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**Instructional Leadership Needs among School Heads: Basis for a Development Program**

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**Abstract.** This descriptive survey research sought to identify the instructional leadership needs of school administrators in the Schools Division of Meycauayan City and these instructional leadership needs served as the basis of a need-driven leadership development program for school heads.

This study is grounded on the Theory of Supervisory Practice of Sergiovanni (1985). This theory is designed to improve instruction and the quality of classroom life through the integration of scientific, artistic, and clinical supervision methods.

The school administrators' instructional leadership competencies were assessed through the National Competency-Based Standards for School Heads (NCBSSH). The data gathered were analyzed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) program to obtain research statistics. Descriptive test, specifically the Mean was used to describe the instructional leadership experience, educational preparation and instructional leadership competencies of school heads.

Based from the result of the study, all the nineteen (19) indicators of the instructional leadership domain of the NCBSSH are qualitatively described as competencies that Need Enhancement Training (NET). All the school heads need training in the instructional leadership domain. They are doing all the competencies but they need to improve on all the indicators of the mentioned domain. These needs served as the basis of a need-driven leadership development program for school heads.

**Keywords:** instructional leadership, leadership development program

### **Introduction**

Principals play a vital role in setting the direction for continuous improvement of learning and development of schools, but existing management development programs for the best ways of preparing and developing principals in order to enhance their instructional leadership skills are sparse. As instructional leadership is a vital part in the management of schools and a common part of a school principal's life, how they face, deal and solve instructional issues and problems makes a big difference. Some sink with the issues and problems and some learn to swim by effectively facing, dealing and solving them. Others are left exhausted, frustrated and stressed out while others face and accept such issues and problems as part of the many challenges in an administrator's life. In order to craft an effective Leadership Development Program based on the Instructional needs of school heads, this research is conducted.

Earlier research by Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe and Meyerson (2005) cited that effective school leadership is a key factor in high student achievement but additional research is required to understand how to best develop these leaders. As researches such as this one have established a significant relationship between school leadership and high student achievement, helping school heads to be better leaders in terms of instructional leadership through a Leadership Development Program based on their needs is an objective of this study.

The latest research of Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr and Cohen (2007) mentioned that specific leadership practices have been associated with active and effective

support of instructional improvement. According to research by Leithwood and Jantzi (2000), the most critical practices involve: working directly with teachers to improve effectiveness in the classroom, providing resources and professional development to improve instruction, regularly monitoring teaching and student progress, participating in discussions on educational issues, and promoting parental and community involvement in the school.

The leadership capacities and practices identified by Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) are consistent with professional standards established by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) in the United States. According to them, while no list of practices can fully predict whether a leader will be effective in a given context, the capacity to lead in ways that both support teaching and develop productive school organizations appears to be a baseline requirement, a necessary if not sufficient condition, for school leadership.

### Data and Methods

This is a descriptive survey research to identify the instructional needs of school administrators in the management of their schools and these served as the basis of a need-driven leadership development program for school heads. For the reason that there are only 25 elementary schools and 6 secondary schools in the Division of Meycauayan City, a purposive sampling of respondent-school administrators was used in this study. The respondents included all the school administrators in the City Division.

The instrument is composed of three parts. Part I is the number of years of experience of the school head. Part II is the educational preparation of school heads. Part III is the Assessment of the School Administrator's Instructional Leadership Competencies through the National Competency-Based Standards for School Heads (NCBSSH).

The names of the school heads were kept confidential. After collecting the questionnaires, the data were analyzed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) program to obtain research statistics. Descriptive test was used to describe the instructional leadership experience, educational preparation and instructional leadership competencies of school heads. For each competency of instructional leadership, there were four possible responses with corresponding scores within a scale as shown below:

I am not doing this yet	1
I am doing a little of this and I need to learn more	2
I am doing it but I need to improve	3
I am doing it well and can lead others do the same	4

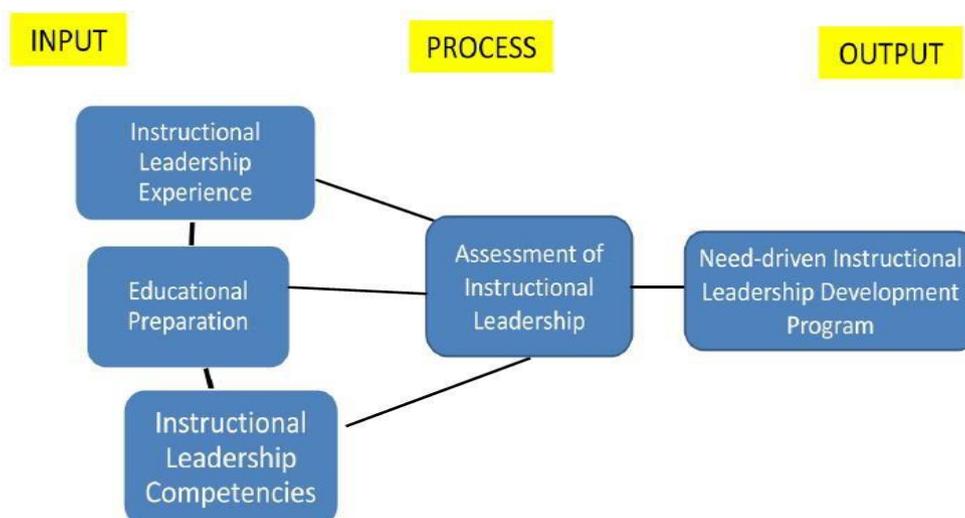
The following scale ranges with corresponding qualitative equivalents was used to interpret each average score in the instructional leadership domain.

Score Range	Qualitative	Descriptor
<b>1.00 – 1.49</b> Not doing this yet	Urgent Need for Training (UNT)	The SH identifies competencies in this range as priority needs for professional development.
<b>1.50 – 2.49</b> Doing a little of this and need to learn more	Strong Need for Training (SNT)	
<b>2.50 – 3.49</b> Doing it but need to improve	Need Enhancement Training (NET)	The SH identifies competencies in this range as secondary needs for professional development.

3.50 – 4.00 Doing it well and can lead others do the same	Can Support Training (CST)	The SH identifies competencies in this range as strong qualities/abilities that may enable him/her to help in the professional development of colleagues.
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In the distribution of survey questionnaires, the names of the school heads were kept confidential in order to maintain the anonymity of the respondents and secure the confidentiality of the respondents' instructional leadership competencies. This ethical consideration avoided the tagging/labelling of school heads based on their instructional leadership competencies and protected their instructional leadership profile.

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of this study.



**Figure 1. Conceptual model of the study**

## Results

### Instructional Leadership Experience

The first question posited in this study was the instructional leadership experience of school heads. 9 out of 31 or 30% of school heads has an experience of only one year. About 10% has 2 years of experience and another 10% has 3 years of experience. 13% of the respondent has 4 years of experience and 16% has 6 years of experience. Six percent each comprised those with 7, 9 and 10 years of experience and only one or 3% has 22 years of experience. About half of the respondents has 3 years and below of instructional leadership experience. The other half has 4 to 22 years of experience.

### Educational Preparation

All the respondents had pursued post graduate courses. 18 or 58% has masteral units. About one-fourth or 23% has earned a masteral degree. 5 or 16% has doctoral units and 1 or 3% has earned a doctoral degree. It can be inferred that all the respondents tried to continue their professional development by pursuing post graduate courses.

### Instructional Leadership Competencies

The instructional leadership competencies of the school heads of elementary and secondary of the Schools Division of Meycauayan City based on their self-assessment of these

competencies as indicated in the instructional leadership domain of the National Competency-Based Standards for School Heads (NCBSSH) is described in the following table.

**Table 1: Instructional Leadership Competencies**

Competency Domain/Strand	Mean	Qualitative
1. Manages the processes and procedures in monitoring student achievement	2.97	NET
2. Ensures utilization of a range of assessment processes to assess student performance	2.87	NET
3. Assesses the effectiveness of curricular/co-curricular programs and / or instructional strategies	3.03	NET
4. Utilizes assessment results to improve learning	3.13	NET
5. Creates & manages a school process to ensure student progress is conveyed to students and parents/guardians regularly	2.97	NET
6. Develops/adapts a research-based school program	2.71	NET
7. Assists in developing and implementing a coherent and responsive school-wide curriculum	2.97	NET
8. Addresses deficiencies and sustains successes of current programs in collaboration with the teachers, learners and stakeholders	3.06	NET
9. Develops a culture of functional literacy	3.10	NET
10. Manages the introduction of curriculum initiatives in line w/ DepEd policies (e.g. BEC, Madrasah)	2.97	NET
11. Works with teachers in curriculum review	3.10	NET
12. Enriches curricular offerings based on local needs	2.97	NET
13. Manages curriculum innovation and enrichment with the use of technology	3.00	NET
14. Organizes teams to champion instructional innovation programs toward curricular responsiveness	2.97	NET
15. Prepares and implements an instructional supervisory plan	3.26	NET
16. Conducts Instructional Supervision using appropriate strategy	3.10	NET
17. Evaluates lesson plans as well as classroom and learning management	3.19	NET
18. Provides in a collegial manner timely, accurate and specific feedback in a collegial manner to teachers regarding performance	3.00	NET
19. Provides expert technical assistance / expertise and instructional support to teachers	3.00	NET
<b>GENERAL WEIGHTED MEAN</b>	<b>3.02</b>	<b>NET</b>

**Legend: 2.50-3.49 - NET- Need Enhancement Training**

Based on the self-assessment of school heads, all the nineteen (19) indicators of the instructional leadership domain of the National Competency-Based Standards for School Heads (NCBSSH) are qualitatively described as competencies that Need Enhancement Training (NET). The General Weighted Mean is **3.02**. This means that school heads identified these instructional leadership competencies need professional development. All the school heads need training in the instructional leadership domain. They are doing all the competencies but they need to improve on all the indicators of the mentioned domain.

## Conclusions

### Instructional Leadership Experience

As experience is the best teacher, the experience of school heads as instructional leaders contributed to their competencies.

### Educational Preparation

Educational Preparation of school heads has an influence on their leadership skills and habits. As taking master's and doctoral degree gave them the learning opportunities to interact with other educational leaders, knowledge, skills and attitudes are further developed and enhanced through intelligent discussions and educational social interactions.

### Instructional Leadership Competencies

School Heads need enhancement training on all the indicators of instructional leadership competencies. This served as the basis of the Instructional Leadership Development Program for elementary and secondary School Heads of the Schools Division of Meycauayan City.

Using the IPO (Input-Process-Output) model in this study and the need-driven instructional leadership development program for school administrators as the output, this study has helped school administrators to be effective instructional leaders who can strategically address issues and problems in the instructional management of schools and shape schools into vibrant learning communities. With the so called principal empowerment (Republic Act 9155), this study helped principals to be creative in solving instructional issues and problems at their own level.

This leadership development program for school administrators helped them meet the increasingly tough expectations of their jobs. They were better prepared in facing the challenges of managing schools. This supported them to do a better job in integrating theory and practice in instructional leadership. This served as their guide in managing schools and in avoiding problems that may arise from poor instructional management.

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