

Administrative Leadership Practices in the Development, Monitoring, And Sustainability of the Phil-IRI Program under the MATATAG Curriculum

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.91100482>

Received: 26 November 2025; Accepted: 03 December 2025; Published: 20 December 2025

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the critical role of school administrators in the implementation of the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) within the context of the newly introduced MATATAG Curriculum. Conducted in the Tagoloan East and West Districts of the Division of Misamis Oriental, the research employed a mixed-methods explanatory sequential design to evaluate administrative strategies across three domains: Development, Monitoring, and Sustainability. Data were collected from 51 Grade 4–6 teachers through the Standard Survey Questionnaire (SSQ) and open-ended qualitative inquiries.

The findings indicate a strong administrative presence in the **Development Phase** (Composite Mean: 3.38), characterized by effective logistical planning and resource provision, though gaps remain in communicating long-term strategic visions. The **Monitoring Phase** (Composite Mean: 3.37) revealed robust compliance with data collection and classroom observation, yet highlighted a need for more specific, actionable instructional feedback. The **Sustainability Phase** (Composite Mean: 3.29) demonstrated high engagement in stakeholder partnerships and teacher recognition but exposed vulnerabilities regarding long-term institutionalization independent of current leadership. Qualitative analysis surfaced five key themes: administrative responsiveness to workload, the challenge of irregular learner attendance, the necessity of schedule adjustments, the impact of material delays, and the emerging role of private-sector partnerships (e.g., San Miguel Corporation). The study concludes that while operational leadership is strong, a shift toward *Distributed* and *Transformational Leadership* is essential for deep-seated literacy reform. Recommendations include formalizing peer-mentoring systems, institutionalizing community partnerships, and enhancing strategic communication to align daily tasks with the broader literacy goals of the MATATAG Curriculum.

Keywords: Phil-IRI, Administrative Leadership, Distributed Leadership, MATATAG Curriculum, Literacy Sustainability, School-Based Management.

INTRODUCTION

The Context of the Literacy Crisis Reading proficiency is the cornerstone of academic success and lifelong learning. However, the Philippine educational landscape is currently grappling with a severe "learning poverty" crisis. As highlighted by the World Bank (2022), approximately 91% of Filipino children at age 10 struggle to read and understand simple age-appropriate text. This alarming statistic, further corroborated by the Philippines' performance in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), underscores an urgent need for systemic intervention.

The introduction of the MATATAG Curriculum in 2023 signals DepEd's measure against these systemized concerns. Through decongesting the curriculum and narrowing its focus on core competencies, such as reading and literacy, MATATAG seeks to give more instructional time and more direct route for focused learning to teachers (DepEd, 2023). This realignment is seen to create a more fertile soil for successful Phil-IRI

implementation, with greater scope for in-depth learning as well as more effective interventions. In this shifting educational environment, the position of school administrators positions itself inevitably at center stage. Administrators are not just policy implementers; they are strategic leaders tasked with taking national mandates and converting them into operational school-wide initiatives. Their roles include resource allocation, nurturing a positive school culture, providing opportunities for professional growth, and closing the gap between policy and practice (Culduz, M. (2024)). Their ability to lead will consequently be a critical factor in determining the success and sustainability of reading programs under the new curriculum.

Even with this critical function, there is clear shortage of empirical evidence in particular outlining the actual tactics administrators adopt to truly build, assiduously track, and successfully maintain district-wide reading programs, particularly in the ever-changing environment of the MATATAG Curriculum and ongoing use of Phil-IRI data (Almagro, R., Flores, L. C., & Amora, M. V. (2024). Recognizing how administrators apply underlying leadership theories—like Transformational Leadership to foster commitment and vision, Instructional Leadership to drive pedagogy and curriculum directly, and Distributed Leadership to facilitate collaborative action—is essential for discovering outstanding practices and bridging implementation gaps. Unless there is a full appreciation of these administrative approaches, attempts to enhance reading performance could remain piecemeal, insufficient in building the strategic and focused leadership required for far-reaching and systemic change in learner literacy within districts such as Tagoloan West and East Districts.

Administrative support and leadership are critical in the successful implementation of reading programs. Illescas and Manzano (2023) examined the challenges and practices of school-based management in public elementary schools, identifying effective leadership as a pivotal factor in program success. Ormilla and Dupra (2023) further explored the readiness of higher education institutions for quality assurance, underscoring the role of institutional preparedness in educational initiatives.

In response, the Department of Education (DepEd) introduced the **MATATAG Curriculum** in 2023. This curriculum aims to decongest the previous K-12 framework and refocus efforts on foundational skills, particularly literacy and numeracy. Central to this literacy drive is the **Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI)**, a mandated diagnostic tool used to assess reading levels (Frustration, Instructional, Independent) and guide remedial instruction.

The Problem Statement While the policy framework—via DepEd Order No. 14, s. 2018 and the MATATAG guidelines—is clear, the translation of these policies into effective school-based practices remains inconsistent. The success of district-wide reading programs depends heavily on the "middle layer" of the education system: the school administrators. Principals and school heads act as the bridge between national mandates and classroom reality.

However, existing literature suggests that administration of the Phil-IRI is often hampered by logistical challenges, teacher burnout, and a compliance-driven mindset rather than a pedagogical one. Nevertheless, the implementation of reading programs such as Phil-IRI at the field level still encounters substantial challenges. Research from 2021 to date indicates recurring problems like inadequate training of teachers, lack of resources, time limitations, and non-coercive use of interventions, which all contribute to undermining the program's desired effect (Abril et al., 2022; IJARIIS, 2024; IJFMR, 2025). While the MATATAG Curriculum seeks to produce a more supportive learning environment for reading instruction, the key function of school administrators in implementing these reforms into successful, long-term districtwide reading programs remains understudied in empirical research within the Philippine context. This Study attempted to answer the following specific questions:

There is limited empirical research on *how* administrators specifically navigate these challenges under the new MATATAG Curriculum. Do they merely enforce data submission, or do they actively cultivate a reading culture?

Objectives of the Study This study aims to fill that gap by evaluating the roles and strategies of school administrators in the Tagoloan East and West Districts. It seeks to:

1. Assess administrative involvement in the **Development** of the Phil-IRI program (planning, resource allocation).
2. Evaluate strategies used for **Monitoring** implementation (supervision, feedback, data analysis).
3. Determine approaches for ensuring **Sustainability** (long-term planning, stakeholder engagement).
4. Correlate specific leadership behaviors (Transformational, Instructional, Distributed) with perceived program effectiveness.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons:

- **For School Administrators:** It provides insights into effective leadership practices that can enhance the implementation and sustainability of reading programs, helping administrators refine their strategies.
- **For Teachers:** Understanding administrators' roles and strategies can foster better collaboration and support in reading instruction.
- **For Policy Makers and Education Leaders:** The findings can inform policy decisions and resource allocation to strengthen district-wide literacy initiatives.
- **For Researchers:** This study contributes to the limited literature on educational leadership in reading program implementation, particularly within the Philippine context.

Scope and Delimitations

This study focuses on school administrators and teachers involved in the PhilIRI reading program within a selected school district. It examines administrators' roles and strategies related to the development, monitoring, and sustainability of the program. The study does not directly assess student reading outcomes but relies on administrators' and teachers' perspectives and experiences.

Scope of the Study

This research concentrates on evaluating school administrator strategies in developing, monitoring, and maintaining district-wide reading programs, viz. the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI), in the context of the MATATAG Curriculum. It particularly looks at the impact of some administrative leadership behaviors on these strategies. Specifically, this study will:

1. Characterize the perceived administrative strategies used by school administrators in developing district-wide reading programs (Phil-IRI) under the MATATAG Curriculum.
2. Describe the perceived administrative approaches utilized by school administrators for tracking district-wide reading programs (Phil-IRI) under the MATATAG Curriculum.
3. Determine the perceived administrative approaches utilized by school administrators for maintaining district-wide reading programs (Phil-IRI) under the MATATAG Curriculum.
4. Evaluate how far administrators display leadership behaviors of Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, Shared Vision and Goal Setting, Collaborative Professional Learning, and Managing the Instructional Program (for Reading) in their Phil-IRI administration.
5. Examine the impact of the said specific administrative leadership behaviors on the perceived strategies for developing, monitoring, and maintaining district-wide reading programs (Phil-IRI).

6. Develop evidence-based recommendations to improve administrative plans for developing, monitoring, and maintaining effective district-wide reading programs under the MATATAG Curriculum.

The research will be carried out in sample public elementary of the Misamis Oriental Division, including administrators (Principals, School Heads, Assistant Principals, and Master teachers) and possibly lead reading program coordinators or lead teachers as major respondents. It will use quantitative research methods, that is, survey questionnaires to collect perceptions, and possibly qualitative interviews for richer information.

Limitations of the Study

Though this study intends to present meaningful insights, its layouts the following limitations:

1. **Geographical Scope:** The study focuses to the elementary schools in the Tagoloan East and West Districts, and it may not be able to generalize results to schools in other areas of the country. The study is limited to public schools in the Cagayan de Oro City Division. Thus, the results and their generalizability need to be understood in this particular context, as different divisions or places may have distinct demographic, socio-economic, or administrative configurations that may affect leadership practices and program effects.
2. **Program Specificity:** The research focuses mainly on the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) as the representative district-wide reading program. Although other supplementary reading programs are implemented in schools, these will only be taken into account with reference to their direct connection and integration with Phil-IRI implementation strategies.
3. **Leadership Dimensions:** The investigation will be limited to five particular administrative leadership behaviors only, namely: Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, Shared Vision and Goal Setting, Collaborative Professional Learning, and Managing the Instructional Program (for Reading). Other leadership theories, administrative functions, or personal leader characteristics, as much as they relate to general school administration, are beyond the immediate purview of this research.
4. **Time Constraints:** The study will take place within a specific academic year, which may not reflect capture long-term trends and developments in reading proficiency.
5. **Data Collection Method:** The research will mainly draw on perceptual data gathered from self-report questionnaires and, if necessary, interviews. It will not contain direct observational data of leadership in operation over the long term, nor will it assess student reading proficiency gains directly as a dependent variable. The emphasis is still on the approaches taken by administrators and the perceived effect of their leadership behaviors.
6. **Self-Reported Data:** Teachers and administrators' perceptions will be collected through surveys and interviews, which could be prone to personal biases.
7. **Curriculum Implementation Stage:** The research will evaluate administrative approaches at the early-to-mid implementation stage of the MATATAG Curriculum. The longer-term effects and the complete transformation of administrative approaches under this new curriculum might only be clearly recognizable after a longer duration of implementation.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Theoretical Frameworks The study is anchored on three complementary leadership theories that explain how administrators influence school outcomes:

- **Transformational Leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1994):** This theory posits that leaders inspire change by creating a shared vision. In the context of Phil-IRI, a transformational leader moves teachers beyond "compliance" (administering the test because they have to) to "commitment" (administering the test to help students read). Key elements include *Inspirational Motivation* and *Intellectual Stimulation*. the

profound impact of transformational leadership on school effectiveness and student outcomes. For instance, Kim et al. (2021) found that principals exhibiting transformational leadership behaviors significantly influenced teacher commitment and professional learning, which are indirect drivers of improved instructional quality. Specifically concerning literacy, Jallon et al. (2023) highlighted how school leaders who inspire a shared vision for literacy, emphasizing its importance and fostering a sense of collective purpose, can cultivate a school culture where reading is genuinely prioritized. This inspirational motivation by administrators is critical for garnering initial buy-in and sustaining engagement from teachers and staff in new or challenging reading programs like Phil-IRI (Jallon et al., 2023). Furthermore, Kouzes and Posner (2023) reiterated the enduring power of inspirational leadership in motivating collective action, suggesting that administrators who effectively articulate a clear vision for literacy growth can mobilize resources and efforts towards its achievement. The Intellectual Stimulation aspect, which encourages teachers to question established pedagogical routines and explore innovative approaches to reading instruction and Phil-IRI data utilization, is also consistently linked to school improvement (Culduz, 2024).

- **Instructional Leadership (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985):** This focuses on the principal's role in managing the curriculum and improving teaching. An instructional leader is hands-on, ensuring that Phil-IRI data is actually used to differentiate instruction rather than just being filed away. Contemporary research underscores the direct correlation between strong instructional leadership and enhanced student achievement, particularly in literacy. Al-Shara (2022), in a study on principal leadership, identified that principals who actively monitor curriculum implementation, provide targeted instructional feedback, and manage instructional resources significantly contribute to improved learning outcomes. For reading programs like Phil-IRI, an instructional leader's role extends to ensuring that assessment data is meaningfully interpreted and translated into differentiated instruction (IJFMR, 2025). Yildirim et al. (2021) emphasized that a principal's active participation in setting clear academic goals for literacy, providing instructional resources, and organizing relevant professional development are key to the successful implementation of reading programs. Furthermore, O'Donnell and O'Connell (2021) highlighted the critical need for instructional leaders to protect instructional time dedicated to reading and to champion evidence-based reading strategies, especially when navigating curriculum reforms. Thus, the administrator's direct engagement in managing the reading curriculum, monitoring teaching practices, and ensuring resource availability is a cornerstone of effective Phil-IRI implementation.
- **Distributed Leadership (Spillane, 2006):** This views leadership as a shared practice. It suggests that sustaining a reading program requires empowering teachers, reading coordinators, and even parents to take ownership. It moves away from the "hero-principal" model to a systems-based approach. Recent studies highlight the efficacy of distributed leadership in fostering collective teacher efficacy and sustained school improvement, particularly in complex initiatives like literacy programs. Harris (2021) argued that distributing leadership for literacy development empowers teachers, encourages collaborative problem-solving, and builds a sustainable capacity for change within the school. When administrators foster a culture where the vision and goals for the reading program are mutually developed and owned by teachers, it leads to greater commitment and more effective implementation (Almagro et al., 2024). Rivera-Cintrón (2022) found that schools where professional learning communities (PLCs) engaged in collaborative data analysis and shared pedagogical development, facilitated by distributed leadership, showed more consistent improvements in reading outcomes. This model directly supports the ongoing monitoring of Phil-IRI data and the sustainability of interventions, as collective expertise is leveraged to identify needs and devise solutions (IJARIIS, 2024). Administrators embodying distributed leadership traits, therefore, strategically empower teachers to take ownership of literacy goals, ensuring a more resilient and adaptable reading program.

The Role of Administrators in Literacy Literature indicates that successful reading programs share common administrative traits. Llego (2021) and DepEd mandates emphasize that administrators must be "orchestrators" who ensure materials are ready and training is provided. However, challenges persist. Studies by Abril et al. (2022) and others highlight that operational hurdles—such as lack of reproduction funds for reading passages, insufficient teacher training on reading pedagogy, and time constraints—often derail implementation.

Administrators are pivotal in the monitoring and evaluation of reading programs. Dinoro et al. (2023) point out that while classroom teachers conduct the Phil-IRI assessments, administrators ensure fidelity of implementation by organizing training sessions, checking compliance through classroom observations, and using data analytics to track learner progress across the district. Phil-IRI results are often used in Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions led by school heads to recalibrate strategies based on emerging trends in student reading performance. This managerial oversight ensures that data collection translates into instructional decisions.

Long-term success of reading interventions requires not just initial efforts but sustainability plans steered by capable administrators. A study on management support practices in Panabo City (2023) emphasized that school heads and supervisors were instrumental in maintaining the momentum of reading programs by ensuring continued funding, resource procurement (e.g., books, tablets), and forging partnerships with NGOs and LGUs. Administrators also institutionalized reading by incorporating it into performance appraisals, school-based management tools, and recognizing teachers or students through awards—thus motivating stakeholders to continuously support the program.

The Sustainability Challenge Sustainability is the most difficult phase of any educational reform. Fullan (2007) argues that reforms often fade when the initial champion (the principal) leaves. To achieve sustainability, the program must be institutionalized into the school culture. This involves "systems thinking," where reading programs are integrated into the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and supported by external stakeholders. Recent studies (Almagro et al., 2024) in the Philippine context highlight that engaging Local Government Units (LGUs) and parents is critical for securing the resources necessary to sustain remedial reading camps and material production over the long term. School administrators are crucial in directly addressing persistent challenges such as teacher workload, limited resources, and potential burnout, which can hinder program continuity. Strategies to streamline administrative processes, provide sufficient materials, and offer continuous support are essential to mitigate these barriers (IJFMR, 2025). The need for "additional means or activities" (TIJER, 2025) reinforces that administrators must continuously seek solutions to persistent issues.

Despite significant investments and efforts, widespread reading comprehension deficiencies persist among Filipino learners. As highlighted in the World Bank (2022) report, the country faces a substantial "learning poverty," with a vast majority of 10-year-olds struggling with basic reading. This grim reality is consistently reflected in international assessments such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), where Filipino students have consistently ranked low in reading literacy (OECD, 2018; OECD, 2022). These data underscore systemic issues that go beyond individual classroom practices, pointing to the need for robust, school-wide, and district-level strategies (Academe, n.d.).

Teacher Workload and Burnout A significant theme in recent literature (Moore, 2023; Guimary et al., 2022) is the impact of workload on intervention fidelity. When teachers are overwhelmed by administrative tasks, specialized interventions like Phil-IRI remediation are often the first to suffer. Effective administrators are those who recognize this and employ strategies to "buffer" teachers from external distractions, allowing them to focus on instruction. The recent introduction of the MATATAG Curriculum (DepEd Order No. 010, s. 2023) marks a significant reform aimed at enhancing foundational education, particularly literacy. The curriculum's thrust includes decongesting learning competencies and intensifying the focus on essential skills, with a clear emphasis on reading, language, and mathematics (DepEd, 2023a; IJMABER, 2025). This recalibration is intended to provide teachers with more instructional time and a clearer pedagogical path to address learning gaps. The success of MATATAG's literacy component, however, is heavily dependent on how effectively school administrators facilitate its implementation and integrate existing tools like Phil-IRI within this new framework. Initial observations suggest that while the curriculum provides a strong framework, its real impact will depend on the capacity of schools to adapt, innovate, and sustain these changes, underscoring the critical role of administrative strategies (ResearchGate, 2024a).

School and Stakeholder Coordination Lucero (2021) investigated the challenges faced during reading program execution and found that most problems—such as lack of reading materials, poor parent involvement, and low teacher motivation—could be mitigated by proactive administrators. For instance, school leaders who conducted regular stakeholder orientations, literacy forums, and parent-teacher conferences reported higher reading

engagement. Similarly, administrators who secured partnerships with local libraries or private donors could supply classrooms with much-needed books and materials, mitigating resource-related challenges.

The effective development of a school-wide reading program goes beyond simply initiating it; it involves strategic planning, resource mobilization, and securing stakeholder buy-in. Fullan (2023) emphasized the importance of a clear vision and collective purpose during the initiation phase of any educational reform. For reading programs, this translates to administrators leading comprehensive needs assessments (e.g., analyzing baseline Phil-IRI data), engaging teachers and parents in the planning process, and strategically allocating initial resources (financial, human, material) to support the program's launch (IIARI, 2025). A strong emphasis on Inspirational Motivation from the administrator during this phase can cultivate enthusiasm and a shared commitment, which is crucial for successful program adoption (Jallon et al., 2023). Simultaneously, Shared Vision and Goal Setting, driven by distributed leadership principles, ensures that the program's objectives for literacy are collectively understood and owned from the outset, laying a solid foundation (Almagro et al., 2024).

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology employed in this study was rigorously structured to ensure both the breadth of quantitative assessment and the depth of qualitative understanding, thereby providing a comprehensive analysis of administrative practices. This section details the research design, the selection of the setting and participants, the instrumentation used, the data gathering procedure, and the statistical and thematic analyses applied.

3.1 Research Design The study utilized a **Mixed Methods Research Design**, specifically the **Explanatory Sequential Design** (Creswell, 2014). This approach is characterized by the sequential collection and analysis of two distinct forms of data, where the quantitative phase (QUAN) occurs first, followed by the qualitative phase (QUAL).

- **Phase 1 (Quantitative):** A survey questionnaire was administered to assess the extent of teacher perceptions regarding administrative support across the three crucial domains: Development, Monitoring, and Sustainability. This phase provided statistical generalizations and established the magnitude of administrative involvement using standardized metrics.
- **Phase 2 (Qualitative):** Open-ended questions were then analyzed to **explain, elaborate, and contextualize** the quantitative findings. This phase provided the rich, descriptive narratives and specific examples—such as the role of schedule adjustments and the impact of partnerships with entities like San Miguel Corporation—that are essential for a nuanced understanding of the implementation challenges and supportive leadership behaviors. The triangulation of quantitative results (what is happening) with qualitative insights (how and why it is happening) significantly enhanced the validity and trustworthiness of the overall conclusions.

Research Setting and Participants

Research Setting

The study was delimited to the Tagoloan East and West Districts within the Division of Misamis Oriental, Northern Mindanao, Philippines. The selection of this setting was deliberate and grounded in diagnostic evidence. Official Phil-IRI data for the academic year 2024-2025 indicated a high number of learners at the "Frustration Level" (classified as "alphabet readers") within these districts. This demographic profile signaled an urgent need for robust administrative intervention and provided a context where the fidelity and effectiveness of Phil-IRI implementation were most critical. The performance metrics of these districts, therefore, offered a high-stakes environment for studying administrative leadership. **Respondents:** 51 Teachers (Grades 4, 5, and 6) who are directly responsible for administering the Phil-IRI and conducting remedial reading classes. The majority of respondents (88.2%) were from Tagoloan East.

Participants and Sampling

The target respondents were **51 teachers** from Grades 4, 5, and 6 who were **directly responsible** for administering the Phil-IRI tool and conducting remedial reading classes. The focus on the intermediate grades (G4-G6) was strategic, as this period marks the critical transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn," making the effectiveness of the Phil-IRI-based interventions paramount.

The sampling technique used was **Purposive Sampling**. This non-probability method allowed the researchers to specifically select individuals who possessed the necessary expertise and direct experience with the phenomenon under investigation (Phil-IRI implementation and administrative support).

Distribution of Respondents:

- **Total Respondents:** 51 Teachers
- **District Composition:** The majority of respondents (**88.2%**) were sourced from the Tagoloan East District, with the remaining **11.8%** from the Tagoloan West District, reflecting the practical distribution and accessibility within the research timeframe.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to data collection, comprehensive ethical protocols were strictly observed. Formal approval was secured from the respective District Superintendents and School Administrators. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed by ensuring that no identifying personal information (names, specific schools) was collected alongside the responses. Informed consent was obtained from all 51 participants before they completed the survey and open-ended questions.

Instrumentation The primary data collection instrument was a two-part questionnaire: the **Standard Survey Questionnaire (SSQ)** for quantitative data, and **Open-Ended Questions** for qualitative data.

The SSQ was adapted from established leadership scales, including the **Multifactorial Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)**, to ensure content validity related to Transformational, Instructional, and Distributed Leadership. The instrument was structured into **three distinct variables**, corresponding to the research objectives:

1. **Development:** Focused on planning, preparation, and resource allocation (e.g., *material readiness, communication of plans*).
2. **Monitoring:** Focused on supervision, data analysis, and instructional support (e.g., *classroom observation, specificity of feedback*).
3. **Sustainability:** Focused on long-term institutionalization, capacity building, and stakeholder engagement (e.g., *continuity planning, community partnerships*).

The SSQ employed a **4-point Likert Scale**, ranging from:

- 4 – Strongly Agree (SA)
- 3 – Agree (A)
- 2 – Disagree (D)
- 1 – Strongly Disagree (SD)

This ordinal scale was chosen to measure the perceived extent of administrative practices, forcing a clear stance without allowing a neutral option, thus providing clearer data points for analysis. The instrument was pilot-tested and subjected to expert validation to ensure clarity, relevance to the Phil-IRI program, and reliability.

Qualitative Instrument (Open-Ended Questions)

The qualitative component consisted of a set of open-ended questions designed to elicit rich narratives related to the administrators' support mechanisms, encountered challenges, and specific recommendations for improvement. These questions were strategically placed immediately following the quantitative survey to provide context and elaboration on the statistical trends observed. The specific questions were:

1. What kind of professional support from your school administrators has helped you the most in implementing the Phil-IRI reading program?
2. What challenges do you encounter when implementing the Phil-IRI program, and how do administrators help you address these challenges?
3. What additional strategies or resources would you recommend to improve the monitoring and sustainability of the Phil-IRI program in your school?

Data Gathering Procedure

The data collection process adhered to a rigorous, systematic procedure to ensure data integrity and maximize the response rate.

Administrative Approval: The researcher secured endorsement letters from the University Graduate School and sought formal permission from the Division Superintendent and the respective District Supervisors of Tagoloan East and West.

Coordination with Administrators: The researcher met with school administrators to explain the study's purpose, scope, and the confidentiality protocols. The administrators' role was limited to facilitating access to the teacher-respondents.

Respondent Orientation and Consent: Teachers were gathered in a common area (e.g., faculty room) and were provided with a detailed orientation regarding the research objectives and ethical assurances. They were given ample time to read and sign the informed consent forms.

Instrument Administration: The survey questionnaires (SSQ and open-ended questions) were distributed simultaneously. The standardized instructions were read aloud, and the researcher clarified any questions regarding the scales or the content of the items.

Collection and Data Preparation: The completed instruments were immediately collected by the researcher. Data entry and cleaning followed, ensuring that all 51 responses were accurately transcribed into the statistical software for analysis.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involved a sequential process integrating both descriptive statistics for the quantitative data and thematic analysis for the qualitative data.

Descriptive statistics were the primary tools used to summarize the data.

1. **Frequency and Percentage Distribution:** Used to describe the demographic profile of the respondents (e.g., district, grade level taught).

2. **Weighted Mean:** Employed to determine the extent of administrative strategies across the three domains. The weighted mean (\bar{x}) for each indicator and the composite mean for each domain were calculated using the formula:

$$\sum_{i=1}^n x^4 = \frac{n(n+1)(6n^3 + 9n^2 + n - 1)}{30}$$

Where:

- x = Weighted Mean
- w = Weight of the response (4, 3, 2, or 1)
- F = Frequency of each response
- N = Total number of respondents (51)

Interpretation: The resulting mean scores were interpreted using a four-level scale to provide meaningful academic context:

- **3.25 – 4.00: Very High (VH):** Indicating a robust and consistent implementation, strongly agreed upon by the teachers.
- **2.50 – 3.24: High (H):** Indicating a positive and generally effective implementation.
- **1.75 – 2.49: Low (L):** Indicating inconsistency and areas needing significant improvement.
- **1.00 – 1.74: Very Low (VL):** Indicating minimal or ineffective administrative practice.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The open-ended responses were analyzed using **Thematic Analysis** (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process involved a structured, six-phase approach to ensure the reliability and validity of the emergent themes:

1. **Familiarization:** The researcher repeatedly read all open-ended responses to gain a holistic understanding of the data's content and nuances.
2. **Generating Initial Codes:** Relevant excerpts, phrases, and keywords were systematically tagged with descriptive codes (e.g., "material provision," "schedule flexibility," "delayed forms").
3. **Searching for Themes:** Codes were grouped based on semantic relevance to form potential overarching themes related to support, challenges, or recommendations.
4. **Reviewing Themes:** The potential themes were reviewed against the entire dataset to ensure they accurately captured the meaning of the underlying codes and to identify any contradictory cases. Themes were refined (e.g., grouping "schedule flexibility" and "intervening with parents" under the theme of "Administrative Responsiveness").
5. **Defining and Naming Themes:** Final, distinct themes were defined, ensuring they clearly articulated the narrative provided by the teachers (e.g., "The Supply Chain Issue," "Public-Private Partnerships").
6. **Producing the Report:** The final themes and supporting direct quotations were integrated with the quantitative results to provide the triangulated findings in Chapter 4. The consistency between the high

quantitative scores on logistics and the qualitative theme of "Material Support" served as a crucial validation of the overall data interpretation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data reveals a generally **positive perception** of administrative leadership, characterized by high composite means across all three domains of the Phil-IRI program implementation (Development, Monitoring, and Sustainability). However, a granular look at the specific indicators and integrated qualitative responses exposes the nuanced difference between mere **"operational readiness"** and true **"strategic depth"** in leadership practice. The discussion integrates the quantitative measures with the qualitative insights, utilizing the theoretical lenses of Transformational, Instructional, and Distributed Leadership.

The Development Domain: Logistics vs. Strategy

Composite Mean: 3.38 (Very High)

Survey Item	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Missing	Composite mean
My school administrator involves teachers in planning and implementation of the Phil-IRI assessment tool.	1	2	24	24	0	3.39
The instructions and objectives of the Phil-IRI assessment during pre and post-tests from school administrators are clear and easy to understand.	1	2	24	24	0	3.39
Our school leaders provide contingency resources and materials in case a material is faulty in producing passages to effectively implement the Phil-IRI assessment tool.	1	3	24	23	0	3.35
Our school administrators keep us informed about any updates or changes related to the Phil-IRI program.	0	0	21	30	0	3.59
The school administrator encourages collaboration among teachers to support the Phil-IRI assessment.	1	2	25	23	0	3.37
Our school administrators clearly explain how the Phil-IRI program supports the literacy goals in LAC Session through school-based as part	1	3	28	19	0	3.27

of the MATATAG Curriculum.						
Our school administrators encourage participation from parents and the community in the initial planning of reading support activities (GPTA Meetings).	1	4	26	20	0	3.27
Administrators ensure that Phil-IRI assessment tools and forms are readily available before the assessment period begins.	1	2	24	24	0	3.39
I believe that administrators proactively address potential administrative barriers (e.g., lack of time, competing priorities) during the planning phase of Phil-IRI.	1	3	27	20	0	3.39
Our administrators make efforts to secure additional resources (books, bond papers, printers) for the Phil-IRI implementation from external sources (e.g., NGOs, private companies).	0	3	25	23	0	3.39
Our School Administrators effectively manage the distribution and inventory of Phil-IRI related materials and resources within the school.	1	3	25	22	0	3.33
As a teacher I am aware of the overall plan or strategy for developing and implementing the Phil-IRI Implementation in our school.	1	3	29	18	0	3.25

Quantitative Findings on Logistical Readiness: The results strongly indicate that administrators excel in the **logistical aspects** of program development. The highest-rated indicators involved the provision of assessment tools (94.1% agreement) and consistently keeping teachers informed of updates (94.1% agreement). Teachers felt that the **"basics" were covered**—paperwork, forms, and schedules were managed effectively, fulfilling the basic requirements of the DepEd mandate.

Discussion: Strong Instructional Management: This high rating reflects the effective execution of Instructional Leadership, specifically the dimension of "managing the instructional program." Administrators are ensuring the "conditions for learning" are met by proactively removing material and informational barriers. The qualitative data strongly supported this, with teachers citing "Provision of reading materials for independent

readers" and assessment tools as the single most helpful support received. This proactive stance buffers teachers from the typical resource-related frustrations noted in the literature (Abril et al., 2022).

The Strategic Gap: Lack of Transformational Vision: However, a critical finding emerges from the lowest-rated item in this domain: teacher awareness of the overall plan or strategy (56.9% awareness, though still generating a 'Very High' mean of 3.25). This indicates a significant gap in Transformational Leadership. While teachers know *what* to do (administer the test), they may not fully grasp the strategic vision or understand *how* the Phil-IRI data fits into the long-term school improvement goals of the MATATAG Curriculum. As Fullan (2007) notes, without a shared vision, implementation can become superficial compliance. Administrators are proficiently managing the *tasks* but need to improve in communicating the overarching *mission*

The Monitoring Domain: Surveillance vs. Support

Composite Mean: 3.37 (Very High)

Survey Item	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Missing	Composite mean
Administrators regularly check and monitor how the Phil-IRI program is being implemented in our classrooms.	1	2	25	23	0	3.37
Feedback from administrators helps me improve my reading instruction based on Phil-IRI assessment results.	1	2	26	22	0	3.35
Professional development sessions or training related to Phil-IRI are organized or supported by school administrators.	1	2	25	23	0	3.37
When I encountered problems/confusions in implementing the Phil-IRI assessment, my administrator provides assistance or guidance.	1	2	24	24	0	3.39
There is consistent follow-up from administrators to ensure that reading interventions for struggling students are applied properly.	1	2	25	23	0	3.37
Administrators ensure that Phil-IRI assessment data is collected from all students as required.	0	2	23	26	0	3.47

I receive clear instructions from administrators on how to submit Phil-IRI data and reports.	1	2	24	24	0	3.39
Administrators actively analyze Phil-IRI results (e.g., comparing pre-tests to post-tests) to understand student progress at a school level.	1	3	27	20	0	3.29
Administrators use insights from Phil-IRI monitoring to identify specific areas where teachers need more support or training in reading instruction.	1	3	28	19	0	3.27
Classroom observations by administrators specifically focus on how effectively Phil-IRI strategies and interventions are being implemented.	1	4	27	19	0	3.25
The feedback I receive from administrators about Phil-IRI implementation is specific, actionable, and helps me improve.	2	3	26	20	0	3.27
There are regular meetings or discussions with administrators about our school's overall Phil-IRI monitoring results and next steps.	1	3	28	19	0	3.27
I feel supported by administrators to make adjustments to my reading instruction based on student progress observed through Phil-IRI.	1	3	27	20	0	3.29
Administrators communicate the overall Phil-IRI reading progress of the school to the teaching staff and other stakeholders.	1	2	25	23	0	3.37
Administrators ensure that Phil-IRI monitoring data is	1	1 23	27	20	0	

used to identify students who require specialized reading interventions (e.g., SPED, remedial classes).						3.46
I understand how the Phil-IRI monitoring data we collect is used by administrators to improve the overall school reading program.	1	3	28	19	0	3.27

Quantitative Findings on Monitoring Consistency: Monitoring is perceived as active and consistent. Teachers reported high agreement that administrators regularly check implementation (90.2% agreement) and ensure data is collected from all students (92.2% agreement). This confirms administrative adherence to compliance protocols and data accountability, a core function of Instructional Leadership.

Integrated Discussion: Adaptive Leadership and Workload Management: The quantitative consistency is powerfully contextualized by a crucial qualitative finding: Schedule Adjustments. Teachers noted that principals actively adjusted class schedules to accommodate the time-consuming nature of Phil-IRI assessments. This responsiveness to Teacher Workload is a critical enactment of Adaptive Leadership—changing the school structure to fit pedagogical necessity. This behavior directly validates the literature (Agaton & Cueto, 2021) which suggests that administrative flexibility is vital for maintaining program fidelity, as it acknowledges and mitigates the time constraints identified in the literature review (Moore, 2023).

The Gap: Insufficient Pedagogical Coaching: The weakness in this domain lies in the specificity of feedback. The lowest agreement (78.4%) in this section was regarding whether the feedback provided was specific and actionable. While monitoring happens, the feedback is often generic. Effective Instructional Leadership requires that observation feedback be pedagogical and actionable—telling a teacher exactly how to modify a reading intervention for a frustration-level reader, rather than just checking that the intervention occurred. This suggests that administrators need to upskill in literacy pedagogy themselves to provide better instructional mentorship and move the monitoring process beyond mere surveillance.

The Sustainability Domain: Institutionalization vs. Dependency

Composite Mean: 3.29 (High)

Survey Item	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Missing	Composite mean
Our school administrators have clear plans to sustain the Phil-IRI reading program over the long term.	1	3	27	20	0	3.29
Administrators actively involve parents and the community to support and sustain the reading implementation.	1	3	26	21	0	3.31
The school leadership recognizes and appreciates the efforts of teachers in	1	2	25	23	0	3.29

implementing the Phil-IRI program.						
Administrators regularly review and update the Phil-IRI program based on feedback from teachers.	1	3	27	20	0	3.35
I feel motivated and supported by my school administrators to continue implementing the Phil-IRI program effectively.	1	2	26	22	0	3.29
I believe the Phil-IRI program is deeply integrated into our school's overall academic goals and long-term planning, not just a temporary initiative.	1	3	27	20	0	3.27
There are ongoing professional development opportunities provided by administrators that help me maintain and improve my skills in Phil-IRI and reading instruction.	1	3	27	20	0	3.27
Administrators proactively address issues like teacher workload or burnout to ensure the long-term viability of the Phil-IRI program.	1	3	28	19	0	3.27
I perceive that new teachers joining our school are adequately onboarded and supported in their role regarding the Phil-IRI program.	1	3	28	19	0	3.27
Administrators effectively communicate the long-term vision and benefits of the Phil-IRI program, which encourages my continued commitment.	1	3	28	19	0	3.29
I am aware of how our school plans to continue the Phil-IRI program even with	1	3	28	19	0	3.27

potential changes in school leadership or staff.						
Our administrators foster a collaborative environment where teachers feel empowered to contribute ideas for the continuous improvement of the Phil-IRI program.	1	3	27	20	0	3.27
I perceive that administrators value teachers' input when making decisions about the long-term direction of the Phil-IRI program.	1	3	28	19	0	3.29
Administrators involve teachers in identifying and addressing challenges that could threaten the Phil-IRI program's longevity.	1	3	28	19	0	3.29
I feel that the successes and positive impacts of the Phil-IRI program are regularly celebrated and communicated by school administrators.	1	3	27	20	0	3.29
Administrators ensure that opportunities for peer learning or mentoring related to Phil-IRI practices are available to sustain teacher expertise.	1	3	27	20	0	3.29
Administrators actively seek ways to integrate the Phil-IRI program with other school initiatives to ensure its sustained relevance and support.	1	3	27	20	0	3.29

Quantitative Findings on Stakeholder Engagement: This domain scored the lowest overall, though still rated "High," highlighting the inherent difficulty of long-term program maintenance. Strengths included recognizing teacher efforts and actively involving parents in the program.

Integrated Discussion: Distributed Leadership and Resource Brokering: A standout qualitative finding was the emergence of **Public-Private Partnerships**. Teachers specifically mentioned collaboration with **San Miguel Corporation** and local NGOs to secure resources. These partnerships are concrete evidence of **Distributed Leadership** extending beyond the school walls. Administrators are acting as "boundary spanners" or **resource brokers**, a function essential for sustainability, especially given the chronic lack of funds for reading materials

in Philippine public schools. This validates the need to expand leadership functions to community actors (Spillane, 2006).

The Gap: Fragility of Continuity: A concerning finding is that only **78.4%** of teachers were aware of **continuity plans** in case of leadership turnover. This points to a fundamental fragility: if the current principal leaves, the program, which relies heavily on personal connections (e.g., the relationship with San Miguel Corp), might collapse. Sustainability is currently **driven by personality** (the current leader's energy and connections) rather than **policy** (institutionalized systems). True sustainability requires that the program be formally embedded in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and school culture so it survives inevitable leadership transitions, mitigating the risk identified by Fullan (2007).

Qualitative Themes and Integrated Insights

The qualitative analysis provided the "human story" behind the statistics, offering rich, integrated insights into the daily operational reality of Phil-IRI implementation. Five major themes emerged:

1. **Administrative Responsiveness:** This theme reinforced the high quantitative scores on monitoring and support. Teachers appreciated when leaders solved immediate, practical problems, such as intervening with parents when students had **irregular attendance** to ensure assessment completion. This highlights a supportive, hands-on style of leadership.
2. **Workload Constraints:** Despite administrative efforts to adjust schedules, the **sheer volume of work** remains a pervasive hurdle. Teachers requested more than just time; they requested **streamlined processes** and de-loading to allow focus on the core task of instruction and remediation.
3. **The "Supply Chain" Issue:** A recurring systemic frustration was the **delayed delivery of materials** (forms, passages) from the central office. While school administrators managed the distribution of local materials effectively, systemic delays from the Division Office disrupted the assessment calendar, highlighting a **bottleneck** that requires higher-level intervention.
4. **Professional Development Needs:** Teachers explicitly requested **regular, continuous training**, not just one-off seminars. They need continuous coaching on how to accurately **interpret Phil-IRI data** to create differentiated lessons, supporting the finding that instructional feedback is currently too generic.
5. **Community as a Resource:** The recommendation to conduct **"Parent Reading Seminars"** highlights a strong shift toward viewing parents as pedagogical partners, not just financial supporters. This theme strongly validates the necessity of **Distributed Leadership** in building a collaborative ecosystem for literacy.

CONCLUSION

The study confirms that school administrators in the Tagoloan East and West Districts are performing their roles with a **high degree of commitment and competence**, particularly in the operational and logistical domains of the Phil-IRI program. The consistently high composite means across all variables (Development: 3.38; Monitoring: 3.37; Sustainability: 3.29) suggest that the **"mechanics" of the program**—planning, testing, resource provision, and data collection—are functioning well under the initial implementation phases of the MATATAG Curriculum. Administrators are successfully managing the day-to-day requirements, establishing a solid foundational environment conducive to the literacy initiative.

However, the findings also illuminate the difference between *implementation* and *integration*.

- **Implementation** is strong: The evidence shows high fidelity in logistical compliance. Materials are ready, tests are conducted according to schedule (often with adaptive adjustments), and reports are filed. This success is directly attributable to the effective **Instructional Leadership** displayed by the administrators in managing the curriculum and ensuring resource allocation.

- **Integration is Developing, but Vulnerable:** The data reveals that the Phil-IRI program is not yet fully integrated into the school's long-term culture. Vulnerabilities exist in three key areas: **Strategic alignment** with the broader MATATAG curriculum goals, the **depth of instructional feedback** (moving beyond compliance checking), and the assurance of **long-term continuity** (institutionalization). The leadership style observed is predominantly **Instructional** (managing the program) and **Distributed** (sharing tasks with teachers and parents), but it needs a stronger infusion of **Transformational** elements—specifically in communicating a shared strategic vision that ensures every teacher understands the "why" behind the data.

The prevailing leadership style observed is predominantly **Instructional** (managing the program effectively) and **Distributed** (sharing tasks with teachers and external partners like San Miguel Corporation). While effective for immediate operational success, this model needs a stronger infusion of **Transformational** elements. Specifically, leadership must focus on communicating a **shared strategic vision** that ensures every teacher understands the "why" behind the Phil-IRI data and how their individual efforts contribute to eradicating the "Frustration Level" gap in the district.

Ultimately, the study concludes that administrators are **effective enablers** of the Phil-IRI program. They **buffer teachers from external shocks** (like attendance issues and resource delays) and provide the necessary tools. To move the program from a state of "High" operational success to one of **"Excellent" and sustainable integration**, the focus must fundamentally shift from **managing resources to managing talent (mentoring)** and from **managing compliance to managing systems (institutionalization)**. This strategic pivot is essential for achieving the foundational literacy goals mandated by the MATATAG Curriculum.

Ultimately, the study concludes that administrators are effective *enablers* of the Phil-IRI program. They buffer teachers from external shocks (like attendance issues) and provide the necessary tools. To move from "High" to "Excellent," the focus must shift from managing resources to **managing talent** (mentoring) and **managing systems** (institutionalization).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the empirical findings and theoretical gaps identified, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen the Phil-IRI implementation in the Tagoloan East and West Districts and within the broader context of the MATATAG Curriculum.

Recommendations for School Administrators:

1. Enhance Feedback Loops through Structured Coaching:

Action: Move beyond checking for compliance. Administrators should develop and utilize specific observation tools (rubrics) designed solely for reading classes. This will allow them to give granular, actionable feedback on pedagogical strategies tailored to the needs of students identified at the Frustration and Instructional levels.

Rationale: The finding that feedback lacks specificity ($\{x\}=3.27$) indicates a need for administrators to become literacy coaches, focusing on how a teacher differentiates instruction based on Phil-IRI results, rather than just if the intervention occurred.

2. Democratize the Strategic Plan and Vision:

Action: Ensure that the "Master Plan" for literacy—how the school will move 35% of students out of the "Frustration Level" within one year—is not merely a document for the principal's office. It must be consistently discussed in Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions so every teacher understands the long-term trajectory and their specific role in achieving the MATATAG goals.

Rationale: Bridging the gap in strategic awareness ($\{x\}=3.25$) requires a strong exercise of Transformational Leadership, ensuring teacher buy-in and ownership beyond superficial compliance.

3. Formalize Sustainability through Institutional Documentation:

Action: Document best practices and partnership agreements (e.g., with San Miguel Corporation and NGOs) in a formalized "School Reading Handbook" or policy manual.

Rationale: The current dependency on personality for resource generation is a critical vulnerability ($\{x\}=3.27$). Institutionalizing these processes ensures that if leadership changes, the essential resource relationships and operational continuity remain intact, utilizing the principles of Distributed Leadership.

Recommendations for District/Division Offices

1. Address Supply Chain Issues via Decentralized Printing:

- **Action:** The recurring issue of delayed delivery of materials needs immediate systemic intervention. The Division should explore authorizing local reproduction of materials earlier in the school year or piloting the digitization of assessment tools where feasible.
- **Rationale:** Systemic bottlenecks disrupt the school calendar, undermining the administrator's ability to maintain program fidelity. Decentralization empowers local leaders to maintain control over the assessment timeline.

2. Standardized Training in Data Interpretation:

- **Action:** Institutionalize annual professional development training that focuses not just on *how to administer* the Phil-IRI test, but on remedial reading strategies and data analysis for the frustration-level learners identified by the test.
- **Rationale:** This training will equip administrators and teachers with the necessary skills to transition the program from an assessment tool to a powerful diagnostic and intervention mechanism, aligning with the core intent of the MATATAG curriculum.

6.3 Recommendations for Teachers

1. Leverage Data for Differentiated Instruction:

- **Action:** Move beyond data submission. Teachers should utilize the Phil-IRI results to group students dynamically for reading interventions and actively share successful strategies during LAC sessions.
- **Rationale:** The ultimate measure of the program is student literacy growth. Teachers must treat the Phil-IRI results not as a compliance report, but as a live, evolving blueprint for instruction.

2. Establish Peer Mentoring Systems:

- **Action:** Experienced teachers should mentor novices in the precise administration and interpretation of the Phil-IRI tool to ensure consistency and reliability of data.
- **Rationale:** This strengthens internal capacity, distributes instructional leadership horizontally, and reduces the administrative burden on school heads.

Implications For Practice

This study holds several significant practical implications for the broader educational landscape under the MATATAG Curriculum, particularly in terms of leadership development and resource mobilization.

Shift in Principal Training: The Imperative of Data Literacy:

- Leadership development programs for principals must now emphasize **Data Literacy** as a core competency. It is no longer sufficient to merely collect Phil-IRI data; principals must be equipped to **lead statistical analysis sessions** (e.g., comparing pre-test to post-test trends) to identify school-wide reading deficits and track the effectiveness of specific interventions. This empowers them to provide genuine **evidence-based instructional leadership**.

The "Whole School" Approach and Formalized Partnerships:

- The successful establishment of partnerships, such as those with **San Miguel Corporation**, proves that literacy success cannot be solved by teachers and school funds alone. Schools must actively cultivate an **ecosystem of support**, leveraging **Distributed Leadership** to formalize relationships with community stakeholders (GPTA, LGUs, NGOs). This minimizes the risk of resource gaps and creates a shared accountability for student learning that transcends the school gates.

Workload Rationalization and Adaptive Structuring:

- The study validates the necessity of "de-loading" teachers during high-stakes assessment periods. The practice of schedule adjustments must be formalized as policy. Schools should further consider utilizing non-teaching personnel or trained parent volunteers (where appropriate) to assist with logistics, such as test material collation and attendance tracking. This rationalization of workload allows the highly skilled teacher to focus primarily on the diagnostic and intervention aspects of the Phil-IRI, maximizing their pedagogical impact and aligning with the focused objectives of the MATATAG Curriculum.

By addressing these administrative and systemic areas, the Phil-IRI can successfully evolve from a required annual report into a **dynamic, transformative tool** that genuinely eradicates learning poverty and builds a nation of proficient readers.

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