comprehensive perspectives on the effectiveness of educational management strategies.

The study demonstrates that school heads significantly influence student literacy through effective leadership styles, support for teachers, and well-structured management practices. The majority of respondents agree that school heads play a critical role in fostering a learning environment conducive to literacy development. The data indicates strong alignment between the strategies employed by school heads and the literacy outcomes observed, highlighting the effectiveness of their leadership in addressing challenges and implementing initiatives that enhance student literacy.

Specifically, the results show that respondents view the leadership styles of school heads as highly effective in promoting literacy. Teachers perceive that they receive adequate support, which is essential for implementing instructional practices that benefit students. Additionally, the study highlights that experienced educators, particularly those in higher-ranking positions, contribute valuable insights into the influence of school management on literacy.

V. Recommendations

1. **Enhance Leadership Training for School Heads:** Given the positive correlation between effective leadership and literacy outcomes, it is recommended that leadership training programs be strengthened. Training should focus on fostering both instructional and emotional intelligence, enabling school heads to provide more targeted support for literacy initiatives.
2. **Encourage Collaboration Among Teachers and School Heads:** Establishing a more collaborative environment where teachers and school heads can regularly exchange ideas and feedback is essential. This collaboration will ensure that literacy programs are continuously improved based on the shared experiences and insights of all educators.
3. **Implement Targeted Professional Development Programs:** Tailor professional development initiatives to address specific challenges related to literacy instruction. These programs should be designed to equip teachers with strategies and resources that align with

the school's literacy goals, promoting consistent practices across different levels of teaching experience.

4. **Monitor and Evaluate Management Practices Regularly:** Continuous evaluation of management practices is crucial for identifying areas for improvement. School heads should implement regular assessments to ensure that the strategies in place are effectively addressing challenges and contributing to positive literacy outcomes.

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