Principals' Management Skills and School Academic Achievement

Wilbur L. Dalton[1], Allen T. Arpon[2]*

Abstract: School management skills are seen as the dominant indicating factors for the success of the school, such as academic achievement. This study examines the relationship between management skills and academic achievement in the respondents' schools in Leyte Division, utilizing a descriptive research design. Questionnaires and documentary analysis were used in gathering the relevant data. The school principals with at least three years of experience were involved in the study. The weighted mean and Pearson correlation coefficient were used in the data analysis. Results revealed that the principals had very high management skills in technical, conceptual, human relations, administrative and supervisory, resource generation and fiscal management, and networking and linkages. Overall, the school principals possess the necessary management skills to govern the school. On the other hand, the academic achievement of the selected schools was categorized as moving towards mastery. This indicates that the schools had their best practices in place. Moreover, findings showed that there is no significant relationship between management skills and school academic achievement. For the continual improvement of quality education, future studies, including additional variables such as schools' ICT facilities, may be correlated with school achievement.

Keywords: Management, Academic achievement, Skills, School, Descriptive design

1. Introduction

Schools today, like most well-functioning organizations, are administered by an individual or group of individuals who take overall charge of all affairs and directions that the school takes. Such individuals or administrators oversee the school in its entirety, including the teachers, students, staff, activities, and physical facilities present in the school.

The administrator's leadership style and management skills are seen as the dominant factors indicating the success of the school. Prastiawan *et al.* [1] reached a similar conclusion, which states that the principal, as the highest leader, has a great influence in determining the progress of the school. More

---

[1] Department of Education, Division of Leyte, Philippines
Email: wilburxix80@gmail.com

[2]* College of Graduate Studies, Palompon Institute of Technology, Palompon, Leyte, Philippines
Email: allen_arpon2000@yahoo.com (Corresponding Author)

often than not, behind a successful school is a good administrator, and eventually, a good administrator leads a school into success.

A principal can make or unmake a school. Key elements such as good leadership, sound decision-making, and excellent job performance could transform a low-performing school into a high-performing one. This is supported in the study by Mapony [2], where the majority of the participants perceived learners' academic achievement as the core responsibility of the school principals.

Interestingly, the study by Hou *et al.* [3] claimed that the principals' overall instructional leadership does not dramatically influence the school's final average college entrance scores. This is also supported by the research work by Huang *et al.* [4], which disclosed that the principals' management behavior did not have a direct influence on student achievement in school.

One major area that a principal should conscientiously monitor and check is the school's academic achievement. Based on the 2015 District Achievement Test (DAT), Matag-ob District got a Mean Percentage Score (MPS) of 64.85%, still far from achieving the national target of 75%. The 2015 District Oral Reading Test and Numeracy Test also revealed that there are still non-readers and non-numerates in grades two to six in most schools in Matag-ob District.

The conflicting research findings on the relationship between management skills and school performance and the aforementioned situations and problems with poor academic performance and unsatisfactory performance indicators were the main reasons why the researchers conducted this study.

This study was conducted to determine the school principals' management skills in relation to school academic achievement in the elementary schools of Leyte Division. The findings of which shall be the basis for the formulation of an intervention program for the school principals.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of management skills of the elementary school principals as to technical, conceptual, human relations, administrative and supervisory, resource generation and fiscal management, and networking and linkage skills?

2. What is the level of the school's academic achievement?

3. Is there any significant relationship between the school principal's management skills and school academic achievement?

2. Methodology

The purpose of this study was to identify and interpret the prevailing management skills of school principals as well as the school's academic achievement. This study used a descriptive research design because it was concerned with the conditions of relationships that existed, practices that prevailed, and effects that were being felt.

This research work was conducted during the school year 2015-2016. Twenty-five schools, five from each of the five congressional districts of the Leyte Division, comprised the coverage of this study. The respondents constituted twenty (25) school principals who gave perceptions on management skills.

Questionnaire was the main gathering research tools. It gathers data on management skills, which include technical skills, conceptual skills, human relations skills, administrative and supervisory skills, resource generation and fiscal management skills, and networking and linkage skills. The questionnaire was adopted from the study of Domael [5] and Arpon [6]. The researchers made a formal request from the Schools Division Superintendent of Leyte Division, asking permission to distribute the questionnaire to the schools involved in the study, and utilized the National Achievement Test (NAT) result.

3. Results and Discussion

This section presents the data that was statistically treated, analyzed, and interpreted in answer to the specific questions of the study. First, the level of the school principal's management skills was determined. This is followed by the level of school academic achievement. Then, a relationship was assessed between the school principal's management skills and the school's academic achievement.

The succeeding tables portray the management skills exhibited by the school principals. They were asked to rate the management skills statements using the following numerical scale: 4 – Always; 3 – Often; 2 – Seldom; and 1 – Never.

3.1 Technical Skills

Table 1 shows the management skills of the principal in terms of technicality. The statement "demonstrates knowledge of the education regulations as they relate to the rights, roles, and responsibilities of the principal and teachers in the school" and the statement "capable of preparing any written document or report associated with work as an administrator" got a perfect mean of 4.0. On the other hand, the statement "skilled in the use of technology such as computers, LCD projectors, *etc.*" got the lowest rank with a mean of 3.32. The finding implies that the principals knew very well the technical aspects of their job, and most of them were ready to adapt the use of technology to make their work comfortable and productive. The offshoot of this inquiry accords with the study of Lunenburg [7] that the manager needs technical skill "to accomplish the mechanics of the particular job" for which he or she is responsible.

Table 1. Technical Skills

Statements	Mean	Interpretation
Demonstrates knowledge of the education regulations as they relate to the rights, roles, and responsibilities of the principal and teachers in the school.	4.00	Very High
Capable of preparing any written document or report associated with work as an administrator.	4.00	Very High
Guides teachers in planning differentiated activities for the improvement of different groups of learners.	3.96	Very High
Utilizes different supervisory schemes in monitoring, evaluating and improving class instruction.	3.96	Very High
Extends professional and technical support to teachers.	3.96	Very High
Speaks and writes well in English and Filipino language.	3.92	Very High
Prepares School Improvement Plan (SIP) with participation of teachers, pupils and community stakeholders.	3.92	Very High
Leads in the construction of school-based test such as oral reading, numeracy and summative test.	3.84	Very High

Prepares training design based on the common instructional needs of teachers.	3.72	Very High
Skilled in the use of technology such as computers, LCD projectors, *etc.*	3.32	Very High
Grand Mean	3.86	Very High

It reveals that the management skills of the school principal in terms of technical skills were very high, which means that they followed the aforementioned management practices. It further implies that they have implemented best practices because the respondents rated them very high in terms of technical skills.

3.2 Conceptual Skills

Table 2 shows that the management skills of school principals in conceptual skills were also very high, which means that they did the benchmark statement all the time. The statement "display the skill in critical and analytical thinking, updated on the most recent instruction and information coming from the Division and District Office", and "display consciousness about the relevant issues in the immediate environment" got a perfect mean of 4.00. On the other hand, the statement "conducting school-based in-service training based on the approved training design" had the lowest rank with a mean of 3.72.

Table 2. Conceptual Skills

Statements	Mean	Interpretation
Updated on the most recent instruction and information coming from the Division and District Office.	4.00	Very High
Displays consciousness about the relevant issues in the immediate environment.	4.00	Very High
Displays the skill in critical and analytical thinking.	4.00	Very High
Knowledgeable in terms of the theoretical aspect of instructional supervision.	3.96	Very High
Demonstrates awareness on standards and guidelines provided by the Department of Education on instructional supervision.	3.96	Very High
Resolves critical or difficult situation and makes sound decisions that are judiciously moral, ethical and legal.	3.96	Very High
Capable of conceptualizing and implementing innovative strategies, programs and projects to respond to the current and future needs of pupils and teachers.	3.96	Very High

Demonstrates a repertoire of strategies and methods in teaching.	3.92	Very High
Oversees the smoothness of the school system and immediately checks the intentional overlapping of duties.	3.88	Very High
Conducts school – based in – service training based on the approved training design.	3.72	Very High
Grand Mean	3.936	Very High

The result indicates that the school principals were knowledgeable enough to perform their functions and roles as the head of school. Further, these findings conform to the study of Prastiawan *et al.* [1], which provides, among others, that leaders with conceptual abilities would allow someone to act in harmony with the overall goals of the organization rather than just on the basis of the group's own goals and needs.

3.3 Human Relations Skills

Table 3 shows that the management skills of school principals in human relations were also very high, which means that they always practiced all the benchmark statements. Nine out of ten statements got a perfect mean of 4.0, and they were the following: commands respect from the community, displays an open or positive attitude towards others, develops a trusting relationship with teachers and other stakeholders, recognizes each person as an individual with unique needs and expertise, sensitive to the needs of teachers and pupils, listens to the comments, opinions, and suggestions of teachers and parents, takes prompt action on different requests from teachers and community stakeholders, avoids remarks that belittle the ability of others, and deals with problems objectively and fairly. The statement on "maintains harmonious relationships with people he deals with got the lowest mean of 3.6.

Table 3. Human Relations Skills

Statements	Mean	Interpretation
Commands respect from the community.	4.00	Very High
Displays an open or positive attitude towards others.	4.00	Very High
Develops a trusting relationship with teachers and other stakeholders.	4.00	Very High
Deals with problems objectively and fairly.	4.00	Very High
Recognizes each person as an individual with unique needs and expertise.	4.00	Very High
Sensitive to the needs of teachers and pupils.	4.00	Very High
Listens to the comments, opinions, and suggestions of teachers and parents.	4.00	Very High

Takes prompt action on different requests from teachers and community stakeholders.	4.00	Very High
Avoids remarks that belittle the ability of others.	4.00	Very High
Maintains harmonious relationships with people he deals with.	3.96	Very High
Grand Mean	3.996	Very High

The finding discloses that human relations skills are the most dominant aptitudes professed by the principals among all management skills. Furthermore, school administrators nowadays value the importance of human relations in implementing their management practices in school, and they consider the human resources to be one of the most important resources that schools have today. The outgrowth of this bookwork is similar to the conclusion reached from the study of Wrigley [8], in which the principals of Kogi State were managerially competent to a very high extent in the maintenance of human relations and school community relationships.

3.4 Administrative and Supervisory Skills

Table 4 shows that the management skills of principals in administrative and supervisory areas were very high as well, indicating that the head of school performed the procedure all the time. The statement "submits the required reports on time, such as MOOE liquidation, SF-4, Form 7, *etc.*", "makes use of data and information for policy formulation and decision making", "utilizes test results to improve school performance", "conducts faculty meetings routinely and systematically", and "regularly checks the teacher's lesson plan and other school forms" obtained a perfect mean of 4.00. On the other hand, the statements "has an efficient filing system for all school records and reports" and "conducts test visits frequently to monitor the pupil's progress got the lowest rank with a mean of 3.88.

Table 4. Administrative and Supervisory Skills

Statements	Mean	Interpretation
Regularly checks the teachers' lesson plan and other school forms.	4.00	Very High
Submits the required reports on time, such as MOOE liquidation, SF-4, Form 7, *etc.*	4.00	Very High
Makes use of data and information for policy formulation and decision making.	4.00	Very High
Utilizes test results to improve school performance.	4.00	Very High
Conducts faculty meetings routinely and systematically.	4.00	Very High
Establishes an award and incentive system for teachers and pupils.	3.96	Very High

Gives feedback to teachers and pupils about their performance.	3.96	Very High
Observes classes regularly to provide technical assistance to teachers.	3.92	Very High
Conducts test visits frequently to monitor the pupil's progress.	3.88	Very High
Has an efficient filing system for all school records and reports.	3.88	Very High
Grand Mean	3.96	Very High

The finding uncovers that the school leaders devotedly did their task as empowered managers and competent instructional leaders of the school.

3.5 Resource Generation and Fiscal Management Skills

Table 5 exhibits that the management skills on resource generation and fiscal management of the principals were very high too, and it divulges that they executed the management tradition all the time. The statements "plans the procurement of materials and supplies according to the priority needs of teachers and pupils", "procures materials, supplies, and equipment based on the Commission on Audit (COA) accounting and auditing rules and procedures", "observes fairness in the allocation of resources" and "maximizes the utilization of materials and other resources" and "informs the teachers and parents on the allocation and expenses of school funds such as MOOE, PTA, Income Generating Projects (IGP), etc. got a perfect mean of 4.0. The statement on "regularly receiving donations from Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), Local Government Units (LGUs), alumni, *etc.* got the lowest rank with a mean of 3.36.

Table 5. Resource Generation and Fiscal Management Skills

Statements	Mean	Interpretation
Informs the teachers and parents on the allocation and expenses of school funds such as MOOE, PTA, Income Generating Projects (IGP), *etc.*	4.00	Very High
Maximizes the utilization of materials and other resources.	4.00	Very High
Observes fairness in the allocation of resources.	4.00	Very High
Plans the procurement of materials and supplies according to the priority needs of teachers and pupils.	4.00	Very High
Procures materials, supplies, and equipment based on the Commission on Audit (COA) accounting and auditing rules and procedures.	4.00	Very High

Uses all financial collections to its intended purpose.	3.96	Very High
Keeps an up – to – date financial statement and transparency board of various donations received.	3.96	Very High
Has income generating projects in school.	3.68	Very High
Conducts fund raising activities regularly such as prince & princess, raffle draws, run for a cause, *etc.*	3.64	Very High
Regularly receiving donations from Non – Government Organizations (NGOs), Local Government Units (LGUs), alumni, *etc.*	3.36	Very High
Grand Mean	3.86	Very High

The finding shows that the school administrators already had sound knowledge of financial management, and they had become resourceful in searching for financial allocation that could help finance the implementation of programs and projects in school. Further, it is confirmed by the findings of the study of Akinnubi *et al.* [9] that the financial skills of principals were high. It further implies that the implementation of administrative skills plays an inevitable role in achieving educational goals.

3.6 Networking and Linkage Skills

The data shown in Table 6 reveals that the management skills on networking and linkages of the school principals were likewise very high, which implies that they carried out the management norm all the time. The statements "builds strong relationships with key stakeholders", "establishes standards and role expectations of stakeholders", "informs community about school accomplishments", "maintains good public relations with community to earn its support", and "displays appreciation through motivation and recognition of efforts and achievements of stakeholders" got a perfect mean of 4.0. The statement "establishes alliances with local residents, business establishments, non-government organizations (NGOs), and local government units (LGUs)" got the lowest rank with a mean of 3.88.

Table 6. Networking and Linkages Skills

Statements	Mean	Interpretation
Builds strong relationships with key stakeholders.	4.00	Very High
Establishes standards and role expectations of stakeholders.	4.00	Very High
Displays appreciation through motivation and recognition of efforts and achievements of stakeholders.	4.00	Very High
Informs community about school accomplishments.	4.00	Very High
Maintains good public relations with community to earn its support.	4.00	Very High

Develops community support system for sustaining effective learning and working environment.	3.96	Very High
Works with the community to identify and implement ways to improve the quality of education.	3.96	Very High
Involves parents in school evaluation and other school activities.	3.96	Very High
Involves stakeholders in planning and implementing school plans.	3.92	Very High
Establishes alliances with local residents, business establishments, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and Local Government Units (LGUs).	3.88	Very High
Grand Mean	3.968	Very High

These findings signify that school heads have an exceptional attitude toward establishing alliances and proficient talent for creating connections with stakeholders that could help the school advance towards progress and development. Further, it is confirmed in the study of Sudyaningsih and Aryani [10] that implementing academic supervision through monitoring and evaluation techniques is very important to improved education administration management.

3.7 School Academic Achievement

The data shown in Table 7 reveals that the academic performance of the schools in Leyte Division included in this study was moving towards mastery with an average MPS of 84.19%. One school from Area IV got the highest MPS of 96.24% with a mastery level descriptive equivalent of mastered. More than half of the schools got a mastery level equivalent of moving towards mastery, and the school that got the lowest MPS of 71.11% was also from Area IV.

Table 7. Level of School Academic Achievement

Area & School	NAT MPS	Interpretation
IV$_A$	96.24%	Mastered
IV$_B$	95.14%	Closely Approaching Mastery
III$_A$	94.89%	Closely Approaching Mastery
V$_A$	93.89%	Closely Approaching Mastery
II$_A$	93.06%	Closely Approaching Mastery
I$_A$	89.09%	Closely Approaching Mastery
II$_B$	88.79%	Closely Approaching Mastery

II_C	87.10%	Closely Approaching Mastery
V_B	86.62%	Closely Approaching Mastery
V_C	86.03%	Closely Approaching Mastery
II_D	85.59%	Moving Towards Mastery
V_D	85.51%	Moving Towards Mastery
IV_C	85.48%	Moving Towards Mastery
IV_D	85.45%	Moving Towards Mastery
III_B	82.32%	Moving Towards Mastery
III_C	81.28%	Moving Towards Mastery
I_B	80.68%	Moving Towards Mastery
V_E	78.47%	Moving Towards Mastery
II_E	78.09%	Moving Towards Mastery
I_C	78.05%	Moving Towards Mastery
III_D	77.29%	Moving Towards Mastery
I_D	75.66%	Moving Towards Mastery
III_E	74.48%	Moving Towards Mastery
I_E	74.40%	Moving Towards Mastery
IV_E	71.11%	Moving Towards Mastery
Grand MPS	84.19%	Moving Towards Mastery

Mastery Level Descriptive Equivalent:

96% - 100% = Mastered	86% - 95% = Closely Approximating Mastery
66% - 85% = Moving Towards Mastery	35% - 65% = Average
15% - 34% = Low	5% - 14% = Very Low
0% - 4% = Absolutely No Mastery	

This outcome indicates that the schools with high MPS followed their respective best practices in order to excel in the assessment test administered by the National Education Testing and Resource Center (NETRC). Their best practices included the following: excellent instruction, regular instructional supervision of the principal, the conduct of remedial classes on least learned skills, the conduct of concept reviews on NAT competencies on Saturdays, and peer tutoring. The less-performing schools pointed out the following factors for their low performance in the said test: large class size and the presence of non-readers and non-numerates pupils in Grade 6 classes.

3.8 Relationship between Management Skills and School Academic Achievement

It uncovers the correlation between the school principal's management skills and school academic achievement. The Pearson correlation coefficient analysis result shows that there is no significant relationship between the school principal's management skills and school academic achievement, which means that whether or not the school principal is skilled in the different aspects of management, school academic achievement remains the same.

Table 8. Relationship between the Management Skills and School Academic Achievement

Variable	School Academic Achievement		Interpretation
	r-value	p-value	
Technical Skills	0.213^{ns}	0.468	not significant
Conceptual Skills	0.202^{ns}	0.333	not significant
Human Relation Skills	0.282^{ns}	0.172	not significant
Administrative and Supervisory Skills	0.111^{ns}	0.607	not significant
Resource Generation and Fiscal Management Skills	0.040^{ns}	0.851	not significant
Networking and Linkages Skills	0.106^{ns}	0.623	not significant

ns – not significant   ** - significant at $\alpha < 0.05$*   *** - highly significant at $\alpha < 0.01$*

The results of this study coincided with the outcomes of research by Huang *et al.* [11] on the relationship among school context, principal time use, school climate, and student achievement. The research work revealed that schools led by different clusters of principals did not differ in terms of student engagement. Said differently, the principals' management behavior did not have a direct influence on student achievement in school.

Additionally, the study of Bello *et al.* [12] on principals' administrative styles and student's academic performance provided additional reinforcement to support the result of this study. Their finding reveals that there was no significant relationship between principals' initiative and administrative styles and students' academic performance in the English language. Moreover, the study by Hou *et al.* [3] claimed that principals' overall instructional leadership does not dramatically influence the school's final average college entrance scores.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study concludes that the level of principal management skills is very high. Further, in terms of school academic achievement, most schools in this study were classified as moving towards mastery and attained a grand MPS of 84.19%. As to the relationship between the two variables, there was no significant relationship between the school principals' management skills and school academic achievement. In light of the foregoing, the following recommendations are forwarded: (1) Elementary school principals should discover new ways on how to efficiently implement their management skills in order to further improve the school academic achievement.; (2) A solid intervention program to improve the NAT result should be conducted especially to schools that did not meet the 75% MPS target set by the DepEd.; (3) Similar studies on leadership styles and management skills must be conducted but this

time head teachers of the school must be the main respondents in order to come up with more conclusive findings and recommendations.; (4) The adoption of the proposed Reengineering Scheme on Management Skills for School Principals as an intervention program for the elementary school heads.; and (5) To adopt the new trend of technology application in education, a further study may be done to add variable on school heads computer literacy skills.

References

[1] A. Prastiawan, I. Gunawan, A. P. Putra, D. A. Dewantoro, P. S. Cholifah, N. L. S. Nuraini, T. A. Rini, R. F. Pradipta, K. M. Raharjo, D. Prestiadi, E. Surahman, "*School Leadership Skills in Educational Institutions*," Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research, vol. 501, in Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on Education and Technology (ICET 2020), January 2020, https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.201204.085.

[2] T. J. Mapony, "*The Instructional Leadership Role of the School Principal on Learners' Academic Achievement*," African Educational Research Journal, vol. 8, no. 2, May 2020, pp. 183-193, https://doi.org/10.30918/AERJ.82.20.042.

[3] Y. Hou, Y. Cui, D. Zhang, "*Impact of Instructional Leadership on High School Student Academic Achievement in China*," Asia Pacific Education Review, vol. 20, April 2019, pp. 543-558, https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-019-09574-4.

[4] T. Huang, C. Hochbein, J. Simons, "*The Relationship Among School Contexts, Principal Time Use, School Climate, and Student Achievement*," Educational Management Administration & Leadership, vol. 48, no. 2, March 2020, pp. 305-323, https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143218802595.

[5] M. P. Domael, "*The Management Competencies of the School Administrators of the National High Schools in Areas III and IV of Leyte Division*," Unpublished Master's Thesis, Palompon Institute of Technology, March 2001.

[6] A. T. Arpon, "*Leadership and Management Skills of School Administrators in Relation to Job Satisfaction of Teachers and Organizational Performance of Secondary Schools in the Division of Leyte*," Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Palompon Institute of Technology, December 2008.

[7] F. C. Lunenburg, "*The Principal and the School: What Do Principals Do?*", National Forum of Educational Administration and Supervision Journal, vol. 27, no. 4, 2010, pp. 1-13.

[8] L. Wrigley, "*Leonard, P., & Wilde, R. (2019). Getting In and Getting On in the Youth Labour Market: Governing Young People's Employability in Regional Context. Bristol: Policy Press*," Journal of Applied Youth Studies, vol. 4, April 2021, pp. 201-203, https//doi.org/10.1007/s43151-021-0032-w.

[9] O. P. Akinnubi, O. A. Owonwami, S. N. Salman, "*Principals' Administrative Skills in Public Senior Secondary Schools: A Case of Llorin Nigeria*," Journal of Educational Management and Instruction, vol. 3, no. 2, March 2024, https://doi.org/jemin.v3i2.8501.

[10] S. Sudyaningsih, I. K. Aryani, "*Implementation of Managerial Supervision in Improving School Administration through Monitoring and Evaluation Techniques at Mangunharjo State Elementary School*," in the Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Social Science (ICSS), vol. 3, no. 1, 2024, 99. 190-198, https://doi.org/10.59188/icss.v3i1.185.

[11] S. C. Huang, S. C. Lin, Y. Zhang, "*When Individual Goal Pursuit Turns Competitive: How We Sabotage and Coast*," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, vol. 117, no. 3, January 2019, pp. 605-620, https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000170.

[12] S. Bello, M. B. Ibi, I. B. Bukar, "*Principals' Administrative Styles and Students' Academic Performance in Taraba State Secondary Schools*," Journal of Education and Practice, vol. 7, no. 18, 2016, pp. 62-69, https://iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JEP/article/view/31209/32046#google_vignette.