School Heads' Managerial Competence, Decision-Making Skills and Learning Environment

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ABSTRACT: *This study determined the school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment among elementary schools in the Schools Division of Antique, Philippines for school year 2023-2024. This study was conducted in March to April 2024. The respondents were 365 randomly selected teachers of public elementary schools in the Schools Division of Antique. Stratified proportionate random sampling was used by the researcher to determine the number of samples to participate in each schools district. The descriptive-correlational research design was used in this study. The dependent variables were school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment while civil status, highest educational attainment, school size, type of school and length of service were the independent variables. The research instrument used in this study was a questionnaire on school heads' managerial competence adopted from Amuche and Saleh (2021), decision-making skills adopted from the study of Villafranca (2022) and learning environment adopted from the study of Sithole (2017) and validated by a jury of experts composed of five members. Frequency, percentage, and mean were used as descriptive statistical tools while t- test, ANOVA, and Pearson's r as inferential statistical tools set at .05 level of significance. Statistical computations in this study were processed through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Findings indicated that level of school heads' managerial competence and decision-making skills was "very high" while learning environment was "very good" as assessed by the respondents when taken as a whole and when classified according to civil status, highest educational attainment, school size, type of school, and length of service. Moreover, no significant differences existed in the level of school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment as assessed by the respondents when classified according to civil status, highest educational attainment, school size and length of service while significant differences existed when classified according to type of school. Finally, significant relationships were found among school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment.*

Keywords: *School Heads' Managerial Competence, Decision-Making Skills, Learning Environment*

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In school organizations, school heads are leaders who are responsible for the survival of the organization, for managing operation and administration of schools, mentoring education personnel, and efficiently utilizing and maintaining facilities and infrastructure (Ahmad, 2022).

The school head is the most important factor in improving the quality of education. Because the school head is a leader who influences subordinates to work to achieve goals and who sets precedents, they must have the managerial competence which is consistent, effective, and visible when giving orders, offering tasks, communicating, encouraging subordinates (Ahmad, 2022).

Furthermore, school heads play an essential role in realizing school goals. They have the main task of realizing the vision and goals optimally. In carrying out these tasks, it takes the ability to make quick and appropriate decisions. The effectiveness of decision-making greatly determines the success of the school heads' tasks. Effective decisions can be seen from the quality of decisions and acceptance of these decisions (Putra, 2021).

Today, there are many problems regarding the managerial competence and effectiveness of decisions taken by school heads. This lack of effectiveness can be caused by a lack of time in making decisions or taking too long to make decisions. In addition, it is less effective in terms of inaccurate decisions taken to solve a problem. Making a wrong decision will certainly have a negative impact on the learning environment and the achievement of the school's vision and goals.

However, in the Schools Division of Antique, some school heads fail to meet the expectation of their stakeholders as shown by the results of their performance assessment. These school heads made lapses in their decision-making that resulted to demoralization of their teachers, learners and other stakeholders. This affects the overall quality of school governance in public elementary schools.

Considering the seriousness of the above situation, the researcher was prompted to assess the school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment in the Schools Division of Antique and to find out if relationship exists between these three variables.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to determine the school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment among elementary schools in the Schools Division of Antique, Philippines for school year 2023-2024.

Specifically, this study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the level of school heads' managerial competence as assessed by the respondents when taken as a whole and when classified according to civil status, highest educational attainment, school size, type of school, and length of service?

2. What is the level of school heads' decision-making skills as assessed by the respondents when taken as a whole and when classified according to civil status, highest educational attainment, school size, type of school, and length of service?

3. What is the learning environment as assessed by the respondents when taken as a whole and when classified according to civil status, highest educational attainment, school size, type of school, and length of service?

4. Are there significant differences in the level of school heads' managerial competence as assessed by the respondents when classified according to civil status, highest educational attainment, school size, type of school, and length of service?

5. Are there significant differences in the level of school heads' decision-making skills as assessed by the respondents when classified according to civil status, highest educational attainment, school size, type of school, and length of service?

6. Are there significant differences in the learning environment as assessed by the respondents when classified according to civil status, highest educational attainment, school size, type of school, and length of service?

7. Are there significant relationships among school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment?

Hypotheses

Based on the aforementioned problems, the following hypotheses were tested:

1. There are no significant differences in the level of school heads' managerial competence as assessed by the respondents when classified according to civil status, highest educational attainment, school size, type of school, and length of service.

2. There are no significant differences in the level of school heads' decision-making skills as assessed by the respondents when classified according to civil status, highest educational attainment, school size, type of school, and length of service.

3. There are no significant differences in the learning environment as assessed by the respondents when classified according to civil status, highest educational attainment, school size, type of school, and length of service.

4. There are no significant relationships among school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on Heider's (2003) Attribution Theory. Attribution theory assumes that people try to determine why people do what they do. A person seeking to understand why another person did something may attribute one or more causes to that behavior. Heider (2003) further stressed that a person can make two attributions, internal attribution - the inference that a person is behaving in a certain way because of something about the person, such as attitude, character or personality; external attribution - the inference that a person is behaving a certain way because of something about the situation he or she is in.

In the context of Heider's theory, the researcher in this study believed that school heads' managerial competence may be attributed to factors internal and external to the person.

As regards decision-making skills, this study was linked to Simon's Theory of Bounded Rationality (1957) that posits that individuals make decisions based on the information they have at hand, their cognitive limitations, and the finite amount of time they have to make a decision. Simon's work laid the groundwork for the study of heuristics, as he suggested that individuals use these mental shortcuts to make decisions within their cognitive and temporal constraints. One of the key insights from Simon's work is that heuristics can often lead to good decisions, even when they are not optimal. This is because heuristics are designed to work well in the types of environments that humans typically encounter.

Furthermore, it was also based on Path-goal theory by House (1971) that stipulated that both leaders (principals) and subordinates (teachers) should involve themselves indecision making if the organization is to

achieve its goals. He added that when goals are set together, the subordinates (teachers) become committed; self-confident and knowledgeable about the set goals thus making them perform well.

With regard to learning environment, this study was anchored on Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) who proposed that new behavior can be learned through the process of observation and imitation. Therefore, it can be said that learning takes place as a result of interactions among personal characteristics, behavior and environmental factors. Besides social environment, physical environment also influences teach (Johnson & Johnson, 2019).

Conceptual Framework

This study focused on determining the school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment among elementary schools in the Schools Division of Antique, Philippines for school year 2023-2024.The respondents were classified according to their civil status, highest educational attainment, school size, type of school, and length of service.

In terms of civil status, the respondents were classified as to single and married. The researcher believed that single and married respondents differ in their assessment of the school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment.

In terms of highest educational attainment, the respondents were classified as bachelor's degree, master's degree and doctorate degree holders. The researcher believed that doctorate degree holders differ in their assessment of the school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment with that of bachelors and master's degree holders.

In terms of school size, the respondents were classified as to small, medium and large. The researcher believed that respondents who came from large schools differ in their assessment of the school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment with that of respondents who came from small and medium schools.

In terms of type of school, the respondents were classified as to central and non-central. The researcher believed that respondents who came from central schools differ in their assessment of the school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment with that of respondents who came from non-central schools.

In terms of length of service, the respondents were classified as short (10 years and below) and long (11 years and above). The researcher believed that respondents with long years of service differ in their assessment of the school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment with that of respondents with short length of service.

In addition, the researcher assumed that school heads' managerial competence and decision-making skills are significantly related to learning environment. This means that school heads that are highly competent and good decision-makers ensure a conducive learning environment.

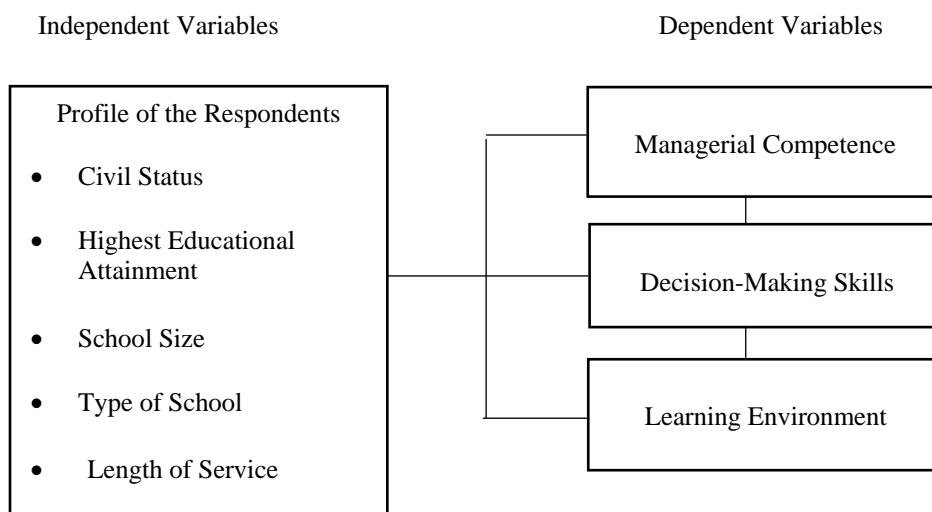The relationship among variables is shown in Figure 1.

Research Paradigm

Independent Variables   Dependent Variables

Figure 1: A Schematic Diagram of the Study showing the relationship between the independent and dependent variables

Significance of the Study

The results of this study were beneficial to the following:

Department of Education (DepEd) Officials. The findings of this study provided DepEd officials with information as regards school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment which served as bases in formulating policies and strategies for further enhancement of their school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment of schools for the benefit of both teachers and learners.

School Heads. The school heads who play significant roles in the management of schools and in the delivery of educational services in the Schools Division of Antique benefited from this study because they were guided on what professional development interventions and activities they implemented in the future especially in improving and enhancing their competence and decision-making skills which were needed in the effective and efficient management of schools and their resources and for ensuring better learning environment among their learners.

Teachers. Teachers who served as frontline workers in the educational system are among the primary stakeholders of the schools. They, too, have interests in the operations of the schools such as provision of a conducive working environment and pleasant working conditions. This study also benefited them because improved managerial competence and decision-making skills of school heads led to better teaching and learning environment for teachers, thus, ensuring better and improved teaching performance.

Learners. Being the end-users, learners benefited a lot from this study. They were able to receive quality education from schools being managed by highly competent school heads and they had access to high caliber education being guaranteed by efficient and effective delivery of educational services.

Researcher. This study was highly beneficial to the researcher herself. Conducting this research allowed the researcher to gain in-depth knowledge and expertise in the field of educational leadership and management. Exploring the managerial competence of school heads and assessing their decision-making skills equipped the researcher, being one of the school heads, with valuable insights into the challenges and best practices in leading educational institutions.

Future Researchers. This study was also beneficial to other researchers and scholars in the field of education and educational leadership. This contributed to the existing body of knowledge on managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment. Future researchers used the findings as basis for their own literature reviews and to understand the current school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment.

Definition of Terms

For common understanding of the different terms used in this study, the following terms were defined conceptually and operationally:

Decision-making Skills. This term referred to all the skills a person need to make an informed, rational decision (Oxford Dictionary, 2020).

In this study, "decision-making skills" referred to the level of school heads' ability to render decisions relative to the management of schools in the Schools Division of Antique categorized as very high, high, moderate, low and very low.

Learning Environment. This term referred to the sum total of the surroundings in which individuals interact to enrich experiences and thus leading to learning (Barra, 2020).

In this study, "learning environment" referred to all those physical sensory elements which characterize the place in which a learner is expected to learn in the Schools Division of Antique categorized as very good, good, slightly good, poor and very poor.

Managerial Competence. This term referred to the combined managerial knowledge, skills, abilities and personal attributes of the individual that contribute to enhanced employee performance and ultimately result in organizational success (University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2020).

In this study, "managerial competence" referred to the level of managerial knowledge, skills and abilities of the school heads in the Schools Division of Antique categorized as very high, high, moderate, low and very low.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study aimed to determine the school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment among elementary schools in the Schools Division of Antique, Philippines for school year 2023-2024.

This study was conducted in March to April 2024. The respondents were 365 randomly selected teachers of public elementary schools in the Schools Division of Antique, Philippines for School Year 2023-2024. The Slovin's formula was employed to determine the sample size. Stratified proportionate random sampling was used by the researcher to determine the number of samples to participate in each schools district.

The descriptive-correlational research design was likewise used by the researcher in this study. The dependent variables were school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment while civil status, highest educational attainment, school size, type of school and length of service were the independent variables.

The research instrument used in this study was a questionnaire on school heads' managerial competence adopted from Amuche and Saleh (2021), decision-making skills adopted from the study of Villafranca (2022) and learning environment adopted from the study of Sithole (2017) and validated by a jury of experts composed of five members.

Frequency, percentage, and mean were used as descriptive statistical tools while t- test, ANOVA, and Pearson's r as inferential statistical tools. Level of significance was set at .05 at two-tailed test.

Statistical computations in this study were processed through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

This part presents a review of conceptual literature and related studies that are relevant to the present study on school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment.

Conceptual Literature
On School Heads' Managerial Competence

The term managerial competence can be traced to White in 1957 who described managerial competence as personal attribute of cognitive intelligence which was manifested by motivation and superior work performance. It had limitation in that intelligence was viewed as a measure of academic ability and potential and was not closely associated organizational performance leading to McClelland in 1973 to redefine managerial competence in relation to individual behavior which could easily be predicted. Boyatzis (2022) extended the work of McClelland by describing competence as what distinguish superior and inferior performance of managers and described competence by the traits of personality, cognitive and social skills which has been supported by many researchers. In the contemporarily world, Le diest et al. (2020) describes managerial competence as knowledge, skills and behavioral attributes required to perform a task effectively for organization to achieve it strategic goal.

According to Henry Mintzberg (2019), managers need to develop right skills and knowledge in order to play the various interpersonal, information and decisional roles. Liridon and Mimoza (2019), identified three perspectives   of managerial competences; professional competence. Social competences and personal competences while cognitive, functional and social competences perspective are identified by Janjua et al. (2021) and Kyongo et al. (2021).

Mintzberg (2019), further refined the managerial roles into four perspective of managerial competence, that includes personal competence that entails managing self (reflecting and strategic thinking) and others (time information, stress and career), interpersonal competences that involves leadership aspects of mentoring, team building, conflict resolution, building an organization culture, delegating, resource allocation, networking and collaborations, informational competencies of information gathering, disseminating analysis and processing and lastly the factional competence of negotiating, politicking and managing change. Liridon and Mimoza (2019), three perspectives of managerial competences can be explained in a number of dimension; professional competence include dimension of modern knowledge, risk management, problem solving, strategic thinking. Social competences that include that of communication, change management and delegation while personal competence that entails stress management, self-confidence and decision making. Namusonge (2021) listed eight competencies as strategic thinking, administrative, leadership, interpersonal, communication, motivation, self-management and organizational knowledge. Motahareh and Sung (2020) noted the administrative, knowledge and technology, communication skills, creativity and innovativeness, networking building, business model development and financial competencies as the various dimensions of competences for entrepreneurs. Hawi et al. (2021) provided a model based on team leadership, problem solving, strategic skills and client focus competences.

In the modern world some dimensions or attributes of the construct of managerial competences have gained traction. On spot consulting (2019) in partnership with American management association identified five out of a cluster of 46 managerial competencies that had the biggest impact on performance of business organizations that can help firms to increase productivity, adapt to changing competition with declining resources while maintaining high organizational performance. These were ability build trust and increase accountability, ability to timely develop and execute an organizational vision, being agile to changes through organizational learning as change managers, building teams and developing well-reasoned decisions through strategic thinking though understanding complex situations, analyzing data and information and challenging the status quo.

Giles (2021) in Harvard business review identified top five most important managerial competences from a list of 74 competences drawn from 30 global organizations from business leaders. These competencies entailed ability to maintain high integrity in business dealing, participation in decision making and a conducing working

environment, having a shared vision through empathy and communication, ability to appreciate new ideas combined with being flexible and adaptive to change through organization learning and lastly ability to learn through experience. A study by center for creative leadership (2021) identified developing a common vision through clearly expressed ideas, allocation of resources to achieve set objective, motivation and building team, building collaborations and network and having a long term strategic intent as the important competences for managerial. According to a report by strategic human resource management (2021), building teams and talents, collaboration and network building and agility to change shall remain the managerial competences relevant to future business trends in face of competition and globalization.

In the school setting, the managerial competence of school leaders nowadays is in crisis due to constant changes in managerial jobs. During this time of the pandemic, school heads are more challenged with the new normal delivery of instruction, making it more difficult to run a school smoothly (Egwu, 2020). Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed how school heads' jobs are carried out. In a time when the pace of change has accelerated exponentially, school heads are now expected to be exceptional managers and excellent leaders (Pollock, 2020). To achieve institutional goals, managerial competence and leadership character are essential for sustainability. Hence, qualified school principals should possess and show capable managerial skills (Heller, 2019 & Ganaden, 2020).

Management in an organization is vital, so managers' competence in their managerial tasks should be important. A manager's job is complex and challenging. They must possess competence concerning finances, administration, information technology, and strategies. A manager should understand followers' feedback and reactions since this is their way to have ideas on how to motivate them toward one goal. Also, the manager must know their behavior and emotions for successful organizational interaction. The impact of their managerial work affects the whole organization. Competence involves knowledge, skills, attitudes, experiences, and interactions that make a good performance. To possess competence, one must put it into concrete actions and practice since it is a learning process. Managerial competence can be developed through training because managers must continue to learn, relearn, and unlearn (Rintala, 2019; Karisa, 2021).

In addition, competence is using knowledge, attitude, skills, and judgment for a successful performance. For school heads, it is the state of being functionally adequate to the position's duty. It is acting based on standards of ability acquired through experiences and training. To sum up, a competent school head manages effectively if they possess specific competences needed for the effective administration of schools. The product of improved additional training and workshops for school heads are competitive managers equipped with specialized skills and systematic principles needed to acquire administrative skills (Ikegbusi, 2019).

Below are some of the competences that school heads must possess:

Leadership Skills. Everybody has the potential to be a leader since leadership skills can be developed. And from those skills leading, anyone or even an organization can benefit from it (Panait, 2019). Management education faces
diverse challenges due to the evolving and competitive environment. Applying the necessary leadership skills is one key to being an effective leader. Leadership skills are abilities that can be developed through training and workshops. In entrusting administrative duties in schools, it is necessary to provide training beforehand. Some arguments proclaim the need to emphasize developing leadership skills since managers can learn and develop these abilities. The skills of managers are technical, interpersonal, and conceptual. In addition, leadership skills are only sometimes inborn. It is manifested in performance and action, not merely in potential. Leadership skills are all about skilfulness projected by the performance of action under various situations (Kalargyrou et al., 2019).

Instructional Leadership. This leadership function is related to teaching and learning. School heads are curriculum leaders and are considered the primary source of educational experience. They are tasked to monitor curriculum and students' progress and supervise teachers and their instruction. They need to ensure that teachers teach and that curriculum implementation is successful. This is forming an influential learning community and developing education systems outside the school. It is a core function of the school leader. It creates a clear direction by sustaining a school environment where effective schooling occurs. School heads must carefully hire and assign

teachers to specific classrooms, ensuring that students are learning towards excellence (Naidoo et al., 2021; Thompson, 2021).

Resource Management and Allocation. Distribution and alignment of financial resources are directed toward the student's learning needs. Its equal allocation involves not only the school leader but also the staff and stakeholders of the school. The wise and skillful use of resources to maximize students' learning is termed the financial plan. The school and the school heads are held accountable for how they spend their money and its impact on students' achievement. Any money spent must have a bearing on student's attainment of standard and quality education. In addition, it is a need for the school to have a planning team in which they make the expert preparation and alignment on the materials, money, people, and time needed for the implementation (Haynes, 2019).

Human Resource Management. Human resources are the most critical resources of an organization that must be given the highest attention. The management area has been fast changing in recent years due to globalization. A conclusive factor in the organization's successful development is its proper human resource management. A human resource manager faces many stressful challenges due to the changing technology, the need for more talent, social media, and many others (Haynes, 2019).

Program Monitoring and Reporting. The use of data is helpful to the school head. In the effective operations of the school, school heads need to carefully treat data for improved student performance. Carefully collecting and analysing information benefits leaders in deciding on interventions and instructional practices. Measurements of this data student's voice, the achievements of the school, and the process on which this data results (Haynes, 2019).

Professional Development Practices. School heads are primarily responsible for students' learning improvement. Therefore, they must promote excellence in teaching by committing to sustaining professional development for themselves and the teachers. Effective school heads help their teachers realize goals and ensure a staff development program aligns with the school's vision. School heads need an action plan supporting their staff in   professional development so that teachers realize their big role in completing the large picture of   the   school's   improvement.   These   professional   development   plans   must   be extended- termed, and carefully analyzed to focus on students' achievement. It would be a reflective practice that enables teachers to discuss and solve issues with peer coaching. It is also noted that this staff development aligns with the actual happenings in the workplace. With this, school heads must view their staff as an agent of change. They must foster a sense of teacher leadership and inject the notion of teacher learning, not only student learning. School leaders must model that professional development is a valuable experience (Haynes, 2019).

Community Collaboration. School heads are not only instructional leaders but also community leaders in the sense that they need to bring the external and internal stakeholders in the school to provide desired outcomes for students to be ready and of use to society. When stakeholders work together for the common good and better service in addressing the needs of the community and the children's performance, there is a greater possibility of improvement since all are accountable and responsible for the student's outcomes. When the community leader achieves this social responsibility, this could be the social capital to improve student's learning experiences. The school leader must use a developmental collaborative approach to fully achieve their complex purpose in the community. A strong connection with parents could build trusting school-community relations. The student's progress will attain high levels of development if parents are advised to come to school to discuss issues related to their student. Moreover, a related study suggests that the higher academic performance of the student is primarily related to the active involvement of parents (Gassaway, 2019 & Haynes, 2019).

Rintala (2019) makes a convincing case when he argues that school heads will be updated with the recent trends in school management through attending training and seminars. These will help them learn new skills and prowess in managing schools. Ikegbusi (2019) is also correct when he states that competent school heads are technically skillful in guiding teachers in producing good instruction and creating bonds and healthy relationships with the school community for the best learner achievement.

The readings above discuss comprehensively that leadership character encompasses integrity, empathy, lack of blame, humility, emotional mastery, accountability, self-confidence, courage, and focus on the whole. These ingredients of moral leaders help produce quality results for learners and success in schools. On the other hand, managerial competence includes leadership skills, instructional leadership, resource management and allocation, human resource management, program monitoring and reporting, professional development, and community collaboration (Raisiene 2019).

Managerial competence is centered on the administrative functions and tasks that will meet the managerial goals effectively. Effective school heads show characteristics of self-awareness and emotional intelligence. A managerial component in leadership was discovered. A decent school head is also an ideal manager. A school head has this power relation using the desired character. Managing requires skills and competence to carry out functionality and coordination. Therefore, these two roles of a school head need not be separated from each other because they are related and interconnected from each other. When one of these two is lacking, there could be failures in an organization. It needs to be equal and partly not exceeding from each other (Hofmeyer et al., 2019).

On School Heads' Decision-Making Skills

Decision-making has been defined differently by various authors focusing primarily on the process involved in choosing the best option among alternatives. Duze (2021) described decision making as the process by which educational managers (school heads) choose the best action or most preferred course of action among alternative courses of action with the purpose of solving problem and achieving set goals effectively and efficiently. Therefore, the school head who manages school should have deep and expert knowledge of decision-making in coordinating individuals or group members in specifying the nature of particular problem and selecting among available alternatives in order to solve the problem and produce a desired result.

Decision-making begins with identifying a problem, mapping out activities and implementation strategies in needed time. The process involves participatory planning, participatory implementation, evaluation and feedback. Decision-making process also involves policies (the definition of objectives), resources (people, money, materials and authority), and means of execution (strategies). In the school setting, the content value of decision-making process is concerned with the ability or skills of the school head to be able to identify policy decision that seeks purposeful action; and executing decision that ensures the best coordination of actions (Duze, 2021).

The success of any organization such as the educational institution depends largely on the ability of the educational manager to make effective decisions. This is why Oviwigbo (2021) stated that principals need to give considerable attention to key elements of managerial process: planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting in making decisions (POSDCORB). Decisions are made daily in school about the individuals' roles, conduct of work, distribution of resources, and short term goals. Decision- making usually involves what is to be done, how is to be done, who to do it, and when and where is to be done. In a school organization, principal has to make decisions that enable the organization to achieve its goals and meet the critical needs of members of the organization (Oviwigbo, 2021).

Donnelly, Gibson and Mancervich (2020) described decision as a means rather than ends in itself. It is the process by which the school head addresses issues dealing with curriculum instruction, supervision, evaluation, and personnel and students' administration, public relations, negotiation and compromise with both members within and outside the school in order to achieve the set goals (Musaazi, 2022).

The school head is the driving force in decision making process. This requires active involvement of teachers in corporate goal setting in staff meetings, committees and delegation of authority to carry out certain activities and responsibilities. These platforms enable teachers to collaborate, discuss and share ideas because the school is an organization made up of people whose knowledge, skills and experience complement each other. This approach will no doubt improve the quality of decisions, boost performance and accelerate achievement of the set goals in secondary schools (Donnelly, Gibson & Mancervich, 2020).

Furthermore, decision is crucial to the realization of organization objectives. Decisions can be better facilitated when all members of an organization, irrespective of age, qualification, and experience participate in

decision-making process. This is an indication that problems are better solved when two or more individuals brainstorm on them. According to Bernard (2022) principals should know that teachers are reliable instruments in implementing administrative policies through their involvement and participation in decision making process. Teachers feel highly motivated when they are consulted about decisions that concern their work.

The school being a dynamic social system is made up of different elements including people who have varied knowledge, skills and experience that are required for effective administration and implementation of the curriculum. It is expected that the school heads operate "open door policy" and welcome ideas from all teachers during a brainstorming session at the staff meetings in order to generate, evaluate and choose the best among alternative ways of providing solution to the identified problem (Bernard, 2022).

According to Mullins (2021), staff participation in decision-making leads to higher performance. Wilkinso (2019) corroborated this fact and saw involvement of employees in decision-making as empowerment of workers with knowledge, skills and experience while the neglect of employees in decision- making was seen as an assumption that workers are untapped resources. Therefore, school heads need to provide opportunities and structures for teachers' involvement in decision-making process to enhance effective job performance.

Wilkinso (2019) further assumed that participating in decision-making is likely to lead to job satisfaction, better quality decisions and increased efficiency. In contrast, where teachers lack motivation and involvement in decision- making, there are usually cases of truancy, excessive excuses, absenteeism and complaints. These inadequacies usually culminate in general ineffectiveness, inefficiency, low productivity and non-achievement of organizational goals.

On Learning Environment

According to Study.com (2021) learning environment encompasses learning resources and technology, means of teaching, modes of learning, and connections to societal and global contexts. The term also includes human behavioral and cultural dimensions, including the vital role of emotion in learning. The learning environment is a composite of human practices and material systems, much as an ecology is the combination of living things and physical environment (Balog, 2021). Contemporary learners deserve learning spaces that meet their individual and collective needs. To meet this challenge, educational leaders must provide physical and cultural environments that are empowering and engaging (Orlu, 2020).

Learning environments vary from classroom to classroom and context to context each with unique elements. According to study.com (2021) learning environments can be learner-centered; knowledge - centered; assessment - centered; and community - centered. Learner-centered environments are designed for the active construction of knowledge by and for learners (Federation University, 2021). Knowledge-centered learning environments are those which support students' deep investigations of big ideas through generative learning activities. Assessment-centered learning environments provide frequent, ongoing, and varying opportunities for assessment, including opportunities for revision and self and peer assessment (Alvaro, 2020). Community-centered environments value collaboration, negotiation of meaning, respect for multiple perspectives around which knowledge is constructed, and connections to the local community and culture (Raccoon gang (2021).

Learning environment is composed of some components that influence the student's learning curve. These components according to Balog (2021) include; people; teaching materials, technical tools, and learning resources; curriculum, training, and instruction, and physical environment/learning space. The people are the individuals that affect the student directly or indirectly through connection or relationship which can contribute to students' growth and success in their career aspect. The teaching materials, technical tools, and learning resources are the teaching materials, highly advanced tools or others instructional resources that are aligned with the curriculum as a part of student learning support. The curriculum, training, and instruction are the core foundations of the learning process; they influence one another and play vital roles to facilitate the flow of knowledge and delivery of instructional content/curriculum. The physical environment/learning space refers to the physical setting of the learner's environment which should evoke positive responses and hold the interests of those who inhabit it (Balog, 2021).

The teacher as an individual personality is an important factor in the learning environment. They are key factors that create a favorable teaching-learning milieu that will make the instructional process easy, enthusiastically adaptable and useful (Usman, 2022). The way in which his personality interacts with the personalities of the pupils helps to determine the kind of behavior which emerges from the learning situation (Brown, 2020). Environmental factors like classrooms, textbooks, equipment, school supplies, and other instructional materials etc. are the physical conditions needed for learning (Mondal, 2022).

Waldman (2022) observed that before students can succeed academically, they must feel safe, both physically and mentally, and to have a safe learning environment, students must feel welcomed, supported, and respected. Personalizing learning helps students develop skills including thinking critically, using knowledge and information to solve complex problems, working collaboratively, communicating effectively, learning how to learn, and developing academic mindsets that would greatly increase students engagement (Raccoon gang, 2018). More so, students must feel connected to teachers, staff, and other students. Schools can nurture these connections by focusing on students' social and emotional learning (SEL). Students must also feel supported by all those connected to their learning experience like teachers, classmates, administrators, family, and community members for a higher academic feat (Waldman, 2022).

Productive learning environments are crucial to students' academic, emotional and social success in school. A conducive learning environment does not just happen on their own or by chance. They should be created through conscious procedures like interacting with students in a positive manner, exhibiting positive behaviors etc. that would promote learning activities in the learning environment (Becton, 2021).

Related Studies

Foreign Studies

Victor (2021) analyzed the principals' managerial competence for effective management of school resources in secondary schools in Anambra State. The study population comprised 257 principals in public secondary schools in the State. A 24 items researcher developed instrument titled "Principals' Managerial Competences for Effective Management of School Resources Questionnaire (PMCEMSRQ)" was used for data collection. The Cronbach alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument which yielded a high reliability coefficient of 0.85. The study found out that secondary school principals' in Anambra State do not have managerial competences in procurement of physical and instructional materials, provision of e-library facilities and equipping classrooms and offices with needed furniture for effective material resource management. The study also found out that school principals' have managerial competences in prioritizing financial allocation according to school needs, keeping accurate financial information of the school, ensuring accountability in all school expenditures, carrying out periodic auditing of school budgets and adopting cost-saving strategies for effective financial resource management among others. The study recommended that school principals' should strive to acquire managerial competences in involving teachers' in decision making, organizing seminars and workshops for professional advancement of teachers, providing incentives for students for effective human resource management in schools, procurement of physical and instructional materials, provision of e-library facilities and equipping classrooms and offices with needed furniture and other school materials for effective material resource.

Rahmi and Usman (2020) determined the managerial competence of school principal in implementing inclusive education. The principal's managerial competence is the ability to manage all the resources and potentials contained in the school effectively and efficiently. The results showed that school head had very high level of managerial competence. The positive thing that was found in the schools that provided inclusive education was the very high commitment of each school principal in implementing inclusive education. They are able to build the sensitivity of all teachers in handling students with special needs optimally. The principal together with teachers and parents of students are able to establish good communication in dealing with students with special needs. The inhibiting factor faced by schools is that special guidance teachers (GPK) provided by the schools, have not sufficient with the number of students with special needs. The available infrastructure has not been fulfilled in accordance with the needs of students with special needs.

Amuche and Saleh (2021) investigated the effectiveness and competence of principals of ECWA Secondary Schools in North Central Geo-political zone of Nigeria and how well they were professionally trained in school administration. It was also to find out how effective the training in-service was implemented in order to develop principals and staff professional competence. Both qualitative and quantitative methods of research were employed in order to establish how competent the principals were in their leadership role, the officials of the ECWA Education Department were interviewed and questionnaire administered in 15 ECWA Secondary Schools on 20 teachers in each school in the North Central Geo-political zone. The study found out that most ECWA Secondary School principals, though educated in other fields, were not professionally competent in school administration and planning. Also, principals' managerial competence had a negative relationship (-0.02) with students performance in ECWA secondary schools. It was therefore recommended that Principal of ECWA Secondary schools should be trained professionally in education administration. They should improve in the teaching-learning process in schools, as well as ensure that the factors that led to student poor performance in external examination should be investigated.

Mulyana et al. (2022) determined the managerial competence that affects the performance of SMEs with Knowledge Management Effectiveness as a moderating variable. There are indicators, namely Impact and Influence, Achievement Orientation, Teamwork and Cooperation, Analytical Thinking, Initiative, Developing Other, Self Confidence, Directiveness/Assertiveness, Information Seeking, Team Leadership, Conceptual Thinking and the Knowledge Management variable being the moderating variable. While the dependent variable is the performance of SMEs. The sample method used is a purposive sample with a sample size of 75 MSME owners. This study used the Equation Structure Equation Model with the help of SPSS v.21 and Smart PLS 3. This research method was quantitative, namely conducting a primary data search with the object of research by MSME owners registered in the trade office of SME and industrial cooperatives in the city of Cimahi. Based on the results of the partial study, the variable that has a significant effect is Knowledge Management Effectiveness, while Managerial Competence has no significant effect. Meanwhile, if Knowledge Management Effectiveness is tested as a moderating variable, then Knowledge Management Effectiveness has a moderating effect that weakens, and reduces managerial competence.

Azainil et al. (2021) determined the effect of principal managerial competence and teacher discipline on teacher productivity. This study uses quantitative analysis with the ex post facto method. The population of this study was 115 teachers spread across 7 State Elementary Schools in Telen District, East Kalimantan Province. By using the cluster random sampling technique, a sample of 68 teachers was obtained. Instruments were used with a questionnaire. Results indicated that principals had very high level of managerial competence. Further, the results of data analysis using multiple linear regression concluded that the principal managerial competence had a significant effect on teacher productivity, teaching discipline had a significant effect on teacher productivity, and principal managerial competence and teacher discipline had a significant effect on teacher productivity. This research can increase teacher productivity in the success of the school in achieving its goals.

Hardianto et al. (2022) analyzed the decision making by the principal. The analysis is carried out on the stages of decision making, influencing variables and factors, so that decision making is better. The main source of research data were articles on school principals' decision-making obtained from Google Scholar. The technique of data collection was done by the method of documentation. The results showed that the principals were very good decision-makers and carried out the decision-making process by following six decision-making steps: problem identification, gathering information, developing alternative solutions, choosing the best alternative, implementing alternatives, and evaluating decisions. There were five variables that influence decision making by the principal. The five variables were self-efficacy, administration knowledge, management information system, emotional quotient and personality. Decision-making by the principal were more effective by involving teachers and education staff.

Mirfani (2021) examined the trend of innovative maps and urgent decision-making skills of principals. Methods performed through innovative potential tests and weigh the position of decision-making updates. The findings of the study indicate that the general trend of innovativeness still in the category of early majority and late majority. The tendency of decision-making skills is in a low category.

Onyango (2022) assessed the influence of the principals' decision-making skills on students' academic outcome in public teachers training colleges in Nyanza Region, Kenya. The researcher used purposive sampling to select principals and BOM chairpersons while 30 percent to select tutors and student leaders. Researcher used questionnaires and interview schedules for data collection. Data was analyzed and interpreted using descriptive statistical and inferential techniques using the Statistical packages of social sciences (SPSS) version 21. The researcher adhered to regulations and ethical considerations. The study found out that the principal decision-making skill was excellent.

Edikpa (2021) evaluated the decision-making skills of principals in Anambra State, adopting the developed and validated decision-making inventory. The survey research design was used. The result revealed that principals in Anambra State were aware and they have good decision-making skills.

Ozerem and Akkoyunlu (2022) examine primary students' and inspectors' opinions on different learning environments designed according to students' learning styles and its effects on students' achievement. Fifty-five seventh grade students and seven inspectors constituted the research sample. The data were collected through an open-ended questionnaire; a mathematics achievement test and the Pat Wyman Personal Learning Style Inventory were used as data collection tools in the research. Since the group consisted of less than 30 participants, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test for Paired Samples was used.

Results indicated that overall the learning environment is very good as assessed by the students. Furthermore, the difference of pre-post test results of visual auditory learners, auditory-kinesthetic learners, and visual-auditory learners were statistically significant. When the ranked average of different grades and their sums were considered, the observed difference was in positive ranking, meaning it is in favor of post-test results. According to these results, different learning environments designed for visual auditory-kinesthetic learners have a positive effect on student grades. The majority of the students stated that the aforementioned activities used in the mathematics lesson could also be used in other school subjects.

Shamaki (2021) conducted a study to determine the influence of learning environment on students' academic achievement at senior secondary school level in Yobe state, Nigeria and found a significant difference between the mean performance of students taught in an ideal learning environment and that of students taught in a dull learning environment.

Adamu (2020) examined the impact of learning environment on the performance of students in public secondary schools in Taraba State, Nigeria and the findings revealed a significant difference in the performances of the two groups (Experimental and Control) implying that a classroom building; class with adequate furniture; class with small class population and the use of instructional materials has positive impact on the performance of students in junior secondary schools.

Mudassir and Norsuhaily (2020) conducted a study to examine how school environment influence students' academic performance in selected secondary schools within Kuala Terengganu. The result of the study indicated that students from a school with adequate facilities, good teachers and favorable environment perform better than those from schools with fewer facilities, unqualified teachers and less enabling environment.

In another research by Duruji, Azuh and Oviasogie (2021) which examined the impact of learning environment on students' performance in external examination in secondary schools in Ota ,Nigeria considering factors such as school facilities, class size, school location and school plant planning, aesthetics, maintenance culture, sanitation, conveniences. The study established that the state of learning environment and quality of infrastructure, together with the extent to which they are being maintained has a strong bearing to academic performance among students.

Finally, Ezike (2021) investigated classroom environment and students' academic interest as correlates of achievement in Senior Secondary Chemistry students in selected Public Secondary Schools in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The result showed significant relationships between classroom environment and academic achievement, while combined contribution of classroom environment and academic interest was equally significant.

Local Studies

Dinampo and Balones (2023) determined the domain in school heads' leadership character significantly influences school heads' managerial competence. Using the quantitative-correlational design, 269 respondents from the elementary and secondary schools in the Samal district division of the Island Garden City of Samal were selected through stratified random sampling to participate in this investigation. Data collection was made through the administration of survey questionnaires to the respondents. Two adapted survey questionnaires were used and subjected to content validity and reliability test: the data analysis used Mean, Pearson Product Moment, and Regression. The results revealed that the level of leadership character of school heads and their managerial competence were very high. The indicators: Lack of Blame, Accountability, Courage, and Focus on the Whole, are the domains of leadership character that significantly influence the managerial competence of school heads. Indeed, school leaders who acquire leadership character and managerial competence can effectively run schools meaningfully and appropriately.

Ganaden (2020) analyzed principals' managerial competence. The respondents of the study comprised of 11 principals and 110 teachers in the Laboratory High Schools (LHSs) of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Region III, Philippines. The study used the Competency Framework for Southeast Asian School Heads, 2014 Edition formulated by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology (SEAMEO INNOTECH) to measure the competence of school managers/administrators on aspects such as (1) Strategic Thinking and Innovation, (2) Instructional Leadership, (3) Personal Excellence, (4) Stakeholder Engagement, and (5) Managerial Leadership. The results showed that the laboratory high school principals always exhibit competences primarily on leadership in instruction, personal improvement and excellence and engagement with the community. However, the study found that there was a need for principals to improve in strategic thinking and innovation and managerial leadership competence aspects. The study found a no significant difference on the perceived attributes of managerial competence when the respondents are grouped according to age, sex and civil status. Moreover, the analysis of variance result established a significant difference on the perceived principals' personal excellence and managerial leadership competences when grouped according to respondents' highest educational attainment. The study suggested that the State Universities and Colleges in Region III may design and pursue activities that can help improve the strategic thinking and innovation and managerial leadership competency aspects of principals aimed to adequately address the growing expectations and demands of the students and other stakeholders of the laboratory high schools.

Cruz et al. (2022) determined the level of managerial competence of school heads, their strengths and weaknesses in the different areas of school management as perceived by school head themselves, their teachers, and senior students. It attempted to propose an enhancement plan based on the identified weaknesses vis-à-vis the managerial performances of school heads in performing their functions. The study used a descriptive method of research that involved the participation of four (4) schools in the Division of Cavite, with their ten (10) school heads, thirty-eight (38) teachers, and one hundred thirty-four (134) senior students. The validated survey instrument containing 50 questions were used. The findings and results of the study revealed that school heads exhibited very satisfactory level in performing their managerial functions in all management areas identified. It also revealed that there were significant differences in the managerial competence of school heads in the areas of vision mission-goals, financial and budgeting, physical plant and facilities, community relations and management of school improvement plan. The data on the weaknesses of school heads in performing managerial functions in identified areas of school management provided the basis in proposing an enhancement plan that may be used in improving their functions and in providing a key to more development programs for school heads in the division.

Gelate and Gelate (2023) determined the perceptual levels of problem-solving and decision-making skills of administrators belonging to top-and-middle level administrators in Nueva Vizcaya State University Bayombong and Bambang campus influenced by their individual preferences. It identified the prevailing organizational decision-making models and the relationship of profile variables with problem-solving and decision-making skills. The study made use of descriptive-correlational-comparative research design. In gathering the individual preferences, a three-factor model based on Carl Jung's study with the primary tool, "Problem-Solving and Decision-Making Questionnaire." The results showed that respondents belonging to the ambivert type have "high" problem-solving and decision-making skills, critical thinking, risk assessment, alternative weighing, data gathering and

processing, perception and judgment, tool selection, and "moderate" lateral conceptualization skills. The prevalent organizational decision-making models employed are routine and creative. It was identified that educational attainment, designation, and the number of years in a position influence the respondent's problem-solving and decision-making practices. Individual preferences significantly relate to critical thinking skills than other problem solving and decision-making skills.

Villafranca (2022) examined the relationship among the school heads' level of servant leadership, level of decision making and instructional leadership practices in elementary schools particularly in the City Schools Division of Cabuyao. Descriptive correlational research design was employed. The study revealed that the there was a significant relationship between the school heads' level of servant leadership skill and their level of decision-making skill, school heads' level of servant leadership skill and their instructional leadership practices and school heads' level of decision-making skill and their instructional leadership practices. Correlations indicated that the higher the level of servant leadership skill of school heads, the higher is their level of decision-making skill, the higher the level of servant leadership skill of school heads, the more they confirm their instructional leadership practices, and the higher the level of decision making skill of school heads, the more they confirm their instructional leadership practices.

Sebello (2019) determined the decision-making styles, based on the 4 decision-making styles such as global, logical, personable and sequential; and better understand how the school decision making process effectively work and affect school management. The study was a quantitative research and applied descriptive survey design in which 60 regular faculty members and 10 educational leaders were guided to complete the decision-making style survey, however, consent was sought ahead prior to their participation in the study. The findings revealed that the dominant decision-making style of both educational leaders and faculty members was logical. This style proves that they want specifics and they need a clear understanding of the possible results of the different choices. The result further showed that, generally, there was no significant difference between the educational leaders' decision-making style and that of the faculty members, however, they just differ on the order of utilizing the global and logical styles. Both are logical thinkers who analyze between options and draw conclusions based on facts they gather, and thus, faculty members more often subscribe to their leaders' decision. Thus, harmoniously achieving organizational objectives can be observed. Decision making skills in academic institution is vital to help increase job satisfaction, achieve goals and harness the potential of everyone inside the organization.

Margario et al. (2022) described the availability of students' learning environment in physical education under modular instruction in terms of exercise and dance in a public school in Negros Occidental, Philippines during the school year 2021-2022 when they were taken as a whole and grouped according to sex, parents' highest educational attainment, and family income. Likewise, it described their learning motivation both intrinsic and extrinsic. Lastly, it described their challenges in environment, content, teacher, learner, and technology. The study utilized the quantitative design particularly the descriptive approach. Using the validated and reliability tested questionnaires, the study was responded by 264 grade 10 students determined through stratified random sampling. In terms of data analysis, mean and standard deviation were utilized to describe the three constructs. The students' availability of learning environment facilities in physical education under modular instruction in terms of exercise was rated with agreeable result. In the availability of learning environment facilities relative to dance, it was rated with agreeable result. Finally, the overall availability of learning environment facilities in physical education under modular instruction is rated with agreeable result.

Cruz and Vargas (2021) determined the relationship between the learning environment and academic performance of grade eight students in public secondary schools in San Jose City, Philippines. The researcher used the descriptive method of research. Random sampling was used in selecting 312 respondents. A locally prepared combination of the open-ended and scaled questionnaire was used as the survey instrument. Data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. In looking at the relationship of the profile of the respondents to the environment, the result shows that age and size of the family were positive and significantly correlated. In determining the relationship of the school location to the profiles, hobbies, and interests of t the respondents, the result shows that it was negatively correlated with "other" hobbies. A negative correlation was shown between the hobby of doing assignments to peacefulness and orderliness of the community of the respondents. Support of the family with regards to the education of the respondents was found to have a negative and significant correlation with

the interest of the respondents in watching movies. Moreover, the completeness and functionality of the school laboratories show a positive effect on the interest of the respondents in watching movies. Also, the type of community exhibited a positive and significant effect with the utilization of the school laboratories. The classroom environment was also found to have a positive and significant correlation with age, the hobby of reading books, and recreation of hanging out with friends.

Salazar and Basierto (2021) determined the classroom learning environment in terms of goal orientation, physical facilities, student-student interaction, teacher-student interaction, method of teaching, and the degree of self-efficacy in mathematics; and establish if there is a significant relationship between their classroom environment and the degree of self-efficacy in mathematics. Descriptive correlational research design. Complete enumeration of 260 freshmen students from the College of Engineering courses: Bachelors of Science in Agricultural Engineering, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, and Mechanical Engineering enrolled in Mathematics were surveyed using the 50-item Learning Environment Schedule developed by Sunitha and Mathematics Self-efficacy Survey developed by Betz and Hackett. The data gathered were tabulated, analyzed, and treated statistically using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 16.0 Version). Results of the study found the classroom learning environment in terms of goal; orientation, physical facilities, student-student interaction, teacher-student interaction, and methods of teaching to be favorable; the respondents had much confidence or had high self-efficacy in Mathematics; the goal orientation, student-student interaction, teacher-student interaction and methods of teaching were found to have a significant relationship with self-efficacy in mathematics; and only physical facilities was not significantly correlated to self-efficacy in mathematics.

Finally, Gamala and Marpa (2022) examined the degree of the influence of learning environment and school heads' managerial competence on school's performances. Using a correlational method of research, a total of 115 school heads, 1044 teachers, 115 pupils, and 115 parents of public elementary schools in the 6th Congressional District of Negros Occidental, Philippines were used for data collection. Results showed that learning environment was moderately favorable while the school heads' managerial competence and schools' performances were very high. Results further revealed that school heads' managerial competence significantly related to learning environment and school's performance. Although results hold that school heads exhibited managerial competence in a favorable learning environment, but this does not mean that it has influence on school performance as reflected in this study. In this regard, the study suggests examining other factors that might influence school performance.

Relevance of Related Literature and Studies

In this chapter, conceptual and research literature on school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment are adequately presented. The focus of the review is to offer clear explanation of the concepts of managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment.

A literature review on the nature of school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment and the present state of research on the topic provides the basis for the present study. Theoretical literature and empirical studies dealing with school heads' managerial competence decision-making skills and learning environment guided the researcher in creating the framework for this study, and will be examined accordingly. This chapter addresses how these three constructs are conceptualized in the most recent scholarly literature and how the present study is situated to contribute to the growing body of research on these topics. The rationale for why specific variables were chosen for the present study, definitions of major concepts, and the empirical basis for the research were discussed.

For purposes of thoroughly explaining the framework guiding the present study, this chapter will address the conceptual framework and related literature on school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment. These topics will provide the rationale for the current study and the groundwork for its methodology.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section dealt with the research design, the respondents of the study, data gathering instrument, data gathering procedure, and statistical tools used.

Research Design

This study made use of a descriptive-correlational research design which aimed to determine the school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment among elementary schools in the Schools Division of Antique, Philippines for school year 2023-2024.

According to Sevilla (2020), descriptive method of research is used to collect data at a certain specified demography and on criteria set to identify the problem of the study considering people's behavior, practices, beliefs, intentions, attitudes, opinions, judgments, interests, perceptions, and the like then such data are analyzed, organized and interpreted accordingly.

Calderon (2019), on the other hand, considered descriptive research as a purposive process of gathering, analyzing, classifying, and tabulating data about prevailing conditions, practices, processes, trends, and cause-effect relationships and then making adequate and accurate interpretation about such data with or without or sometimes minimal aid of statistical methods. Also, this method ascertains prevailing conditions of facts in a group under study that gives either qualitative or quantitative, or both, descriptions of the general characteristics of the group as results (Ardales, 2021).

This research design was appropriate for this study as it allowed the researcher to determine the existence of relationships among school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment as dependent variables in relation to civil status, highest educational attainment, school size, type of school, and length of service as independent variables.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were 365 randomly selected teachers of public elementary schools from 22 school districts in the Schools Division of Antique for School Year 2023-2024.

The sample size of this study was determined by computing the Slovin's formula. Stratified proportionate random sampling technique was used to determine the number of teachers included for each district. Fishbowl technique was then used to draw the names of the teachers that participated in the study.

As presented in Table 1, 12 or 3.27% of the respondents came from Districts of Anini-y, Barbaza, Hamtic South and San Remigio I; 7 or 1.91% came from District of Belison, 21 or 5.85% came from the Districts of Bugasong, 17 or 4.77% came from the District of Caluya, 27 or 7.35% came from the District of Culasi, 16 or 4.37% came from Districts of Hamtic North, Laua-an, Patnongon II and Tibiao, 10 or 2.86% came from District of Libertad, 11 or 2.98% came from District of Pandan, 23 or 2.98% came from District of Patnongon I, 33 or 9.07% came from District of San Jose, 15 or 3.99% came from District of San Remigio I, 9 or 2.48% came from District of Sebaste, 26 or 7.16% came from District of Sibalom North, 22 or 5.97% came from District of Sibalom South, 19 or 5.25% came from District of Tobias Fornier, and 13 or 3.58% came from the District of Valderrama.

Table 1. Distribution of the Respondents

School District	N	n	%
Anini-y	137	12	3.27
Barbaza	134	12	3.20
Belison	80	7	1.91
Bugasong	245	21	5.85
Caluya	200	17	4.77
Culasi	308	27	7.35
Hamtic North	183	16	4.37
Hamtic South	136	12	3.25
Laua-an	180	16	4.30

Libertad	120	10	2.86
Pandan	125	11	2.98
Patnongon I	267	23	6.37
Patnongon II	186	16	4.44
San Jose	380	33	9.07
San Remigio I	138	12	3.29
San Remigio II	167	15	3.99
Sebaste	104	9	2.48
Sibalom North	300	26	7.16
Sibalom South	250	22	5.97
Tibiao	179	16	4.27
Tobias Fornier	220	19	5.25
Valderrama	150	13	3.58
Total	4,189	365	100.00

Data Gathering Instrument

Data needed in this study were obtained through the use of a questionnaire consisted of the following parts:

Part I of the questionnaire enumerated the personal profile of the respondents such as their civil status, highest educational attainment, school size, type of school and length of service.

Part II of the instrument was used to gather data on the level of school heads' managerial competence as assessed by the respondents.

Results and Discussion

This study aimed to determine the school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment among elementary schools in the Schools Division of Antique, Philippines for school year 2023-2024.

This study was conducted in March to April 2024. The respondents were 365 randomly selected teachers of public elementary schools in the Schools Division of Antique, Philippines for School Year 2023-2024. The Slovin's formula was employed to determine the sample size. Stratified proportionate random sampling was used by the researcher to determine the number of samples to participate in each schools district.

The descriptive-correlational research design was likewise used by the researcher in this study. The dependent variables were school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment while civil status, highest educational attainment, school size, type of school and length of service were the independent variables.

The research instrument used in this study was a questionnaire on school heads' managerial competence adopted from Amuche and Saleh (2021), decision-making skills adopted from the study of Villafranca (2022) and learning environment adopted from the study of Sithole (2017) and validated by a jury of experts composed of five members.

Frequency, percentage, and mean were used as descriptive statistical tools while t- test, ANOVA, and Pearson's r as inferential statistical tools. Level of significance was set at .05 at two-tailed test. Statistical computations in this study were processed through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

Specifically, this study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the level of school heads' managerial competence as assessed by the respondents when taken as a whole and when classified according to civil status, highest educational attainment, school size, type of school, and length of service?

2. What is the level of school heads' decision-making skills as assessed by the respondents when taken as a whole and when classified according to civil status, highest educational attainment, school size, type of school, and length of service?

3. What is the learning environment as assessed by the respondents when taken as a whole and when classified according to civil status, highest educational attainment, school size, type of school, and length of service?

4. Are there significant differences in the level of school heads' managerial competence as assessed by the respondents when classified according to civil status, highest educational attainment, school size, type of school, and length of service?

5. Are there significant differences in the level of school heads' decision-making skills as assessed by the respondents when classified according to civil status, highest educational attainment, school size, type of school, and length of service?

6. Are there significant differences in the learning environment as assessed by the respondents when classified according to civil status, highest educational attainment, school size, type of school, and length of service?

7. Are there significant relationships among school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment?

Findings of the Study

1. The level of school heads' managerial competence was "very high" as assessed by the respondents when taken as a whole and when classified according to civil status, highest educational attainment, school size, type of school, and length of service.

2. The level of school heads' decision-making skills was "very high" as assessed by the respondents when taken as a whole and when classified according to civil status, highest educational attainment, school size, type of school, and length of service.

3. The learning environment was "very good" as assessed by the respondents when taken as a whole and when classified according to civil status, highest educational attainment, school size, type of school, and length of service.

4. No significant differences existed in the level of school heads' managerial competence as assessed by the respondents when classified according to civil status, highest educational attainment, school size and length of service while significant differences existed when classified according to type of school.

5. No significant differences existed in the level of school heads' decision-making skills as assessed by the respondents when classified according to civil status, highest educational attainment, school size and length of service while significant differences existed when classified according to type of school.

6. No significant differences were noted in the learning environment as assessed by the respondents when classified according to civil status, highest educational attainment, school size and length of service while significant differences existed when classified according to type of school.

7. Significant relationships were found among school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment.

Conclusions

Based on the foregoing findings, the researcher concluded that:

1. The respondents believe that all school heads have very good managerial knowledge, skills and abilities.

2. The respondents believe that all school heads have the ability to render decisions relative to the management of their school.

3. The respondents believe that all schools have excellent surroundings in which learners interact to enrich experiences.

4. The respondents have the same assessment of the level of school heads' managerial competence regardless of their civil status, highest educational attainment, school size and length of service while they differ when type of school is considered.

5. The demographic profile of the respondents such as their civil status, highest educational attainment, school size and length of service have no direct bearing on the respondents' assessment of their school heads' decision-making skills while type of school makes their assessment vary or differ.

6. The respondents have similar assessment of the learning environment existing in their schools regardless of their civil status, highest educational attainment, school size and length of service while they differ in their assessment of the learning environment when type of school is considered.

7. The learning environment of a school is dependent on the managerial competence and decision-making skills of its school head.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following are recommended:

1. The higher officials of the Department of Education may design and pursue activities that can help improve the strategic thinking and innovation and managerial competence of school heads aimed to adequately address the growing expectations and demands of the teachers, learners and other stakeholders.

2. School heads must maintain their present level of managerial competence for the benefit of their teachers and learners.

3. School heads must create quality time for collaborative goal-oriented and knowledge driven discussions to get teachers' inputs in decision-making as school heads' experience alone could not ensure effective administration and instructional task performance. They must understand the condition under which decisions are to be made as well as being sensitive and clarify situations where and when decisions need to be taken collectively as a group or by individuals in order to achieve quality instructional task performance and desirable academic standard in elementary schools.

4. School heads and teachers alike must be exposed to relevant seminars and workshops that could build their capacities in decision-making to improve the quality of instructional management and school governance in elementary schools.

5. Teachers must be given more opportunities to participate in decision-making so as to increase their level of commitment to instructional task performance that will in turn improve learners' learning outcomes.

6. Schools heads must continue establishing a better learning environment in elementary schools under their supervision to ensure quality teaching and learning.

7. Studies regarding these topics must be conducted in a broader scope to better understand the factors that affect the school heads' managerial competence, decision-making skills and learning environment of schools.

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