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Professional Development and Leadership Competence of School Heads in Urban and Rural Areas

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Abstract

This study determined the correlation between the influence of professional development on the leadership competence of school heads in urban and rural areas. One hundred twenty-five school head-respondents from Baguio City and Apayao represented the urban and rural schools. Descriptive research design using a mixed-method approach was used. Survey method using Dep-Ed's competency-based standards for school heads was utilized for the quantitative and respondents' lived experiences in attending professional development and its influence their leadership competence for the qualitative. Experiential learning and complexity leadership theory are reflected in the professional development experiences of respondents. The level of competence of urban school heads was found inadequate to allow them to fully perform their duties while secondary rural school heads are competent to handle their functions. There is a high, positive correlation between the level of leadership competence and the level of influence of professional development on the school heads' competencies in rural and urban areas. School location is a significant factor in the influence of professional development of school heads, while school level is a significant factor in the level of competence of school heads.

Introduction

Professional development includes formal experiences (such as attending workshops and professional meetings, coaching, etc.) and informal experiences (such as reading professional publications, watching documentaries related to a discipline, etc.) (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2013). Hence, professional development is more than training. It is a set of processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so that they might improve the learning of students.

Davis et al. (2014) examined eight exemplary pre- and in-service program models in the United States on current principal programs and found out that principal preparation programs fail to address the myriad roles required of principals to become effective leaders and do not equip them with the necessary tools to deal with instructional leadership effectively. Fook and Sidhu (2009) support the argument of Davis et al. (2014), where they claim that there is a need to relook into the programs at how in the near

future these characteristics will be demonstrated by the school heads. Lubrica et al. (2019), in a study conducted among school heads in Benguet, Philippines, also recommended that a sound theoretical framework for capacity building be developed in basic education.

The Department of Education (DepEd) released DepEd Order No. 2, s.2015 Guidelines on the Establishment and Implementation of the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS), a comprehensive guideline that emphasizes the strategic alignment of the agency's thrusts with individual milestones. The RPMS requires competencies from school heads, namely: self-management, professionalism and ethics, results-focus, teamwork, service-orientation, innovation, and leadership competencies.

In the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), the Civil Service Commission (CSC) takes charge of conducting an annual audit in human resources. The 2014 CSC-CAR audit report on the implementation of the Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM) showed that five out of the eight Schools Division Offices in the region garnered their lowest rating in the area of learning and development (training, scholarships, seminar, etc.) with an average rating of 62.25%. This finding means that DepEd-CAR and its eight field offices have yet to fulfill the indicators required to address the professional development needs of its employees.

On the other hand, on the assessment of competencies of school heads in the Cordillera using the seven domains of the National Competency-Based Standards for School Heads (NCBSSH), DepEd-CAR (2014) found that school heads from Baguio City have the highest mean percentage or are extremely competent in six domains (school leadership, instructional leadership, human resource management, parent involvement, and leadership, personal, creating a student-centered learning environment and professional attributes). In contrast, Apayao has the lowest rank with slight competence in the seven domains tested. These DepEd CAR findings gave impetus to this study to look into urban and rural contexts.

The legal basis of this study is anchored on three crucial government directives: the DepEd Order 111, s.2009, CSC Memorandum Circular (MC) no. 3, s.2012 or the PRIME-HRM, and the National Higher Education Research Agenda (NHERA) 2009-2018. DepEd Order 111, s.2009 mandates the National Educators Academy of the Philippines in the regions to provide technical assistance to its regional organization and all divisions in its region in the following service areas: training and development, competency assessment, research and development, among others. Likewise, CSC MC no. 2 s. 2012 aims to continuously capacitate agencies to perform their human resource management functions, including recruitment, selection, placement; performance management; learning and development; and rewards and recognition. On the other hand, the CHED (2009), thru NHERA for 2009-2018, prioritizes research undertakings in several disciplines such as education and teacher training.

Research shown that professional development is often episodic and uncoordinated in many countries, and preparatory schemes for principalship are frequently inadequate (Chapman, 2005). Steiner (2004), on the study of professional development for teachers, argues that "one-stop" workshops or training without follow-up have little impact on teaching and learning. Bizzell (2011) recommend studying the impact of designing professional development that is ongoing, job-embedded, and connected to school improvement goals on initial learning and continued leadership behaviors of principals.

Hence, the goal of this study is to examine conditions of professional development of school heads in urban and rural areas and ascertain whether these professional development programs have influenced the leadership competence of school heads. More specifically, it sought to identify the level of leadership competence of school heads in urban and rural areas along school leadership, instructional leadership, creating a student-centered learning environment, human resource management, and parent involvement and partnership; level of leadership competence of the school heads in elementary and secondary; comparison between the leadership competence of the elementary and secondary school heads according to school sites; extent of influence of the professional development on the leadership competencies of the elementary and secondary school; and, comparison between the extent of

influence of the professional development on the leadership competence of the school heads according to school sites.

This study may serve as a basis not only for DepEd-CAR but also for Teacher Education Institutions in developing varied and competency-based professional development programs for school heads in urban and rural areas. TEIs may also find this study's findings useful in designing cutting-edge innovative programs to prepare students who are geared toward school leadership.

Leadership Competency Theories

Competencies are outcomes or relevant measures of knowledge, skills, abilities, and traits (Garman & Johnson, 2006). In this study, leadership competencies are behaviors that are translated as performance indicators to measure performance at work. For this particular study, five leadership competencies were used: school leadership, instructional leadership, creating a student-centered learning environment, human resource management, and parent involvement. These five competencies were based on Mulford (2003). In the study of Mulford (2003), a transformational school principal focused on working toward whole staff consensus on school priorities, establishing a school structure that promotes participative decision-making, having high expectations for students and teachers, and facilitating opportunities for staff to learn from each other. Similarly, Leithwood and Menzies (1998) highlighted transformational leadership on the following competencies: developing a vision for the school and maintaining its relevance for all concerned; developing and maintaining a school culture supportive of the school's vision and the work required to achieve the vision; and, nurturing the capacity and commitment of the staff.

School leadership covers essential elements such as developing and communicating the school's vision, mission, goals, and objectives, analyzing data for strategic planning, handling conflict management, and building a high-performance team. Schlosberg (2006) maintains that the traits of a successful team are clear direction and goals, an overall uniform purpose, diverse talents and competencies, a unified commitment, strong relationships, effective interpersonal communications, elevated trust, mutual accountability, positive leadership, well-defined roles, and adequate resources.

Instructional leadership includes assessment of curricular programs, ensuring student progress, using research in developing curriculum, conducting curriculum review and curriculum innovation, localization and contextualization, instructional supervision, and mentoring practices. School heads are not only seen as managers but also instructional experts.

In relation to creating a student-learning-centered learning environment, setting high expectations for students is enhanced when high expectations for student achievement are evident to students and teachers across the school (Leithwood et al., 2004). To achieve the goal of a truly student learning-centered environment, national policies must include child protection and promotion of student-first policies. According to the Philippines Mapping Report (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2012) the gaps in policies in schools regarding child maltreatment can be attributed to the fact that child protection issues such as sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, physical and emotional abuse, and neglect are not considered to be high priorities on the national agenda.

About human resource management and professional development, school heads are expected to be competent in recruitment, retention, and rewards, leading school action learning cells, using individual professional development plan, conducting in-service training, evaluating training, and evaluating performance. This competency of a school head is deemed important, especially in motivating the teachers in school. The needs and requests that make up the foundation of the concept of motivation are mainly shaped by the culture, social justice, structure in which the individual is in, and the emotional and spiritual makeup of the person. In this respect, teachers are motivated to perform their best when support comes from the leader.

Finally, parent involvement and community partnership are geared toward engaging the participation of the community, which includes establishing linkages using the Adopt A School mechanism and managing the implementation

of the school improvement plan with stakeholder participation.

Professional development that adheres to or does not adhere to the standards affects the status of professional development of school heads. High-quality professional development strategies are essential to schools (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory [SEDL], 2005).

The status of professional development describes the experiences of school heads relative to professional development activities that they have engaged. The status of professional development also determines the level of leadership competence of the school head along school leadership, instructional leadership, creating a student-centered learning environment, human resource management and professional development and parent involvement and partnership. This study also assumes that professional development determines the leadership competencies of school heads.

This research adopts the complexity leadership theory to review the literature on the leadership competence of school heads and the influence of professional development on their competence. Complexity leadership theory espoused by Uhl-Bien et al. (2007) is focused on organizational system behaviors. It describes leadership as a complex interactive dynamic that promotes the emergence of adaptive outcomes (learning, innovation, adaptability).

Professional Development Models

The literature on the professional development of school heads based on experiential learning theory describes a multi-linear model of adult development consistent with how people learn, grow, and develop (Kolb et al., 1999). They emphasize the role that experience plays in the learning process.

Sparks and Loucks-Horsely (1989) and Drago-Severson (1994), as cited by Guskey (2000), argued that a professional development model consists of training, observation/assessment, involvement in the development process, action research/inquiry, individually guided activities, and mentoring.

In the Philippines, professional development is characterized through the following training principles (1) responsiveness to the participant's needs and the agency's requirements where it is anchored on competency-based assessment; (2) promotion of inclusiveness and equity and is developed on sound learning and development principles (adult pedagogies); (3) presence of management structure that identifies accountabilities and responsibilities; (4) presence of logistical arrangements ensure that participants' learning is maximized; (5) efficient delivery of the program; and (6) monitoring and evaluation (Department of Education-National Educators Academy of the Philippines [DepEd-NEAP], 2015).

This study also examined differences among respondents from urban and rural places. From a social justice perspective, adequate support has to be given to professionals to provide education in rural areas. While high-quality professional development is in demand for school heads, there is a need to examine the professional development of school heads in urban and rural areas. Qi and Li (2014) assert that there were certain differences between urban and rural areas in teachers' professional development.

The feedback mechanism assumes that comprehensive monitoring and evaluation on the effect of professional development in the knowledge and behavior of the school heads has to be done thoroughly. Guskey (2000) stated that just as reform efforts take time to implement, evaluation should be extended over a period of time long enough for changes resulting from professional development to have occurred (Bizzell, 2011).

This study uses a regression model to predict which of the independent variables have an impact on the dependent variables. It helps professional development implementers make better decisions when they know the relationship of school location and school level on the leadership competence and level influence of professional development.

Methodology

This study used a descriptive research design on a mixed-method approach. For the qualitative aspect, focus group discussions (FGDs) were used to gather the experiences of respondents. Document analysis was used to review the

individual professional development plan of school heads and training reports. This information was used to answer the status of professional development. Document analysis is valuable for collecting qualitative data (Blundell, 2012). On the level of competence and extent of influence of school heads, a survey was conducted. The survey questionnaires were the same indicators from the DepEd National Competency-Based Standards for School Heads and were pilot tested to a group of school heads who are not part of the study. The questionnaire consisted of 47 items administered to the respondents. The indicators to gather the status of the professional development were drawn from existing literature, reviewed researches, and personal experiences where interviews were used.

The respondents in the study are all the public elementary and secondary school heads in Apayao and Baguio City. Total population sampling was used with Baguio City representing urban and Apayao representing the context of the rural area (Table 1) Urban-rural classification in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) classified Baguio City and three towns of Benguet: Itogon, La Trinidad, and Tuba, as urban population while the rest of the towns and provinces were classified rural (Philippine Statistics Authority [PSA], 2013).

Procedure and Instrument

Ethical procedures were strictly followed. The researcher requested the schools' division superintendents in charge to grant permission in administering the survey questionnaires to the respondents. The respondents were gathered in a hall. A brief orientation of the study was presented, including how to answer the questionnaire. The survey was followed by the FGD during a meeting the next day. Clarifications were done through phone calls. The respondents were given consent forms prior to the survey. This was coursed through the superintendents of the respondents.

The primary research tool was a survey questionnaire. The items in the questionnaire were lifted from the DepEd NCBSSH indicators referred to as leadership competencies in this study. The questionnaire consisted of 47 items that comprise the five leadership competencies-school leadership, instructional leadership, creating a student-centered learning environment, human resource management and professional development, and parent involvement.

The indicators to gather the status of the professional development were drawn from the DepEd NEAP training standards, which include the type of training, adult learning pedagogies, monitoring and evaluation system, and learning service providers. It also made use of the themes espoused by Sparks and Loucks-Horsely (1989) and Drago-Severson (1994) as cited by Guskey's (2000) professional development model.

Personal experiences on professional development attended in the last three years were drawn from the respondents using the interview guide. Document analysis was done using the DepEd-NEAP to validate the responses of respondents.

Treatment of Data

In this study, descriptive statistics was used. Frequency count, weighted mean, two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Pearson correlation (r) were determined. The two-way ANOVA was used to determine significant differencesbetween elementary and secondary respondents, and between urban and rural respondents. It was also used to determine the significance of professional development and the leadership competencies of the respondents.

Table 1

Population of the Study

Area	Elementary	Secondary	Total
Urban	22	20	42
Rural	17	66	83
Total	39	86	125

The status of professional development was analyzed using secondary data and the FGD results. The recorded FGDs were transcribed. The transcript was read and re-read to obtain a general sense of the whole content. Each response was coded into R1, R2, and so on. Cool and warm analyses through a repertory grid were then used to handle the varied responses gathered from the key informants. A repertory grid is a technique that sorts and categorizes responses. It consists of categories of data and significant statements from respondents. The cool analysis consisted of identifying the significant statements or verbalizations of each respondent. Warm analysis was conducted after the cool analysis, where data categories were formulated, and themes evolved.

Likert scale was used to assess the level of competence of the respondents on their leadership competence and the extent of influence of the PD on the leadership competencies of the respondents is shown in Table 2.

On the other hand, Pearson Correlation was used to investigate the relation between the extent of influence of professional development and the leadership competencies. Regression analysis was also used to predict the likelihood that the school location and level will affect the level of competence and influence of professional development on the school heads.

Results and Discussion

Status of Professional Development of School Heads in Urban and Rural Areas

Figure 1 summarizes the responses on the status of professional development undertaken in the last three years from both urban and rural respondents. Generally, the results revealed that the school heads from both urban and rural areas had attended at least three professional development activities from 2014 to 2016, which were training workshops and seminars organized by the DepEd. These activities consist of a total of 72 hours. In contrast, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2009) showedthat in high-performing countries such as Shanghai, China, they require their teachers to undergo 240 hours of professional development per year, while Singaporean teachers are required 100 hours of professional development.

Table 2

Likert Scale in the Level of Competence and Level of Influence

Level of Competence	Description	Level of Influence	Description
Extremely Competent (EC)	I can coach someone else on this leadership competence	Very High Influence (VHI)	The professional develoment provided me highly with the skills on my competencies as a school head
Competent (C)	I can apply this leadership competence consistently	Moderate Influence (MI)	The professional develoment provided me moderately sufficient skills on my competencies as a school head
Somewhat Competent (SC)	I can demonstrate this leadership competence in some situations	Slight Influence (SI)	The professional develoment provided to a small degree/ little the skills on my competencies as a school head
Not Competent (NC)	I have no understanding of this leadership competence	No Influence (NI)	The professional develoment did not provide me skills on my competencies as a school head

Observations show that the professional development activities attended were not trainings to enhance the leadership competencies of the school heads but were programs to be implemented in schools. For example, one program they attended was a Disaster Risk Reduction and Management program (DRRMP), a DepEd program to raise awareness on risk reduction and mitigation in schools. Another program-based training is the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS), which is the implementation of the individual performance and commitment rating of employees.

Furthermore, it reflects the learning pedagogies that the respondents claim positively affected their competencies, such as coaching, involvement in the development process, observation, and individually guided activities. R01 said, "the way they conducted the Disaster Risk Reduction Management (DRRM) from facilitating the training to utilizing the participants to be facilitators during training was helpful. Participants share experiences, processes until we were able to input on the output." These activities are emphasized in the professional development model of Sparks and Loucks-Horsely (1989) and Drago-Severson (1994), as cited by Guskey (2000), where professional development includes the involvement of the participant in the learning process. The indings imply that adult participants learn better through hands-on activities and when coaches are provided. The findings are also reflective of the experiential learning theory, where the first stage of learning starts with concrete experience where the learner actively experiences an activity such as fieldwork.

With reference to the DRRM training, the only one workshop raised by the respondents, the training provider conducted monitoring and evaluation activities in the implementation of the action plan. As R01 said, "*they (University of the Philippines) asked us to assess our school on DRRM and gave us assessment modules. We are being monitored every year in January at City High*." This finding supports Broad and Evans (2006), who argued that evaluation must be seen as an integral part of the continuous process of professional learning. Conducting evaluation will also ensure a greater possibility of sustaining projects as well as a part of the continuing professional development of the school heads.

All of the respondents identified other professional development providers coming from their partners. R02 says, "*Aside from DepEd seminars ket adda met training from UP, DENR and City LGU* (Aside from DepEd seminars there were trainings provided by DENR and the City Local Government Unit." This result implies that given the nature of urban areas where proximity to agencies and universities are at reach, and there are spaces for networking, there are greater opportunities to engage in professional development activities. At the base of Figure 1, 80% of the respondents mentioned that they encountered problems attending professional development activities, including policies and logistics. This result implies that while school heads have the initiative to look for professional development opportunities, there are limitations to the participation of professional development activities provided in DepEd policies.

The respondents' low attendance in PD activities may be attributed to the K to 12 curriculum implementation in 2013 when trainings focused on capability building of teachers on curriculum. Only in the latter part of 2015 were trainings conducted for senior high school principals due to the implementation of the senior high school program in 2016.

The rural respondents have the same DepEd-based trainings, except that fewer external partners or non-DepEd providers conducted professional development programs. This finding may be attributed to the few resources found in rural communities. Resources in local government units (LGUs) are measured in several ways, such as the poverty index or competitiveness index. The competitiveness index of cities and municipalities is an annual ranking of cities and municipalities to show their competitiveness level based on four pillars: economic dynamism, resiliency, government efficiency, and infrastructure. Baguio City ranked 11th out of 32 highly urbanized cities, while other provinces in the Cordillera had an overall rank lower than Benguet. Ifugao ranked 29, Kalinga at 45, Mountain Province at 54, Abra at 60, and Apayao at 68 (Department of Trade and Industry [DTI], 2016). The high competitive index of Baguio City against all other municipalities in the Cordillera shows its ability to provide efficient and equitable servicesin the four pillars. This rank is because cities are considered centers of economic activity

Figure 1

Status of Professional Development of School Heads in Urban and Rural Areas

and generate investments and resources for cluster areas around them and the provinces where they are located (United States Agency for International Development [USAID], 2014).

On the other hand, these findings further imply that the rural respondents may not have utilized their individual professional development plan (IPPD), where professional goals for the year are identified and targeted. Based on the document analysis of trainings conducted, the school heads mostly attended orientation on implementing programs such as wash and wins, DRRM, and others. As against their urban counterparts, 100% of the rural respondents prioritized pursuing their graduate studies as their greatest need. Given the lack of choice for universities to finish their graduate studies, the respondents identified this need as crucial to their professional development. As R02 asserts, "*We need to finish masters and doctoral studies or do distance learning study.*" In the rules for appointment and promotion for school heads (DO 66, s. 2007), the highest points for obtaining a doctoral degree is 25.

In summary, on the status of professional development of urban and rural respondents, the respondents have all undergone the same professional development activities centrally provided by DepEd. They have attended approximately three training activities in the last three years, albeit with inadequate compliance to training standards.

Level of Leadership Competence of School Heads

Level of Leadership Competence of the School Heads in Urban Areas

Table 3 shows the cross-tabulation of the areas of leadership competence and the educational level of assignment of the school heads. The two-way analysis of variance showed no significant differences in the extent of leadership competence

Table 3

Summary of the Perceived Level of Leadership Competence of the School Heads in Urban Areas

Competencies	Elementary	DE	Secondary	DE	
School Leadership	2.32	SC	2.39	SC	Ns
Instructional Leadership	2.32	SC	2.37	SC	Ns
Creating a Student-Centered Learning Environment	2.19	SC	2.41	SC	Ns
Human Resource Management and Professional Development	2.26	SC	2.36	SC	Ns
Parent Involvement and Partnership	2.09	SC	2.23	SC	Ns

SC- Somewhat Competent
Ns- Not Significant

of the school heads in the urban places with respect to school leadership, instructional leadership, human resource development, and parent involvement. However, there is a significant difference along creating a student-centered learning environment. The results indicate further guidance among elementary school heads regarding creating a child-friendly environment and the implementation of the child protection policy.

It is explicit that both secondary and elementary school heads rated themselves in the somewhat competent level or have a limited level of competence across the five competencies. The limited perceived degree of competence across the five levels indicates that the professional development activities of school heads were limited to training in program implementation such as those mentioned in the FGD like Indigenous Peoples Education, RPMS, among others.

It is noteworthy that in school leadership, a significant difference exists in the level of competence of elementary and secondary school heads in urban areas along the competency of creating teams to champion the achievement of the school vision *p*-value=0.006. There are head teachers and non-teaching personnel in secondary schools whose tasks include supervisory and administrative support, who can lead in change management. In contrast, elementary schools have no administrative staff to support the school head in leading change. They also vary significantly in evaluating the implementation of change programs included in the school improvement plan. The varying perceptions of elementary and secondary school principals in the urban places in these two indicators imply that the secondary school heads had sufficient training programs on school improvement planning and championing achievement of school vision compared to the elementary school heads. This is evident in the FGD where the respondents said, "*the School Heads Development Program, a competency-based training was only for secondary school heads*." While both school heads have limited degrees of competence, the difference implies that support and guidance on school improvement planning and initiating change from education program supervisors and public school district superiors are requested by elementary school heads.

Level of Leadership Competence of the School Heads in Rural Areas

Table 4 summarizes the results on the level of competence of school heads in rural areas. The level of competence of rural school heads in the five domains shows varied results. Elementary principals had limited competence in all the five domains, while their secondary counterparts had sufficient knowledge of the five competencies, enabling them to work independently. This result implies that the secondary principals had more exposure to training programs and experiences covering the different competencies. This result is evident in the FGD, where the respondents cited that school heads in the elementary depended on DepEd- initiated training programs for their professional development. In contrast,

Table 4

Summary of the Perceived Level of Leadership Competence of the School Heads in Rural Areas

COMPETENCIES	Elementary	DE	Secondary	DE	
School Leadership	2.32	SC	2.65	C	sig
Instructional Leadership	2.50	SC	2.63	C	sig
Creating a Student-Centered Learning Environment	2.04	SC	2.63	C	sig
Human Resource Management and Professional Development	2.38	SC	2.62	C	sig
Parent Involvement and Partnership	2.06	SC	2.70	C	sig

SC- Somewhat Competent
C- Competent
sig- significant

most secondary school heads attended training programs initiated by the National Association of Philippine Secondary School Heads.

The results further imply that the secondary principals achieved leadership competence along the five leadership domains. This result is evident in the parent involvement and partnership competency where the secondary school heads had to implement the senior high school, where school leadership is required. FGD revealed that the secondary school heads had acquired competencies in partnership building since they claimed that this was a requirement in establishing senior high schools. As R014 said, "*we went to observe how early implementers of senior high school engage their local governments and business industries.*" This experience is in consonance with the principles of partnership, where a leader is expected to forge linkages with stakeholders.

Partnerships in school organizations imply a shared leadership among parents, community leaders, LGUs, and internal stakeholders who are recognized and empowered by their own organizations to improve learning and development. The higher competence level of the secondary school heads means that parents and other stakeholders have stronger involvement in school affairs than at the elementary level. Based on the FGD, the secondary school head respondents go directly to the local government officials to lobby for assistance in school projects. In contrast, the elementary school head respondents course through their public schools' district supervisors the partnership activities with LGUs or private organizations. The secondary school heads mentioned that they formed a school governing council where community representatives are active members and participate in school improvements, such as physical facilities, training programs, and school planning. Also, community elders participated in implementing the Indigenous Peoples Education program, where they were consulted on the local culture and practices.

Comparison of the Level of Leadership Competence Between the Elementary School Heads from Urban and Rural Areas

Table 5 shows that no significant difference exists among the elementary school heads in urban and rural areas in their level of leadership competence. This may be explained in the esponses of the elementary school heads in urban and rural areas, where they claimed that in the last three years, the same people are selected to be trained every year.

Comparison of the Level of Leadership Competence Between Secondary School Heads from Urban and Rural Areas

Among secondary school heads, results show a statistically significant difference between the mean level of leadership competence of secondary school heads in urban and rural areas as indicated by a higher *F*-computed value, of 43.30, compared to the critical value of 7.71 (Table 6). Rural school heads have sufficient competence

Table 5

Comparison of the Level of Leadership Competence Between Elementary School Heads From Urban and Rural Areas

Competencies	Urban	Rural
School Leadership	2.32	2.32
Instructional Leadership	2.32	2.5
Creating a Student-Centered Learning Environment	2.19	2.04
Human Resource Management and Professional Development	2.26	2.38
Parent Involvement and Partnership	2.09	2.06

$F_{competencies} = 5.00$ $F_{.05} = 6.39$ *Not Significant*
$F_{sites} = 0.17$ $F_{.05} = 7.71$ *Not Significant*

Table 6

Comparison of the Level of Leadership Competence Between Secondary School Heads From Urban and Rural Areas

Competencies	Urban	DE	Rural	DE
School Leadership	2.39	SC	2.65	C
Instructional Leadership	2.37	SC	2.63	C
Creating a Student-Centered Learning Environment	2.41	SC	2.63	C
Human Resource Management and Professional Development	2.36	SC	2.62	C
Parent Involvement and Partnership	2.23	SC	2.7	C

$F_{competencies} = 0.21$ $F_{.05} = 6.39$ *Not Significant*
$F_{place} = 43.30$ $F_{.05} = 7.71$ *Significant*

across the competencies. This finding might be attributed to the participation of urban schools in city-wide required activities such as festivities and celebrations, which disrupt their focus on school leadership. This result is evidenced in the responses of the urban respondents. "Our attendance in activities in the city is not only for a day, we need to prepare especially on big events where our learners are participating. We have to prioritize the activities offered by the LGU, national agencies, and other sectors because teachers, learners, and the school are involved." On the other hand, the rural school heads claim that the supervisors conducted regular coaching and mentoring on management and supervision to the secondary school heads and designed training for them.

Perceived Extent of Influence of Professional Development on the Leadership Competencies of School Heads

Extent of Influence of Professional Development on the Competencies of School Heads in Urban Areas

The extent of the influence of professional development on the five domains of urban respondents is on the slight influence (SI) level (Table 7). The slight influence level is described as a weak influence of professional development on the leadership competence of the school heads. Results suggest that strong quality professional development is needed to address the different competencies expected of them. Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) reported that candidates who did not

Table 7

Summary of the Extent of Influence of Professional Development on the Competencies of School Heads in Urban Areas

Competencies	Elementary	DE	Secondary	DE
School Leadership	2.39	SI	2.39	SI
Instructional Leadership	2.26	SI	2.37	SI
Creating a Student-Centered Learning Environment	2.40	SI	2.35	SI
Human Resource Management and Professional Development	2.29	SI	2.38	SI
Parent Involvement and Partnership	2.36	SI	2.50	SI

$F_{competencies} = 1.30$ $F_{.05} = 6.39$ *Not Significant* *SI-Slight Influence*
$F_{level} = 2.64$ $F_{.05} = 7.71$ *Not Significant*

receive strong internships wrapped around their coursework or did not receive ongoing professional development once in the field were less likely to report high levels of effective practices. The study rejected the hypothesis that there is a high extent of influence of professional development and the competencies of the respondents along the five domains.

It is noteworthy to mention that, in general, all the indicators have a low influence on the instructional leadership competence of urban respondents. Instructional leadership focuses on curriculum such as learning assessment, assessment of curricular programs, ensuring student progress, use of research in developing curriculum, conducting curriculum review and curriculum innovation, localization and contextualization, instructional supervision, and mentoring practices. The results imply that the professional development activities need to be reviewed to take into consideration curriculum areas that will help the school heads acquire instructional leadership competence. This result is similar to the findings of Darling-Hammond et al. (2009), claimed that too many districts fail to link professional development to instructional leadership.

The influence of professional development on the instructional leadership competence of urban respondents is inadequate to create an impact in effecting changes in instructional practices. In the FGD, the urban respondents claimed that with the pervasive use of technology among learners in the city and multicultural community, they pointed out the need for a more robust professional development that will help them mentor the teachers on assessment, innovation, and contextualization.

The idea that principals should serve as instructional leaders—not just as generic managers—in their schools is widely subscribed to among educators. In practice, though, few principals act as genuine instructional leaders. Their days are filled with management scheduling, reporting, handling relations with parents and community, dealing with the multiple crises and special situations inevitable in schools (Fink & Resnick, 2001).

Overall, there is no significant difference in the extent of influence of professional development between elementary and secondary school heads in urban areas and even along the five competencies. Thus, the hypothesis that elementary and secondary school heads significantly differ in the extent of influence of the professional development and the competencies of the respondents along the five competencies is denied.

Extent of Influence of Professional Development on the Competencies of School Heads in Rural Areas

The extent of influence of professional development among rural school heads is greater in four out of five leadership competencies: school

leadership, instructional leadership, creating a student-centered learning environment, and human resource management (Table 8). Parent involvement and partnership had a weak influence on their competence. Therefore, it is fair enough to say that the professional development of school heads in rural areas resulted in varying degrees of influence.

Statistical results show that parent involvement and creating a student-centered learning environment differ significantly from human resource development, professional development, and instructional leadership. FGD shows that among secondary school heads, respondents claim that there were fewer opportunities to network with partners to implement the senior high school as there are only small business enterprises in the community.

It is worth mentioning that on the extent of influence of professional development on the instructional leadership of rural school heads, results show that human resource and professional development was ranked with a mean of 2.62 or high influence. This result validates their level of competence in instructional leadership which has the highest mean among the five domains. Based on the FGD, the respondents claim that the Division Office implemented the Enhanced Supervision of Instruction Program (ESIP) that aims to enhance the professional effectiveness of school heads on the following areas: a) observing and analyzing classroom observation information and other data; and b) translating the results of observations into meaningful conference feedback that guides and encourage teachers to improve instruction

Comparison on the Extent of Influence of Professional Development on the Leadership Competencies Among Elementary and Secondary School Heads in Urban and Rural Areas

Comparison on the Extent of Influence of Professional Development on the Leadership Competencies Among Elementary School Heads

Statistically, there is no significant difference in the extent of influence of professional development on the competencies of elementary school heads in urban and rural areas (Table 9). Among elementary urban and rural school heads, the extent of the influence of professional development on their competencies is similar. Document analysis shows that DepEd provided three training programs for elementary school heads across the region in the last three years, school improvement planning, disaster risk reduction, and indigenous peoples program.

This result is in contrast with the study of Preston et al. (2013), where he asserted that professional development has to consider the needs of rural school heads because rural principals commonly face specific socio-cultural and economic challenges associated with the school community. This study rejected the hypothesis that elementary school heads significantly differ in the extent of influence of the professional development and the competencies of the respondents along the five

Table 8

Summary of the Extent of Influence of Professional Development on the Competencies of School Heads in Rural Areas

Competencies	Elementary	DE	Secondary	DE
School Leadership	2.44[ab]	SI	2.62[b]	HI
Instructional Leadership	2.61[b]	HI	2.63[b]	HI
Creating a Student-Centered Learning Environment	2.29[a]	SI	2.47[b]	SI
Human Resource Management and Professional Development	2.57[b]	HI	2.62[b]	HI
Parent Involvement and Partnership	2.27[a]	SI	2.20[a]	SI

$F_{competencies}$ = 9.00	$F_{.05}$ = 6.39	*Significant*	*SI-Slight Influence*
F_{level} = 2.22	$F_{.05}$ = 7.71	*Not Significant*	*HI-High Influence*

competencies.

Comparison Between the Extent of Influence of Professional Development on the Competencies of Secondary School

Statistically, there is no significant difference in the extent of influence of professional development on the leadership competencies of secondary school heads in urban and rural areas (Table 10). The results imply that similar DepEd training activities were conducted, and training processes were observed. This implication is supported in the document analysis, which showed that in the last three years, the secondary school heads across the region had undergone the school heads development program in 2015. No data was found in prior years. It also shows that in 2015, the quality assurance mechanism on the conduct of training was established where quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation teams were required to process, observe and evaluate the conduct of the training and outputs.

Correlation Between the Leadership Competencies of Urban and Rural School Heads

Results indicate a positive, moderate correlation between school leadership and instructional leadership in urban areas in most competencies. This result means that if the level of competence in school leadership is high, then the level of competence in instructional leadership is also high. It can be deduced from these findings that strong leadership competencies require an array of strong quality professional development that school heads may be able to avail of considering their context. The FGD results show that the school heads have undergone one training program

Table 9

Comparison Between the Extent of Influence of Professional Development on the Competencies of Elementary School Heads in Urban and Rural Areas

Competencies	Urban	DE	Rural	DE
School Leadership	2.39	SI	2.44	SI
Instructional Leadership	2.26	SI	2.61	HI
Creating a Student-Centered Learning Environment	2.40	SI	2.29	SI
Human Resource Management and Professional Development	2.29	SI	2.57	HI
Parent Involvement and Partnership	2.36	SI	2.27	SI

$F_{area} = 0.27$ $F_{.05} = 6.39$ *Not Significant*
$F_{place} = 1.04$ $F_{.05} = 7.71$ *Not Significant*

Table 10

Comparison Between the Extent of Influence of Professional Development on the Competence of Secondary School Heads in Urban and Rural Areas

Competencies	Urban	Rural
School Leadership	2.39	2.62
Instructional Leadership	2.37	2.63
Creating a Student-Centered Learning Environment	2.35	2.47
Human Resource Management and Professional Development	2.38	2.62
Parent Involvement and Partnership	2.5	2.2

$F_{area} = 0.35$ $F_{.05} = 6.39$ *Not Significant*
$F_{place} = 1.09$ $F_{.05} = 7.71$ *Not Significant*

that addressed school leadership and instructional leadership in the last three years.

There is a weak and no correlation between the different leadership competencies among rural school heads. This result implies that professional development has a thin bearing on the school head's leadership competence. Based on the FGD among rural respondents, they claim that professional development is limited, and only a few are selected to attend. While private organizations offer professional development, the respondents cannot afford to pay for the registration.

Correlation Between the Extent of Influence of Professional Development and Level of Leadership Competence of Urban and Rural School Heads

Results show a high, positive correlation between the level of leadership competence and the level of influence of professional development on the competencies of school heads both in the rural and in the urban areas (Table 11). This result implies that tailoring professional development to the needs of the school heads according to their context, such as new or tenured school heads, influences the acquisition of leadership competencies. Based on the FGD, the respondents claim that training programs are given to everyone regardless of their years as school heads. The traditional manner of conducting professional development through training was not as effective compared to their experiences in benchmarking other schools and mentoring activities given by the supervisors. This result is aligned to Lubrica et al. (2019), who emphasized that given the great relevance of capability building, it is imperative for school front liners to build their capacity to perform their new roles.

Table 11

Correlation Between the Extent of Influence of Professional Development and Level of Leadership Competence of Urban and Rural School Heads

Area	Coefficient of Correlation, r	Interpretation
Urban	0.809	High Correlation
Rural	0.749	High Correlation

Regression Model on Probable Effect of School Location, Leadership Competence, and Influence of Professional Development of School Heads

Results revealed the regression model, $y = 0.696 - 2.194x1 + 1.892x2$ where school heads in the elementary level have lower probability of a higher level of leadership competence, and the school heads in rural areas have higher probability of a higher level of competence. This indicates that elementary school heads had less opportunities for acquiring higher leadership competencies given the limited number of professional development activities and traditional training methods. Location of school heads-urban and rural have an impact on their leadership competencies.

On the other hand, results revealed the model, $y = -0.41 + 2.966x1 + 0.526x2$, where the school heads in rural areas have a greater probability of higher level of influence of professional development, while school heads in the elementary level have higher probability of having a greater level of influence of the professional development they attended. School heads in rural areas have a higher probability of having a higher level of leadership competence. This result means that given the right mentoring and rich professional development experiences, the school heads in the rural area will be able to acquire the leadership competencies and mentor their peers.

Conclusions

Professional development activities for school heads were not sufficient enough to equip the school heads with leadership competence aligned to the national competency based-standards for school heads. Most of the professional development attended by both urban and rural school heads in the last three years were all classified as training workshops on DepEd projects.

Regardless of the location of school heads, the extent of influence of professional development along leadership competencies is the same. Among the elementary school heads in urban and rural areas, there is no significant difference in the level of leadership competence of elementary school heads in urban and rural areas.

There is a greater impact of the influence of PD in the rural areas than in the urban areas. Both elementary and secondary school heads in rural areas rated high influence of professional development in instructional leadership competency.

Recommendations

This paper recommends the following: (a) school head development programs can be significantly shaped by a purposeful policy agenda that prioritizes the leadership competencies of school heads and a system of continuous development; (b) use leadership competencies and organizational goals as bases for developing professional development of school heads as reflected in a strategic plan; (c) professional development programs and policies need to consider a design and approach that is different for school heads in urban and rural contexts; and (d) similar studies are encouraged especially in using other statistical tools suited in assessing levels of competence of school heads, the status of professional development and including all school heads in the region.

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