

# Leadership Readiness of Newly Assigned School Administrators: Basis for a Proposed Intervention

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined the leadership readiness of newly assigned school administrators in Sorsogon Province Division and proposed a continuing intervention program to enhance their leadership capabilities. Employing a descriptive research design with quantitative approaches, the study assessed 14 newly assigned elementary school administrators across seven districts. Data were collected through structured surveys and analyzed using descriptive statistics, including weighted mean, frequency count, and rank.

Findings revealed that the overall leadership readiness of newly assigned administrators was high across all five dimensions of the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH): leading strategically (3.77), managing school operations and resources (3.73), focusing on teaching and learning (3.85), developing self and others (3.67), and building connections (3.68). However, the study identified significant challenges, including underutilization of research for school improvement, neglect of school facilities and equipment, not frequent curriculum review and contextualization, limited support for personnel development, and struggles in managing diverse relationships.

Despite these challenges, administrators employed effective coping strategies such as leading school planning and implementation, managing school data and information, creating positive learning environments, pursuing personal and professional development, and practicing inclusive approaches. The study concluded that while newly assigned administrators demonstrate strong foundational readiness, targeted interventions are necessary to address specific competency gaps. A continuing intervention program was designed to enhance leadership effectiveness through structured professional development and support systems.

Recommendations include prioritizing capacity-building initiatives across all PPSSH dimensions, adopting the proposed intervention program, and conducting further research on transition experiences, political dynamics, mentorship roles, and well-being among newly assigned administrators. This study contributes to strengthening educational leadership in the division by providing empirical evidence and practical recommendations for supporting newly assigned school administrators.

**Keywords** — Challenges, Intervention Program, Leadership Readiness, Newly Assigned Administrators, PPSSH, School Administrators, Sorsogon Province Division, Strategies

## INTRODUCTION

In the intricate landscape of 21st-century global education, effective school leadership is universally recognized as the cornerstone of systemic improvement, second only to classroom teaching in its impact on student outcomes; however, a pervasive international crisis threatens this foundation as seasoned leaders retire en masse, compelling a surge of newly assigned administrators—individuals typically in their initial three years of a formal leadership role—into positions for which they are often profoundly underprepared.

This leadership readiness gap was defined as the discrepancy between the competencies an individual possesses upon entry and the complex demands of the administrative role, which manifests in national contexts through heightened stress, burnout, and attrition among new principals and assistant principals, which in turn destabilizes schools, undermines reform initiatives, and disproportionately affects underserved communities, creating a vicious cycle of discontinuity.

The Newly assigned School Head holds the same statutory authority, accountability, and duty of care as an experienced principal, as mandated by state education codes and administrative regulations (e.g., responsibilities for instructional supervision, fiscal management, and student welfare under laws like Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) . However, their newly assigned status is marked by a developmental disequilibrium between this formal, legal authority and their internalized capacity to wield it effectively within the complex, ambiguous, and politically charged ecology of a school.

Research on the leadership readiness of newly assigned school heads reveals a critical international challenge that transcends national borders, characterized by a systemic failure to adequately prepare new principals for the complex realities of the role. A primary global issue is the universal theory-practice gap, where pre-service training often emphasizes idealized leadership models over the messy, context-specific dilemmas of daily practice. As highlighted in the OECD's (2014) international review of school leadership policies, many countries report that preparation programs are overly theoretical, leaving newly assigned heads unprepared for the intense emotional labor and crisis management that define their early years. This gap is exacerbated by inconsistent and under-resourced induction and mentorship systems. For instance, a comparative study by Bush (2018) across Commonwealth nations found that while mentorship is widely endorsed, its implementation is often ad hoc and dependent on local goodwill, lacking structured time, trained mentors, and systemic support, leaving new heads to navigate their isolation alone.

Furthermore, the international context is marked by increasing accountability pressures and role intensification. Newly assigned heads globally are thrust into environments where high-stakes testing, public performance reporting, and decentralized governance have dramatically expanded their responsibilities beyond traditional instructional leadership. A Study by Moos et al. (2020) across European educational systems documents how this "management turn" forced new heads to prioritize financial, operational, and public relations tasks, often at the expense of pedagogical leadership and their own well-being, leading to widespread stress. This is compounded in developing and post-colonial contexts, where newly assigned heads face unique challenges of scarce resources, large class sizes, and the complex legacy of imported educational policies. A study by Oplatka and Arar (2017) in the Middle East and Africa illustrated how newly assigned heads must become adept at community negotiation, political navigation, and entrepreneurial resource mobilization just to meet basic operational needs, a set of survival skills rarely covered in formal training.

In the Philippines, the challenge of leadership readiness for newly assigned school heads is amplified by the unique structural, cultural, and systemic pressures of the Department of Education (DepEd), the nation's largest bureaucracy. The transition from master teacher or department head to the role of School Principal—formally termed "School Head" under the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH) and Republic Act No. 9155 (Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001) —represents a profound leap in scope and accountability.

Empirical studies within the Philippine setting consistently highlight critical gaps in readiness. Research by Bautista and Ocampo (2019) on the socialization of newly assigned principals in the National Capital Region found that their primary preoccupation was mastering bureaucratic and financial systems, leaving little cognitive space for instructional supervision. The study revealed that many newly assigned heads experience "initiative overload," where they feel compelled to launch numerous projects to prove their capability, often without the strategic vision to align them with long-term school improvement.

Furthermore, the culturally embedded value of "utang na loob" (debt of gratitude) and complex hierarchical relationships can severely constrain a newly assigned head's micropolitical literacy. As explored by Dela Cruz and Singson (2020) , new heads struggled to assert authority, initiate difficult personnel conversations, or drive pedagogical change when dealing with senior teachers who may have been former colleagues or mentors, leading to stalled reforms and a default to managerial rather than transformative leadership.

The Province of Sorsogon stands at a pivotal moment of growth, with a projected 15.6% increase in enrollment by 2025 signaling a vibrant commitment to education. This growth presents a valuable opportunity to strengthen school infrastructure, enhance learning resources, and work toward a more equitable distribution of facilities across districts. At the heart of this exciting expansion are the province's newly assigned school administrators, leaders whose dedication will be essential in shaping a responsive and resilient educational system.

While research acknowledges the challenges of leadership, it also highlights the capacity for growth, support, and connection that can empower these leaders to thrive. Recognizing this, there is a timely opportunity to assess their leadership readiness, not as a response to deficit, but as a proactive investment in their success and well-being, ensuring they have the tools and support needed to lead with confidence and make a lasting impact in their school communities.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature and studies established that leadership readiness is a critical determinant of effective transition for newly appointed school administrators, encompassing instructional, managerial, emotional, and relational competencies. Hallinger, Grissom, Egalite, and Lindsay, Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe consistently found that newly assigned administrators often enter leadership roles with limited preparedness for instructional leadership, teacher supervision, and accountability demands, which directly affects their ability to produce immediate improvements in school outcomes.

This is echoed in the context by Bautista, Malabonga, and Garcia, who documented that while newly appointed principals meet formal qualification standards, they lack practical readiness in instructional supervision, classroom observation, teacher coaching, financial management, and school planning. Both foreign and local studies converged on the finding that this disconnect between formal preparation and actual administrative responsibilities results in trial-and-error learning, inconsistent leadership practices, and difficulties in managing teacher performance and curriculum implementation. Collectively, these studies underscored that instructional and administrative readiness are foundational to early leadership effectiveness and must be systematically assessed to inform targeted interventions.

Another significant theme across literature is the importance of emotional, relational, and adaptive readiness in navigating the complexities of leadership transition. Internationally, Sun and Leithwood, Walker, Bryant, Lee, and Netolicky emphasized that newly assigned administrators with low emotional readiness experience heightened anxiety, decision paralysis, interpersonal conflict, and difficulty managing change, while those with higher readiness demonstrate resilience, adaptive problem-solving, and constructive stakeholder engagement.

Similarly, Le Fevre and Robinson, and Bickmore and Parker found that readiness to manage conflict and lead school reforms predicts administrators' capacity to handle resistance and sustain improvement initiatives. These findings were strongly mirrored in local research by Reyes and Domingo, Flores, and Lopez, who reported that Filipino newly assigned school heads face emotional stress, relational challenges, and contextual pressures in rural and urban settings, with readiness influencing their ability to build trust, engage communities, and adapt to change.

Furthermore, studies by Ocampo and Lucero, Santos and Ramirez, and Cruz and Villanueva consistently demonstrated that structured mentoring, targeted professional development, and readiness-based interventions significantly enhance leadership confidence, decision-making competence, and overall transition success. The alignment of foreign and local evidence reinforced that leadership readiness is multidimensional and that comprehensive, context-sensitive interventions addressing instructional, emotional, and relational domains are essential for supporting newly assigned school administrators during their critical transition period.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study's theoretical framework is grounded in leadership development, educational psychology, and organizational readiness theories, which collectively explain how newly assigned school administrators acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies required for effective leadership and transition. The framework posits that leadership readiness is a multidimensional construct influenced by instructional competence, emotional and relational preparedness, adaptive and crisis management skills, administrative and governance capacity, mentoring, and professional development support.

The researcher theorized that structured interventions, mentoring, experiential learning, reflective practice, and readiness assessment can significantly enhance newly assigned school administrators' leadership competencies, thereby facilitating smoother transitions, informed decision-making, and overall school effectiveness.

This study is anchored on the following theories:

**Super's Career Development Theory (1990).** This posited that career development is a lifelong process, where individuals gradually form occupational self-concepts based on experiences, interests, values, and abilities. Applied to school leadership, newly assigned administrators develop their leadership self-concept as they transition into administrative roles, with exposure to practical experiences, structured mentoring, and reflective practice shaping their perception of effective leadership and readiness for decision-making.

**Transformational Leadership Theory (2006).** This theorized that transformational leadership involves inspiring, motivating, and supporting followers to achieve goals beyond their self-interest through vision, communication, and relational engagement. For newly assigned administrators, cultivating transformational leadership skills—through mentoring, professional development, and reflective exercises—enhances instructional supervision, teacher engagement, and school improvement, contributing to readiness for effective school leadership.

**Social Cognitive Theory (1986).** This emphasized that human behavior is driven by triadic reciprocal determinism, wherein personal cognitive factors (e.g., beliefs, expectations, self-appraisals), environmental influences, and behavioral patterns dynamically interact with and influence one another. Central to this theory is the construct of self-efficacy—an individual's belief in their capability to organize and execute specific courses of action required to manage prospective situations—which regulates motivation, thought patterns, emotional reactions, and resilience in the face of challenges.

**Experiential Learning Theory (1984).** It highlights that knowledge and skills are constructed through concrete experiences, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. In the context of leadership readiness, structured interventions, hands-on leadership tasks, and reflective exercises allow newly assigned administrators to apply theory to practice, evaluate outcomes, and refine their decision-making, instructional, and managerial skills.

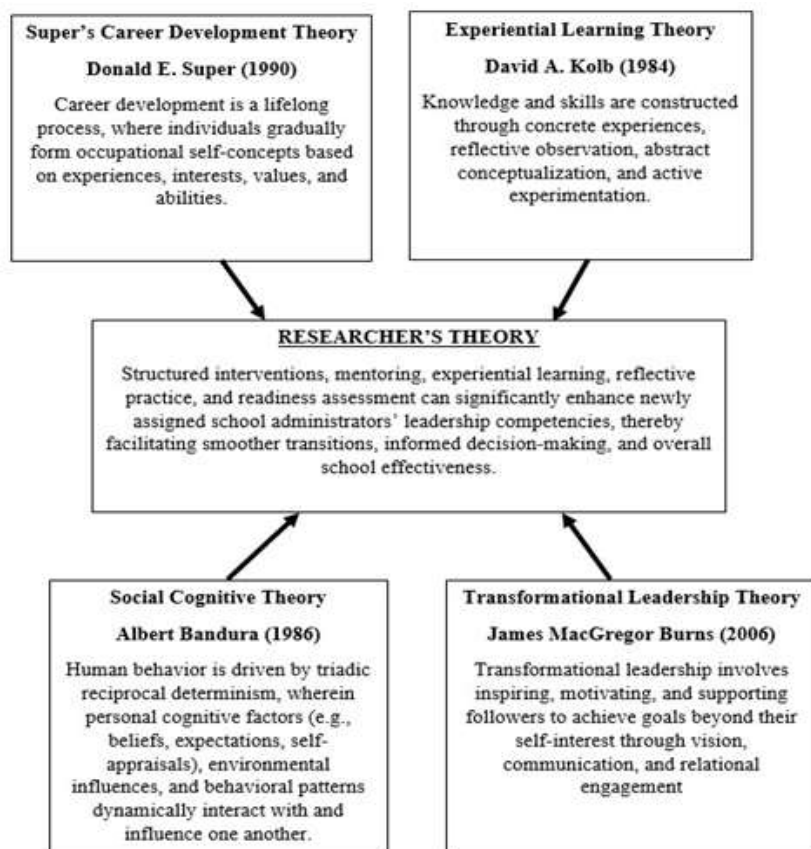


**Figure 1. Theoretical Paradigm**

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of this study illustrates how assessing leadership readiness among newly assigned school administrators serves as a basis for designing a structured intervention to enhance their transition

effectiveness. It highlights the flow from input, through processes, to outputs and outcomes, with feedback functioning as a mechanism for continuous improvement.

The Input Phase represents all essential elements that initiate the study. This includes the leadership competencies of newly assigned school administrators, such as instructional supervision, decision-making, emotional and relational skills, adaptive and crisis management, administrative and governance capacity, and prior leadership experience. It also includes organizational factors, such as mentoring, professional development, and support structures provided by schools and the Department of Education. Its importance lies in establishing the foundation for the study; without understanding these inputs, the assessment of readiness and design of targeted interventions may not effectively address the actual gaps or needs of newly assigned administrators.

The Process Phase focuses on the assessment of leadership readiness and implementation of the proposed intervention. Newly assigned administrators participate in structured activities, mentoring sessions, reflective exercises, and capacity-building programs designed to strengthen their instructional, emotional, adaptive, administrative, and relational competencies. This phase is experiences: use it transforms inputs into developmental experiences; it captures how targeted interventions, experiential learning, and mentoring strategies interact with administrators' existing competencies to enhance leadership readiness.

The Output Phase represents the immediate results of the intervention process, including improved confidence in decision-making, enhanced instructional supervision skills, better stakeholder engagement, and stronger emotional resilience. The output of this study is the SHIELD 2 (School Heads' Integrated Empowerment and Leadership Development for 2 Years), a continuing intervention designed to address the transition challenges identified by the respondents.

The Outcome Phase captures the long-term effects of the intervention on leadership transition and school effectiveness. Specifically, newly assigned administrators are expected to demonstrate smoother transitions into their roles, higher performance in instructional and administrative tasks, increased ability to manage crises and adapt to changes, improved relationships with teachers and stakeholders, and overall enhanced school leadership effectiveness.

The Feedback Box gathers information from readiness assessments, observations, evaluations of intervention activities, and performance metrics of administrators and schools. Feedback is critical as it closes the loop in the conceptual framework, allowing continuous refinement of interventions, mentoring approaches, and leadership development strategies to ensure sustained readiness, effectiveness, and school improvement.

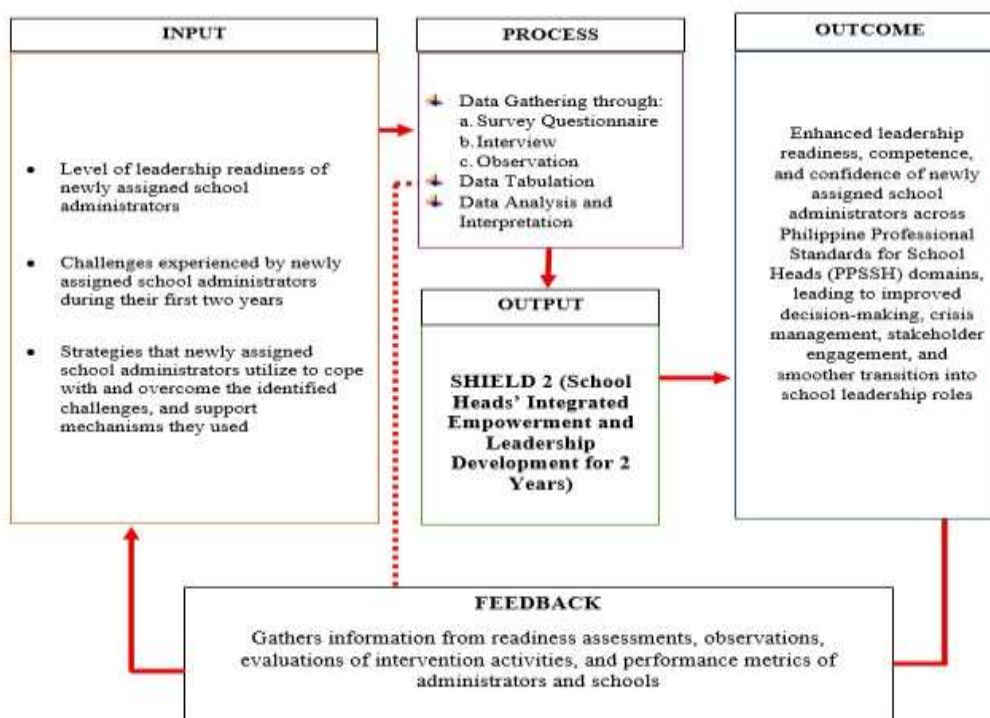


**Figure 2. Conceptual Framework**

## METHOD AND PROCEDURES

### Method

This study utilized a descriptive research design to quantitatively assess the leadership readiness of newly assigned school administrators in the Sorsogon Province Division. Data were collected using a researcher-developed survey questionnaire that measured leadership readiness across instructional, managerial, emotional, relational, and adaptive domains. The questionnaire was validated by experts and tested for reliability to ensure internal consistency. Respondents rated their readiness using a Likert scale, and the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including weighted mean and standard deviation, to determine the overall level of leadership readiness and the readiness level per indicator.

Frequency count and rank were also used to identify the most and least prevalent challenges and strategies reported by the respondents. The quantitative data provided a measurable and objective basis for designing the proposed intervention program. Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the study, including informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and secured data storage, with approvals obtained from relevant Department of Education authorities.

### Respondents

**Table A**

**The Respondents**

| District                | Name of Schools                  | Frequency |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Bulusan                 | Bagacay Elementary School        | 1         |
| Casiguran               | Trece Martires Elementary School | 1         |
| Castilla East           | Bagong Sirang Elementary School  | 1         |
|                         | Libtong Elementary School        | 1         |
|                         | Minanticaan Elementary School    | 1         |
| Castilla South District | Bogña Elementary School          | 1         |
|                         | Buenavista Elementary School     | 1         |
|                         | Tomalaytay Elementary School     | 1         |
| Castilla West District  | Canjela Elementary School        | 1         |
|                         | San Vicente Elementary School    | 1         |
| Gubat North             | Patag Elementary School          | 1         |
|                         | San Ignacio Elementary School    | 1         |
| Irosin I                | Carriedo Elementary School       | 1         |
|                         | Cawayan Elementary School        | 1         |
|                         | <b>Total</b>                     | <b>14</b> |

The respondents of this study are 14 newly assigned school administrators in the Sorsogon Province Division, purposively selected. Table A shows the respondents of the study:

### Research Instruments

The study utilized a survey questionnaire. The survey instrument was a structured questionnaire designed to measure the competencies of newly assigned school administrators across five key PPSSH domains: Leading Strategically, Managing Operations and Resources, Focusing on Teaching and Learning, Developing Self and Others, and Building Connections. Participants responded to Likert-scale items assessing their confidence, skills, and performance in areas such as instructional supervision, decision-making, crisis management,

stakeholder engagement, and governance.

The survey provided quantitative data on administrators' readiness levels and identified specific competency gaps. Together, the survey questionnaire provided a comprehensive assessment of leadership readiness, enabling the researcher to design and evaluate a structured intervention program effectively.

### Statistical Treatment

The following statistical tools were used in the study:

| Interval    | Description |
|-------------|-------------|
| 4.50 – 5.00 | Very High   |
| 3.50 – 4.49 | High        |
| 2.50 – 3.49 | Moderate    |
| 1.50 – 2.49 | Low         |
| 1.00 – 1.49 | Very Low    |

For problem number 1, the weighted mean was utilized to determine the level of leadership readiness of newly assigned school administrators. Below is the table of equivalents for reference purposes:

For problem number 2, frequency count and rank were used to identify the challenges experienced by newly assigned school administrators during the first two years.

For problem number 3, frequency count and rank were again used to identify the specific strategies utilized by newly assigned school administrators to cope with and overcome the identified challenges.

### Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation of Data

This chapter is a presentation of data gathered by the researcher from the respondents. Likewise, these data are analyzed and interpreted in this section.

#### The Level of Leadership Readiness of Newly Assigned School Administrators

Leadership readiness is a critical factor that determines the effectiveness of newly assigned school administrators in navigating the complexities of their roles and responding to the demands of modern educational leadership. It encompasses the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and dispositions that enable school heads to lead with confidence, make sound decisions, and create positive learning environments from the outset of their assignment.

Table 1.1 shows the level of leadership readiness of newly assigned school administrators along leading strategically. As gleaned from the table, the weighted means range from 3.43 to 4.00, which means from a moderate to high level of leadership readiness. The average weighted mean of 3.77 is described as high. It is of interest to note that articulating vision, mission, goals, and core values, and driving school planning and implementation both got the highest weighted mean of 4.00. This shows that new administrators may be strong in strategic leadership, but these are just initial findings and still to be proven.

Articulating vision, mission, goals, and core values and driving school planning and implementation are particularly telling, with a weighted mean of 4.00 and described as High. These two indicators form the essential head and hands of strategic management—the former establishes a clear, shared directional compass for the entire school community, ensuring that all stakeholders understand the purpose behind their work. The latter (driving school planning and implementation) demonstrates the administrators' capacity to translate that abstract direction into concrete, actionable roadmaps, timelines, and resource allocations.

**Table 1.1**

**Level of Leadership Readiness of Newly Assigned School Administrators along  
Leading Strategically**

| Indicators                                              | Weighted Mean | Description |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Articulating vision, mission, and core values           | 4.00          | High        |
| Driving school planning and implementation              | 4.00          | High        |
| Leading policy review and implementation                | 3.86          | High        |
| Deploying monitoring and evaluation processes and tools | 3.79          | High        |
| Strategizing programs, projects, and activities         | 3.64          | High        |
| Amplifying learner's voice                              | 3.64          | High        |
| Leveraging research to improve school performance       | 3.43          | Moderate    |
| <b>Average</b>                                          | <b>3.77</b>   | <b>High</b> |

Four (4) other indicators are described as high. These are Leading policy review and implementation, 3.86; Deploying monitoring and evaluation processes and tools, 3.79; Strategizing programs, projects, and activities, 3.64; and Amplifying learners' voice, 3.64. These four indicators—policy review (3.86), M&E deployment (3.79), strategizing PPAs (3.64), and amplifying learner voice (3.64)—reveal a clear gradient from operational confidence to emerging competence. Administrators are most assured in policy compliance and routine monitoring, tasks rooted in familiar bureaucratic systems, but their scores taper off as strategic work becomes more creative and more democratic. This suggest that they are at a high level in compliance management but need to build confidence in innovation and stakeholder collaboration.

The indicator with the lowest weighted mean of 3.43 and described as moderate was Leveraging research to improve school performance. This is because it represents the most abstract, analytical, and specialized competency among all strategic indicators. Unlike articulating visions or implementing policies—tasks rooted in daily administrative routines and clear bureaucratic procedures—research utilization demands advanced data literacy, critical appraisal of academic literature, and the ability to translate empirical findings into context-specific, actionable interventions.

For newly assigned administrators who are still navigating immediate operational crises, resolving discipline issues, and mastering basic compliance, engaging with research feels like a non-urgent, intellectual luxury rather than an instinctive leadership tool. Furthermore, since they spent most of their careers as teachers—who rarely do research—they haven't developed the habit of using evidence to make school-wide decisions.

The finding that newly assigned school administrators prioritize teacher professional development is strongly supported by Booth et al. , who conducted a systematic literature review on leadership for professional development in schools. Their study identified three critical leadership dimensions—trusting leadership, engaged leadership, and learning leadership—that school leaders must demonstrate to create environments where teachers can effectively engage in and implement their learning from professional development activities. The authors emphasized that school leaders play a complex role in navigating the balance between providing direction and granting autonomy, as well as fostering both individualization and collaboration in professional learning. This aligns with the present study's finding that administrators encourage teachers to attend seminars,

enroll in graduate studies, and participate in collaborative learning sessions such as lesson study groups.

Table 1.2 presents the level of leadership readiness of newly assigned school administrators along managing school operations and resources. Based on the table, the weighted means range from 3.07 to 4.14, which means from a moderate to a high level of readiness. The average weighted mean of 3.77 is described as high.

Interestingly, two (2) indicators with the highest weighted mean and described as high were Governing school data and information with a weighted mean of 4.14 and Integrating school safety for disaster preparedness, mitigation, and resiliency, 3.86. The results suggest the importance of school data and information for better decision-making by the school administrators. In the same manner, school safety is a must so as to prepare for any emergency in school.

Two (2) indicators tied with a weighted mean of 3.79 and described as high are stewarding financial management and empowering the management of staff. This shows that new administrators recognize the critical balance between hard fiscal accountability and soft people development, yet their moderate positioning reveal that they are still mastering the delicate art of managing scarce resources while keeping teachers motivated—a tension that defines operational leadership and remains their most practical learning edge.

**Table 1.2**

**Level of Leadership Readiness of Newly Assigned School Administrators along  
Managing School Operations and Resources**

| Indicators                                                                      | Weighted Mean | Description |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Governing school data and information                                           | 4.14          | High        |
| Integrating school safety for disaster preparedness, mitigation, and resiliency | 3.86          | High        |
| Stewarding financial management                                                 | 3.79          | High        |
| Empowering the management of staff                                              | 3.79          | High        |
| Optimizing school facilities and equipment                                      | 3.71          | High        |
| Anticipating emerging challenges and opportunities                              | 3.07          | Moderate    |
| <b>Average</b>                                                                  | <b>3.73</b>   | <b>High</b> |

Another indicator described as high was Optimizing school facilities and equipment with a weighted mean of 3.71. This reflects the administrators' capacity to ensure that physical assets—classrooms, laboratories, ICT tools, furniture, and maintenance—are functional, safe, and conducive to learning. Its slightly lower position within the high cluster suggests that while they can handle basic upkeep and resource allocation, they are less confident in strategic asset management, such as long-term facility planning, preventative maintenance scheduling, or maximizing underutilized spaces.

On the other hand, the indicator with the lowest mean of 3.07 and described as moderate was Anticipating emerging challenges and opportunities. This suggests that they are still largely reactive rather than proactive, focusing on immediate operational fires rather than forecasting shifts in curriculum, technology, enrollment patterns, community demographics, or policy directions. For instance, anticipating challenges might mean foreseeing the impact of declining birth rates on future enrollment and planning alternative income-generating

programs, or recognizing early warning signs of teacher burnout before it affects performance.

A study by Velos examined the managerial competence of school heads in the Moalboal District, assessing their capabilities across five domains based on the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH), including leading strategically and managing school operations and resources. The findings revealed that both teachers and school heads perceived the school heads' managerial competence as "Very High" across all domains, indicating consistently strong leadership practices. This supports the present study's results showing high readiness in strategic and operational domains. However, the same study also found that school improvement was rated only "Satisfactory" in quality and access, with identified gaps in areas such as evidence-based decision-making—a finding that parallels the present study's moderate score on leveraging research to improve school performance.

The study concluded that while school heads demonstrated strong managerial competence, school improvement outcomes are influenced by multifaceted factors beyond leadership alone. This reinforces the present study's implication that newly assigned administrators, despite their high readiness in operational and strategic functions, require further development in research utilization and anticipatory competencies to translate their leadership readiness into tangible school improvement.

**Table 1.3**

**Level of Leadership Readiness of Newly Assigned School Administrators along  
Focusing on Teaching and Learning**

| Indicators                                                   | Weighted Mean | Description |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Upholding learner discipline                                 | 4.07          | High        |
| Expanding career awareness and opportunities                 | 3.93          | High        |
| Modeling teaching standards and pedagogies                   | 3.86          | High        |
| Normalizing teaching performance feedback                    | 3.86          | High        |
| Using learning assessment formatively                        | 3.79          | High        |
| Shaping a positive learning environment                      | 3.79          | High        |
| Leading school-based curriculum review and contextualization | 3.64          | High        |
| <b>Average</b>                                               | <b>3.85</b>   | <b>High</b> |

Table 1.3 delves into the level of leadership readiness of newly assigned school administrators along focusing on teaching and learning. In this area, all the indicators are described as high with an average of 3.85. Upholding learner discipline got the highest weighted mean of 4.07. This implies that the discipline of learners is the priority of the assigned school administrators. It is followed by expanding career awareness and opportunities with a weighted mean of 3.93. This suggests that administrators are not merely focused on academic content but are actively concerned with preparing learners for life beyond the classroom, recognizing that schools must bridge education to future employability and higher education pathways. Two (2) indicators tied with a weighted mean of 3.86 were Modeling teaching standards and pedagogies, and Normalizing teaching performance feedback. These results imply that school administrators have to follow orders from the Department of Education in terms of curriculum and strategies, as well as recognize feedback as a mechanism for improving teaching.

Another two (2) indicators, which get a weighted mean of 3.79, are using learning assessment formatively and shaping a positive learning environment. Using learning assessment formatively reflects the administrators'

readiness to guide teachers in employing assessment not merely for grading but as a diagnostic tool to identify learning gaps, adjust instruction in real-time, and provide timely interventions, yet the moderate-high score suggests they are still transitioning from traditional summative mindsets to embedded formative practices. Shaping a positive learning environment, meanwhile, encompasses fostering psychological safety, inclusivity, high expectations, and a culture of mutual respect that enables optimal learning conditions.

Leading school-based curriculum review and contextualization get the lowest weighted mean of 3.64. The newly assigned school administrators, in this regard, have to visit and revisit the curriculum, for that matter, in order to be updated on the content. This indicates that new administrators find this the most challenging aspect of instructional leadership. Contextualization refers to the process of adapting, localizing, and indigenizing the prescribed national curriculum to make it relevant, meaningful, and responsive to the specific needs, culture, language, and resources of the local community and learners. It goes beyond merely knowing the curriculum content—it involves translating DepEd's standard competencies into learning experiences that resonate with learners lived realities, such as using local stories, indigenous knowledge, community resources, and regional dialects as teaching tools.

Leading school-based curriculum review and contextualization, Famero investigated the adaptive leadership practices of public secondary school principals during the COVID-19 pandemic and identified curriculum review and contextualization as one of the nine emerging themes of adaptive leadership practices. The study noted that principals do not deviate from the PPSSH leadership domains but strategized ways to adapt, including contextualizing the curriculum.

This low score suggests that while contextualization is recognized as essential—particularly in making learning relevant to local culture and community needs—newly assigned administrators find it the most challenging aspect of instructional leadership, as it demands ongoing collaboration with teachers and community stakeholders to translate national standards into locally responsive learning experiences.

Table 1.4 discusses the level of leadership readiness of newly assigned school administrators along with developing self and others. As seen from the table, the weighted means range from 3.36 to 4.14, which means a moderate to high level of leadership readiness. The average weighted mean of 3.67 is described as high.

Practicing professional reflection and learning to improve practice got the highest weighted mean of 4.14 and described as high. These results indicate that the newly assigned school administrators regard continuous improvement as part of their routine, coupled with a habit of reflecting. This is followed by owning personal and professional development with a weighted mean of 3.93 and strengthening leading organizations within the school with a weighted mean of 3.86. Both are described as high.

These two indicators demonstrate that newly assigned administrators are strongly committed to their own continuous growth and to building collaborative organizational structures. Their high scores indicate recognition that personal competency development and distributed leadership are essential for sustainable school improvement, yet the slight gap from the top score of 4.14 suggests that they are still navigating how to fully prioritize these areas amidst the operational demands of their new roles.

Following are two (2) indicators, also described as high, which are aligning school personnel and office performance management with a weighted mean of 3.79 and safeguarding the general welfare of school personnel with a weighted mean of 3.71. These results imply the necessity for school personnel to know their functions. Similarly, on how to show concern among their colleagues.

Two (2) remaining indicators described as high and with a weighted mean of 3.64 are Cultivating leadership in individuals and teams and Institutionalizing rewards and recognition. These two indicators represent the relational and motivational dimensions of developing others, both scoring at the lower end of the high range. Cultivating leadership involves identifying potential leaders, mentoring, and delegating meaningful responsibilities to foster shared governance, while institutionalizing rewards and recognition entails establishing formal systems to acknowledge and celebrate personnel contributions.

**Table 1.4**

**Level of Leadership Readiness of Newly Assigned School Administrators along  
Developing Self and Others**

| Indicators                                                          | Weighted Mean | Description |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Practicing professional reflection and learning to improve practice | 4.14          | High        |
| Owning personal and professional development                        | 3.93          | High        |
| Strengthening leading organizations within the school               | 3.86          | High        |
| Aligning school personnel and office performance management         | 3.79          | High        |
| Safeguarding the general welfare of school personnel                | 3.71          | High        |
| Cultivating leadership in individuals and teams                     | 3.64          | High        |
| Institutionalizing rewards and recognition                          | 3.64          | High        |
| Championing learning and development of school personnel            | 3.36          | Moderate    |
| <b>Average</b>                                                      | <b>3.67</b>   | <b>High</b> |

Their identical scores suggest that while administrators understand the importance of nurturing people and motivating performance, they find these tasks more challenging than managing themselves or formal structures, likely due to the time, interpersonal skill, and consistent effort required—a pattern reinforced by the lowest indicator in the table, championing learning and development of school personnel at 3.36 (moderate), confirming that systematically investing in others' growth remains the most demanding aspect of this domain.

Finally, Championing learning and development of school personnel get the lowest weighted mean of 336 and is described as moderate. The score suggests that while administrators recognize the importance of investing in their personnel's development, they face significant challenges in translating this into consistent practice due to logistical and financial constraints, competing operational demands, limited experience in identifying training needs and designing responsive programs, and reliance on external providers rather than developing internal mentoring systems. Its position as the lowest indicator in the table reveals that while new administrators demonstrate strong readiness in managing themselves and organizational structures, their capacity to champion others' growth remains the most underdeveloped aspect of their leadership, highlighting a critical area where targeted support and capacity building are urgently needed.

Research by Ramos & Bauyot revealed a substantial positive association ( $r = 0.90$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) between school leadership and professional development, highlighting the importance of leadership in creating a supportive atmosphere for teacher development. The study found that the more the school heads give much focus on the professional development of teachers, the more likely the teachers tend to enhance their professional competence. The study also found evidence of the importance of school leadership in understanding the value of managing and leading development to attain organizational goals. They also noted that continuously capacitating teachers improved teaching and learning and, ultimately, improved learner performance.

Table 1.5 reveals the level of leadership readiness of newly assigned school administrators along building connections. As presented in the table, the weighted means range from 3.50 to 3.79, which means they are all described as a high level of leadership readiness.

Table 1.5

### Level of Leadership Readiness of Newly Assigned School Administrators along Building Connections

| Indicators                                    | Weighted Mean | Description |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Advancing inclusive practice                  | 3.79          | High        |
| Mastering strategic communication             | 3.79          | High        |
| Mobilizing community engagement               | 3.64          | High        |
| Navigating and managing diverse relationships | 3.50          | High        |
| <b>Average</b>                                | <b>3.68</b>   | <b>High</b> |

Among the four (4) indicators, advancing inclusive practice and mastering strategic communication both get the highest weighted mean of 3.79. These results imply the importance of having good communication skills with both the internal and external stakeholders for the newly assigned school administrators. Likewise, inclusive practice is much needed in the school setting to ensure that all learners, regardless of their background, ability, or circumstances, have equitable access to quality education and feel valued and supported.

The tied scores suggest that administrators recognize these as foundational competencies for building trust, fostering collaboration, and creating a school culture where diversity is celebrated and every stakeholder's voice is heard. Their high readiness in strategic communication indicates they are capable of articulating messages clearly, tailoring their approach to different audiences, and managing information flow effectively, while their readiness in advancing inclusive practice reflects their commitment to upholding DepEd's mandate for inclusive education, including catering to learners with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and those in marginalized situations.

Next is mobilizing community engagement with a weighted mean of 3.64. This means involvement of the community is needed for the school to successfully operate. And, with the lowest weighted mean of 3.50, is navigating and managing diverse relationships. The third indicator, mobilizing community engagement, obtained a weighted mean of 3.64, described as high. This refers to the administrators' capacity to actively involve parents, barangay officials, local government units, non-government organizations, and other community stakeholders in school activities, decision-making, and resource mobilization. Its slightly lower score suggests that while administrators understand the value of community partnerships, they find it more challenging to sustain meaningful engagement due to time constraints, varying stakeholder interests, and the effort required to build and maintain trust with external groups.

Navigating and managing diverse relationships obtained the lowest weighted mean of 3.50, described as high. This indicator refers to the administrators' ability to effectively handle the complex web of relationships within the school and the broader community, including managing conflicts, balancing competing interests, and maintaining harmonious interactions among teachers, staff, learners, parents, and external partners. Its position as the lowest in this domain suggests that while administrators are capable of building connections, the nuanced interpersonal skills required to navigate diverse and sometimes conflicting relationships remain their most challenging area.

Udeani & Ogbuanu found that while headmasters involve communities in school-community relations to an acceptable level, engagement is less consistent in staff management activities. Studies on stakeholder engagement in Philippine rural schools revealed that school leaders struggle with effectively identifying, planning, engaging, and monitoring stakeholders, aligning with the present study's finding that sustaining meaningful community engagement remains challenging. Furthermore, research on conflict management among school heads in the Philippines found that leadership growth through conflict resolution plays a critical role in shaping leadership styles, indicating that the skills required to navigate diverse relationships are honed

over time through experience. These findings collectively confirmed that while administrators exhibited high overall readiness in building connections, continued professional development in community engagement and relationship management is essential to strengthen their capacity to foster truly collaborative school communities.

### The Challenges Experienced by Newly Assigned School Administrators during Their First Two Years

The transition into school leadership is a pivotal and often demanding period that shapes the trajectory of an administrator's career and influences the overall effectiveness of the school. The first two years of assignment present a unique set of challenges as newly assigned school administrators navigate unfamiliar responsibilities, establish credibility with stakeholders, and adapt to the complexities of school governance, instructional leadership, and resource management. Understanding these challenges is essential because unaddressed difficulties can hinder leadership performance, delay school improvement efforts, and contribute to early career stress or attrition.

Table 2.1 analyzes the challenges experienced by newly assigned school administrators during the first two years along leading strategically. Among the indicators, Underutilizing research to improve school performance get the highest frequency of 8 and rank 1st. It is followed by lacking clarity in vision, mission, and core values with a frequency of 6 and rank 2nd. These results imply that the respondents need to research the assessment data of learners. Likewise, study the vision, mission, and core values of the Department of Education.

**Table 2.1**

#### Challenges Experienced by Newly Assigned School Administrators During Their First Two Years along Leading Strategically

| Indicators                                                 | Frequency | Rank       |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Underutilizing research to improve school performance      | 8         | 1          |
| Lacking clarity in vision, mission, and core values        | 6         | 2          |
| Struggling with policy review and implementation           | 3         | 4.5        |
| Failing at school planning and implementation              | 3         | 4.5        |
| Ineffectively designing programs, projects, and activities | 3         | 4.5        |
| Misapplying monitoring and evaluation processes and tools  | 3         | 4.5        |
| Ignoring the learner's voice                               | 2         | 7          |
| <b>Over-all Rank</b>                                       |           | <b>4.0</b> |

Following are four (4) indicators with a frequency of 3 and rank 4.5th are struggling with policy review and implementation, failing in school planning and implementation, ineffectively designing programs, projects, and activities, and misapplying monitoring and evaluation processes and tools.

These results serve as a wake-up call for the newly assigned school administrators to attend to these challenges by identifying interventions to avoid such a scenario. For example, to review policy, school planning, monitoring, and evaluation of the school, as well as to religiously follow programs of the Department of Education. The indicator with the lowest frequency of 2 and rank 7th is ignoring the learner's voice. This should not be the case for learners' voices as it trains them to speak up.

Cabangon , explored the challenges faced by school heads in conducting action research in the Gumaca West District. The study found that while school leaders exhibited moderate proficiency in core action research competencies, significant gaps persisted in interpreting data and report writing. Moreover, time constraints, overlapping responsibilities, and health-related challenges emerged as major barriers to effective research practice. The district also lacked resource allocation, mentorship, and regular professional development opportunities. These findings directly mirror the present study's result that underutilizing research is the most

frequently cited challenge among new administrators, as they struggle not only with technical research skills but also with the systemic support needed to integrate research into their decision-making processes.

**Table 2.2**

**Challenges Experienced by Newly Assigned School Administrators During Their**

**First Two Years along Managing School Operations and Resources**

| Indicators                                                                                     | Frequency | Rank       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Neglecting school facilities and equipment                                                     | 5         | 1          |
| Experiencing gaps in financial management                                                      | 3         | 3          |
| Weak oversight of the management of staff                                                      | 3         | 3          |
| Being overwhelmed by emerging challenges and opportunities                                     | 3         | 3          |
| Mismanaging school data and information                                                        | 2         | 5.5        |
| Inadequate preparation for school safety for disaster preparedness, mitigation, and resiliency | 2         | 5.5        |
| <b>Over-all rank</b>                                                                           |           | <b>3.5</b> |

Table 2.2 showcases the challenges experienced by newly assigned administrators during their first two years along managing school operations and resources. Among the six indicators, neglecting school facilities and equipment with a frequency of 5, and ranked 1st. This may be because of lack of facilities and equipment needed by both the teachers and learners. For example, lack of classrooms and science and mathematics equipment.

Following are three (3) indicators with a frequency of 3 and ranked 3rd are experiencing gaps in financial management, weak oversight of the management of staff and being overwhelmed by emerging challenges and opportunities. Financial management gaps stem from limited prior training in budget preparation and COA compliance. Weak staff oversight reflects difficulties in delegation, performance evaluation, and mentoring. Being overwhelmed by emerging challenges indicates that administrators are consumed by daily operational fires, leaving little capacity for strategic foresight and adaptation to rapid educational changes.

To address these, the following are suggested: provide mandatory financial management training and mentoring for new administrators; implement structured induction programs on performance management and instructional supervision; establish strategic foresight capacity-building and reduce administrative burden through streamlined reporting; and create Division-level support systems and peer coaching networks to help administrators navigate these challenges.

On the other hand, two (2) indicators get a frequency of 2 and rank 5.5th are Mismanaging school data and information, and Inadequate preparation for school safety for disaster preparedness, mitigation, and resiliency. These results suggest proper use of school data and information and having a program in school to answer scenario in case of an emergency. For example, conduct a regular drill. Mismanaging school data undermines evidence-based decision-making and reporting, requiring systematic data management protocols and staff training.

In the study of Patiam assessed School-Based Management (SBM) practices in Philippine public elementary schools and found that despite SBM institutionalization through Republic Act No. 9155 and DepEd Order No. 007, s. 2024, implementation remains uneven. The study identified resource tracking difficulties and gaps in action follow-through as key issues, and concluded by promoting "consistent, data-driven school management practices". These findings directly mirror the present study's result that mismanaging school data and information remains a challenge among new administrators, as they struggle not only with tracking resources and following through on actions but also with the systemic support needed to maintain consistent, data-driven management practices.

**Table 2.3**

**Challenges Experienced by Newly Assigned School Administrators During Their  
First Two Years along Focusing on Teaching and Learning**

| Indicators                                                                     | Frequency | Rank       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Not frequently conducting school-based curriculum review and contextualization | 7         | 1          |
| Failing to maintain a positive learning environment                            | 4         | 2          |
| Inconsistently applying teaching standards and pedagogies                      | 3         | 4          |
| Avoiding teaching performance feedback                                         | 3         | 4          |
| Lack of attention to career awareness and opportunities                        | 3         | 4          |
| Inconsistent enforcement of learner discipline                                 | 2         | 6          |
| Poor use of learning assessment                                                | 1         | 7          |
| <b>Over-all rank</b>                                                           |           | <b>4.0</b> |

Table 2.3 examines the challenges experienced by newly assigned school administrators during their first two years along focusing on teaching and learning. Among the seven (7) indicators, not frequently conducting school-based curriculum and contextualization with a frequency of 7 and rank 1st. It is followed by failing to maintain a positive learning environment with a frequency of 4, and rank 2nd. These results imply regular conduct of school-based curriculum review and contextualization. Likewise, the school has to maintain a good relationship between colleagues and external stakeholders.

Following are three (3) indicators with a frequency of 3 and rank 4th are Inconsistently applying teaching standards and pedagogies, Avoiding teaching performance feedback, and Lack of attention to career awareness and opportunities. New administrators often struggle with this because their previous roles as teachers required them to focus on their own classroom practice, not on monitoring and improving the instructional practices of others. Without adequate training in instructional supervision, they may lack the confidence or skills to observe classrooms, identify teaching gaps, and provide technical assistance. As a result, teachers may revert to traditional, teacher-centered methods that do not align with national standards.

The last two (2) indicators with the lowest frequency are inconsistent enforcement of learner discipline with a frequency of 2 and ranked 6th, and poor use of learning assessment with a frequency of 1 and ranked 7th. These results suggest a strict implementation of discipline among learners. Likewise, assessment of learning outcomes be given attention.

This challenge is supported by Bello , who explored the leadership practices of teachers-in-charge relative to the PPSSH domains and found that under Domain 3 (Focusing on Teaching and Learning), key practices included providing technical assistance to improve teaching practice. However, the study also noted that teachers-in-charge often lacked preparation for instructional supervision roles, resulting in inconsistent application of teaching standards. Similarly, Maramag & Espiritu examined instructional leadership practices of school administrators and found that while administrators demonstrated some competency as visible leaders, significant gaps remained in their ability to provide technical assistance and ensure consistent pedagogical implementation.

Table 2.4 summarizes the challenges experienced by newly assigned school administrators during their first two years along developing self and others. Among the eight (8) indicators, limited support for learning and development of school personnel with a frequency of 6 and rank 1st. This is followed by inconsistent application of rewards and recognition with a frequency of 4 and rank 2nd. These results suggest strong support for school personnel by allowing them to attend seminars and training and recognizing their performance by giving rewards.

**Table 2.4**

**Challenges Experienced by Newly Assigned School Administrators During Their  
First Two Years along Developing Self and Others**

| Indicators                                                                | Frequency | Rank |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------|
| Limited support for learning and development of school personnel          | 6         | 1    |
| Inconsistent application of rewards and recognition                       | 4         | 2    |
| Neglecting personal and professional development                          | 3         | 4.5  |
| Resisting professional reflection and learning to improve practice        | 3         | 4.5  |
| Failure to cultivate developing leadership in individuals and teams       | 3         | 4.5  |
| Difficulty in leading organizations within the school                     | 3         | 4.5  |
| Weak implementation of school personnel and office performance management | 2         | 7    |
| Overlooking the general welfare of school personnel                       | 1         | 8    |

Following are four (4) indicators with a frequency of 3 and rank 4.5 are neglecting personal and professional development, resisting professional reflection and learning to improve practice, failure to cultivate developing leadership in individuals and teams, and difficulty in leading organizations within the school. These results further suggest that the newly assigned school administrators to avail for graduate study, attend seminars and trainings and also attend committee meetings to enhance their competencies, foster reflective practice, develop leadership capacity in others, and strengthen organizational structures within their schools.

The two (2) indicators with the lowest frequency are weak implementation of school personnel and office performance management, with a frequency of 2 and rank 7, and overlooking the general welfare of school personnel, with a frequency of 1 and rank 8th. While these two (2) indicators have the lowest frequency, but still a reminder for the newly assigned school administrators to consider them as a challenge. The welfare of school personnel be a top priority.

Caingcoy conducted a narrative inquiry exploring the feedback mechanisms school heads employ in conveying performance evaluation results to teachers. The study found that school heads often lack structured opportunities for professional reflection, limiting their capacity for self-improvement and informed decision-making.

**Table 2.5**

**Challenges Experienced by Newly Assigned School Administrators During Their  
First Two Years along Building Connections**

| Indicators                                     | Frequency | Rank |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------|------|
| Struggling with managing diverse relationships | 7         | 1    |
| Superficial commitment to inclusive practice   | 4         | 2    |
| Breakdowns in communication                    | 3         | 3    |
| Weak community engagement                      | 2         | 4    |

Table 2.5 shows the challenges experienced by newly assigned school administrators during their first two years along building connections. Among the four (4) indicators, struggling with managing diverse relationships with a frequency of 7 and rank 1st. This is because every individual has their own characteristics to deal with. In this regard, the newly assigned school administrator should lay down his vision for the school and how it can be attained. It is followed by superficial commitment to inclusive practice with a frequency of 4 and rank 2. The second-ranked challenge, superficial commitment to inclusive practice with a frequency of 4, refers to administrators' tendency to pay lip service to inclusive education without implementing meaningful, sustainable

practices that ensure all learners—regardless of ability, background, or circumstance—have equitable access to quality education. This superficiality manifests in various ways: schools may claim to be inclusive but lack adapted learning materials, accessible facilities, or trained teachers for learners with special needs; administrators may attend diversity training but fail to translate learning into school policies; or inclusive education may be reduced to tokenistic gestures rather than embedded in the school's culture and daily operations.

Following in the 3rd rank is breakdowns in communication with a frequency of 3. The challenge breakdowns refer to the administrators' difficulties in effectively exchanging information, ideas, and feedback with internal and external stakeholders—teachers, staff, learners, parents, and community partners. Communication breakdowns manifest in various ways: unclear or inconsistent messaging, failure to listen actively, misinterpretation of directives, lack of transparency in decision-making, and inadequate dissemination of important information. These breakdowns lead to confusion, mistrust, low morale, conflicts, and ultimately, compromised school performance.

This challenge arises from several factors. First, new administrators often lack training in strategic communication, public relations, and conflict resolution, relying instead on informal or ad hoc communication practices. Second, the transition from teacher to administrator involves shifting from peer relationships to hierarchical ones, creating discomfort and awkwardness in communication. Third, the sheer volume of information that must be communicated—from DepEd orders to school announcements to parent concerns—can be overwhelming, leading to important messages being lost or delayed. Fourth, cultural factors such as "pakikisama" (getting along) may lead administrators to avoid direct or difficult conversations, resulting in passive-aggressive communication or unresolved issues.

The last in rank is weak community engagement with a frequency of 2 and rank 4th. It refers to the administrators' inability to actively involve parents, barangay officials, local government units, non-government organizations, and other community stakeholders in school activities, decision-making, and resource mobilization. Its low frequency suggests that while this challenge affects a notable number of new administrators, it is less prevalent than struggles with managing diverse relationships or superficial commitment to inclusive practice (frequency of 4). Nonetheless, weak community engagement remains a significant concern because schools cannot operate in isolation—community support is essential for resource generation, learner support, policy implementation, and overall school effectiveness.

This challenge arises from several factors. First, new administrators often lack experience in establishing and sustaining partnerships with external stakeholders, having previously focused on classroom instruction rather than community relations. Second, geographic isolation and cultural barriers can make engagement difficult, particularly in remote or indigenous communities. Third, limited resources and funding constrain the school's capacity to organize community activities and maintain regular communication. Fourth, the hierarchical structure and culture of bureaucracy within DepEd can create barriers, as school heads are often caught between top-down policy directives and grassroots community needs. Fifth, the "diffusion of responsibility" under School-Based Management may lead to finger-pointing and less proactive behavior among stakeholders.

De Jesus explored the challenges in school-community involvement, locally termed "Kadtabanga," as experienced by seven public elementary school heads in Maguindanao del Sur, Philippines. Key challenges included weak community participation, resource limitations, and inconsistent engagement efforts. Recommended strategies included multi-channel communication, leadership training, policy support, and stronger partnerships with local government units and NGOs. The study concluded that while school-community involvement significantly benefits pupil outcomes, sustained institutional support and professional development for school heads are essential for long-term success.

### **The Specific Strategies Utilized by the Newly Assigned School Administrators to Cope with and overcome the identified challenges**

Facing the multifaceted challenges of school leadership during the first two years of assignment requires newly assigned administrators to be intentional and resourceful in finding ways to cope and overcome these difficulties. While the challenges of operational overload, school culture navigation, resistance to change, and

conflicting expectations are inevitable, the strategies that administrators employ determine whether they merely survive or thrive in their new roles. Effective coping mechanisms not only help novice leaders manage stress and maintain well-being but also enable them to build credibility, foster positive relationships, and sustain their focus on school improvement.

The specific strategies the newly assigned school administrators utilized to cope with and overcome the identified challenges along leading strategically are found in Table 3.3. Among the seven (7) indicators, leading school planning and implementation with a frequency of 7 and rank 1. This is expected from them in planning and implementation.

This strategy—leading school planning and implementation—highlights the administrators' recognition that effective planning and faithful execution are foundational to school success. Planning provides direction, enables efficient resource allocation, facilitates monitoring and evaluation, and transforms vision into reality. Implementation builds stakeholder confidence, promotes organizational learning, ensures compliance and accountability, and contributes to crisis prevention.

**Table 3.1**

**Specific Strategies the Newly Assigned School Administrators Utilized to Cope with  
and Overcome the Identified Challenges along Leading Strategically**

| Indicators                                             | Frequency | Rank |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------|
| Leading school planning and implementation             | 7         | 1    |
| Conducting policy review and implementation            | 6         | 2.5  |
| Designing programs, projects, and activities           | 6         | 2.5  |
| Articulating vision, mission, and core values          | 5         | 4.5  |
| Utilizing research to improve school performance       | 5         | 4.5  |
| Applying monitoring and evaluation processes and tools | 3         | 6    |
| Incorporating learner's voice                          | 2         | 7    |

This suggests that administrators understand their credibility and effectiveness depend on their ability to deliver results, not just articulate intentions. This is supported by studies showing that while administrators demonstrate competence in planning, translating plans into tangible outcomes requires strengthening, and systematic planning helps navigate competing demands and systemic barriers such as bureaucracy and limited resources.

Following are two (2) indicators both with a frequency of 6 and rank 2.5, conducting policy review and implementation, and designing programs, projects, and activities. Conducting policy review addresses the challenge of struggling with policy implementation by providing clarity, enabling contextualization of national mandates, supporting continuous improvement, and building stakeholder confidence. Designing PPAs directly addresses the challenge of ineffective program design by ensuring interventions are evidence-based, focused, and responsive to identified needs. Together, these strategies are complementary—policy review ensures programs align with national standards, while PPA design translates policies into actionable, context-responsive interventions.

Another two (2) indicators, both with a frequency of 5 and rank 4.5, are Articulating vision, mission, and core values and Utilizing research to improve school performance. These two indicators guide the newly assigned school administrators to see his school in the future and how to accomplish them, as well as considering core values and research important to improve the performance of the school.

The indicators getting the lowest frequency but are still considered as strategies to cope with and overcome identified challenges are applying monitoring and evaluation processes and tools with a frequency of 3 and rank 6 and incorporating learners' voice with a frequency of 2 and rank 7. In this regard, monitoring and evaluation

should not be overlooked because this guides the personnel to improve their work. Likewise, listening to learners' voices gives an idea of what sentiments they have, so the school can give attention.

Martin explored school heads' and teachers' awareness of inclusive education and the institutional challenges in its implementation in the Alfonso Lista Districts 1 and 2, Philippines, using a descriptive survey design. Findings revealed that school heads were more aware of the legal aspects of inclusive education, while teachers were knowledgeable about the pedagogical aspects. Key challenges included limited functional transition programmes and insufficient teacher competencies in inclusivity.

Table 3.2 explains the specific strategies the newly assigned school administrators utilized to cope with and overcome the identified challenges along managing school operations and resources. Among the six (6) indicators, managing school data and information with a frequency of 9 and rank 1. This is followed by overseeing the management of staff with a frequency of 6, and rank 2.

These results only prove how school data and information are very important to the school. These serve as a guide on what the school will do next. On the other hand, overseeing the management of staff is a strategy that newly assigned school administrators can use to give guidance and direction to their subordinates.

Following are three (3) indicators, all of which have a frequency of 5 and are rank 4: implementing financial management, maintaining school facilities and equipment, and addressing emerging challenges and opportunities. These strategies contribute to the upliftment of the school in terms of judicious spending of MOOE, a conducive environment, and good camaraderie.

**Table 3.2**

**Specific Strategies the Newly Assigned School Administrators Utilized to Cope with  
and Overcome the Identified Challenges along Managing School Operations and  
Resources**

| Indicators                                                                   | Frequency | Rank |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------|
| Managing school data and information                                         | 9         | 1    |
| Overseeing the management of staff                                           | 6         | 2    |
| Implementing financial management                                            | 5         | 4    |
| Maintaining school facilities and equipment                                  | 5         | 4    |
| Addressing emerging challenges and opportunities                             | 5         | 4    |
| Ensuring school safety for disaster preparedness, mitigation, and resiliency | 4         | 6    |

The indicator with the lowest frequency of 4 and rank 6 is ensuring school safety for disaster preparedness, mitigation, and resiliency. Ensuring school safety for disaster preparedness, mitigation, and resiliency refers to the administrators' capacity to develop and implement comprehensive plans, systems, and protocols to protect learners, personnel, and school assets from natural and human-induced hazards. This includes conducting risk assessments, establishing early warning systems, organizing regular drills, securing emergency supplies, coordinating with local government units, and ensuring that school infrastructure meets safety standards.

**Awareness and Readiness of School Leaders in Digital Governance** Examined the awareness and readiness of school leaders in Camarines Norte, Philippines, regarding the implementation of digital governance in schools. Key challenges included insufficient training, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of resources, all of which hinder effective implementation. This supports the present study's finding that managing school data and information is a priority strategy, as administrators must address these barriers to implement effective data management systems.

**Table 3.3**

**Specific Strategies the Newly Assigned School Administrators Utilized to Cope with and Overcome the Identified Challenges along Focusing on Teaching and Learning**

| Indicators                                                        | Frequency | Rank |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------|
| Creating a positive learning environment                          | 8         | 1    |
| Facilitating school-based curriculum review and contextualization | 7         | 2    |
| Providing teaching performance feedback                           | 6         | 3    |
| Applying teaching standards and pedagogies                        | 5         | 4.5  |
| Using learning assessment                                         | 5         | 4.5  |
| Enforcing learner discipline                                      | 4         | 6    |
| Promoting career awareness and opportunities                      | 2         | 7    |

Table 3.3 reflects the specific strategies the newly assigned school administrators utilized to cope with and overcome the identified challenges along focusing on teaching and learning. Among the seven (7) indicators, creating a positive learning environment with a frequency of 8 and rank 1.

Creating a positive learning environment refers to the administrators' capacity to establish and sustain a school climate that is safe, supportive, inclusive, and conducive to learning. This encompasses physical safety, emotional well-being, positive teacher-pupil relationships, high expectations, respect for diversity, and a culture of collaboration and mutual trust. A positive learning environment is foundational to effective teaching and learning because it directly influences pupil engagement, motivation, behavior, and academic achievement. When learners feel safe, valued, and supported, they are more likely to participate actively, take intellectual risks, and persist through challenges. Conversely, a negative or toxic environment—marked by fear, disrespect, chaos, or neglect—undermines even the most well-designed instructional programs.

It is followed by facilitating school-based curriculum review and contextualization with a frequency of 7 and rank 2, and providing teaching performance feedback with a frequency of 6 and rank 3. These results indicate that newly assigned school administrators use these two strategies for teachers to be updated with curriculum and improve their teaching through their guidance.

Following are two indicators, both with a frequency of 5 and rank 4.5: applying teaching standards and pedagogies and using learning assessment. The newly assigned school administrators really have to monitor these two strategies to ensure they are being implemented by teachers. Coming 6 in the rank and with a frequency of 4 is enforcing learner discipline.

Enforcing learner discipline helps overcome challenges by creating a safe and orderly environment foundational to all other instructional improvements. Consistent enforcement of clear, positive discipline policies prevents disruptions, reduces behavioral issues, and fosters a positive learning climate—directly addressing the challenge of failing to maintain a positive learning environment. By shifting from punitive measures to reformative approaches aligned with DepEd's positive discipline framework, administrators teach self-discipline and life skills, preventing inconsistent enforcement. Clear, well-communicated discipline standards also build stakeholder confidence, strengthening community engagement.

Meanwhile, the indicator with the lowest frequency of 2 and rank 7 is promoting career awareness and opportunities. The least that the newly assigned school administrators can do is to motivate their teachers to grow professionally by enrolling in graduate school, attending seminars and trainings, and applying for promotion.

Delmas found that school heads implementing the Gender Responsive and Non-Discriminatory Pupil Discipline

Manual demonstrated high awareness and implementation, though challenges such as limited awareness and cultural resistance highlight the need for ongoing communication and stakeholder engagement to sustain effective discipline enforcement.

**Table 3.4**

**Specific Strategies the Newly Assigned School Administrators Utilized to Cope with  
and Overcome the Identified Challenges along Developing Self and Others**

| Indicators                                                           | Frequency | Rank |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------|
| Pursuing personal and professional development                       | 9         | 1    |
| Engaging in professional reflection and learning to improve practice | 5         | 2    |
| Supporting the learning and development of school personnel          | 4         | 3    |
| Implementing school personnel and office performance management      | 3         | 4.5  |
| Establishing rewards and recognition                                 | 3         | 4.5  |
| Ensuring the general welfare of school personnel                     | 2         | 6    |
| Fostering the development of leadership in individuals and teams     | 1         | 7.5  |
| Strengthening organizations within the school                        | 1         | 7.5  |

Table 3.4 presents the specific strategies the newly assigned school administrators utilized to cope with and overcome the identified challenges along developing self and others. As seen from the table, pursuing personal and professional development with a frequency of 9 and rank 1. This is a good move by the newly assigned school administrators for themselves. Also, motivating others to do the same.

This is followed by two (2) indicators namely: Engaging in professional reflection and learning to improve practice with a frequency of 5 and rank 2 and supporting the learning and development of school personnel with a frequency of 4 and rank 3. The second-ranked strategy, engaging in professional reflection and learning to improve practice (frequency of 5), involves administrators intentionally examining their actions, decisions, and outcomes to refine their leadership approaches and enhance self-awareness. This helps overcome challenges by enabling continuous improvement and informed decision-making.

Meanwhile, the third-ranked strategy, supporting the learning and development of school personnel, refers to administrators' efforts to identify professional development needs, provide relevant training, and create a culture of continuous learning for teachers and staff. This addresses challenges such as inconsistent teaching standards and low teacher morale.

Following are two (2) indicators, both with a frequency of 3 and rank 4.5, which are Implementing school personnel and office performance management and Establishing rewards and recognition. These results imply that the newly assigned school administrators should attend personnel and office performances, looking into everybody's performance in order to improve it. Much more, if rewards and recognition are given to deserving personnel. Another indicator is ensuring the general welfare of school personnel with a frequency of 2, and rank 6. When the general welfare of school personnel is being attended to, the work becomes easy.

Two (2) indicators, both got the lowest frequency of 1 and rank 7.5 are fostering the development of leadership in individuals and teams and strengthening organizations within the school. This is because cultivating leadership in others is a higher-order leadership competency that requires confidence, experience, and trust in others. New administrators, still establishing their authority and credibility, often hesitate to delegate meaningful responsibilities or invest time in developing others. They may also lack the mentoring skills or structured programs needed to systematically identify and nurture leadership potential. As a result, they default to managing tasks themselves rather than building leadership capacity in their teams.

Cuyegkeng identified that the hierarchical structure and culture of bureaucracy cause barriers in effective policy implementation at the school level, making it difficult for new administrators to lead organizations effectively. The study noted that not all school heads are trained as teachers, with many lacking real experiences in effective school administration.

**Table 3.5**

**Specific Strategies the Newly Assigned School Administrators Utilized to Cope with  
and Overcome the Identified Challenges along Building Connections**

| Indicators                     | Frequency | Rank |
|--------------------------------|-----------|------|
| Exhibiting inclusive practice  | 7         | 1    |
| Managing diverse relationships | 6         | 2    |
| Enhancing communication        | 4         | 3    |
| Driving community engagement   | 3         | 4    |

Table 3.5 is about the specific strategies the newly assigned school administrators utilized to cope with and overcome the identified challenges along building connections. Among the four (4) indicators, exhibiting inclusive practice with a frequency of 7 and rank 1. This indicates that newly assigned school administrators recognize it as a primary tool for overcoming challenges in building connections. This strategy refers to the administrators' deliberate efforts to ensure that all learners, regardless of their background, ability, or circumstances, have equitable access to quality education and feel valued, respected, and supported within the school community. By prioritizing inclusive practice, administrators address the challenge of superficial commitment to inclusive practice, moving beyond lip service to meaningful, sustainable actions that create a truly inclusive school culture. It is followed by managing diverse relationships with a frequency of 6 and rank

2. This strategy refers to developing good relationships with others.

Another indicator with a frequency of 4 and rank 3 is enhancing communication. This result suggested that newly assigned school administrators be good communicators both to the internal and external stakeholders. Any message should be clearly relayed to concerns. Meanwhile, last in rank with a frequency of 3 is driving community engagement. This simply means that they can move the community as one to extend support to the school.

Huliganga explored the practices of school heads in the implementation of inclusive education in SOCKSARGEN, Philippines, employing a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design. Key inclusive education practices identified included an inclusive and fair learning environment, identification of learners for placement, assessment of special education programs and learners, collaboration with stakeholders, provision of SPED training courses, and provision of intervention programs. This directly supports the present study's finding that practicing inclusive practice is a comprehensive strategy that addresses multiple dimensions of school operations.

### **A Proposed Continuing Intervention to Enhance Leadership of Newly Assigned School Administrators**

The findings of this study have established that while newly assigned school administrators demonstrate high levels of leadership readiness, they also face significant challenges during their transition and employ various strategies to cope with these difficulties. However, readiness alone is not enough to sustain effective leadership over time.

The dynamic and demanding nature of school administration requires continuous support, capacity building, and structured interventions that address not only the initial transition period but also the evolving needs of school leaders as they grow in their roles. A well-designed intervention program can bridge the gap between

readiness and sustained effectiveness by providing targeted guidance, professional development opportunities, and support systems that strengthen leadership competencies.

## **SHIELD 2: School Heads' Integrated Empowerment and Leadership Development for 2 (Years)**

### **An Intervention for Newly Assigned School Administrators**

Ronell A. Domanais

Proponent

#### **Rationale**

The SHIELD 2 program is not merely a response to the challenges identified in Tables 2.1 to 2.5, but a direct intervention born from a confluence of national crises, systemic policy gaps, and the harsh realities faced by school leaders in the Philippines. At the heart of the problem is a staggering leadership deficit, with the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM 2) revealing that approximately 55% of public schools—nearly 25,000 schools—are operating without a fully designated principal, instead being led by head teachers, teachers-in-charge, or officers-in-charge who lack the authority to make critical decisions.

This structural gap creates a system where schools are managed rather than led, stifling innovation and responsiveness. The shortage is further driven by an insufficient pipeline of qualified candidates, historically low passing rates for the National Qualifying Examination for School Heads (NQESH) at just 26% in 2023, and critically, the absence of structured mentoring, coaching, and formal induction programs. Without adequate support, new principals are left to navigate a complex web of responsibilities—from instructional leadership and financial management to stakeholder relations—largely on their own.

This "sink or swim" approach has devastating consequences, as the weight of expectations coupled with professional isolation and overwhelming workloads often leads to severe burnout, with nearly 50% of principals leaving their roles within the first three years due to burnout and lack of support, and over 25% citing inadequate preparation as a major factor in their decision to leave. While the Department of Education has established a clear vision for school leadership through the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH), a significant gap exists between policy and practice due to inconsistencies in implementation, outdated staffing standards, and a rotation policy that mandates the transfer of school heads every three to five years.

In response, DepEd has committed to deploying over 15,000 qualified teachers as principals to achieve a 1:1 principal-to-school ratio, but as Education Secretary Sonny Angara noted, principals are the "brains of our schools"—filling a brain with a body is not enough; it must be equipped to think. The National Educators Academy of the Philippines (NEAP) has established induction programs that run for three years for teachers but only one year for school leaders, yet the complexity and breadth of competencies required across the five PPSSH domains demand a longer, more comprehensive intervention. The findings from Tables 2.1 to 2.5 provide empirical evidence of the specific challenges faced by newly assigned administrators during their first two years across all five domains, confirming that the transition requires time, support must be sustained, competencies develop progressively, challenges are interconnected, and systemic support is essential.

The SHIELD 2 program is therefore designed as a two-year comprehensive intervention that aligns with the PPSSH framework and complements existing NEAP induction programs, providing the structured, sustained support that newly assigned school administrators need to navigate their critical first two years of leadership, develop competencies across all five domains, and ultimately drive meaningful school improvement that translates into improved learner outcomes.

## **SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter presents the salient results of the study about the statement of the problem. It also explains the conclusions and recommendations made based on the relevant outcome of the present work.

## Findings

The following are the salient findings from the study:

1. The level of leadership readiness of newly assigned school administrators along leading strategically was 3.77; along managing school operations and resources, 3.73; along focusing on teaching and learning, 3.85; along developing self and others, 3.67; and along building connections, 3.68, which were all described as high.
2. The challenges experienced by newly assigned school administrators along leading strategically underutilizing research to improve school performance with a frequency of 8, rank 1; along managing school operations and resources was neglecting school facilities and equipment with a frequency of 5, rank 1; along focusing on teaching and learning was not frequently conducting school-based curriculum review and contextualization with a frequency of 7, rank 1; along developing self and others was limited support for learning and development of school personnel with the frequency of 6, rank 1; and along building connections was struggling with managing diverse relationships with frequency of 7, rank 1.
3. The specific strategies utilized by the newly assigned school administrators along leading strategically, leading school planning and implementation with a frequency of 7, rank 1; along managing school operations and resources, managing school data and information with a frequency of 9, rank 1. along with focusing on teaching and learning, was creating a positive learning environment with a frequency of 8, rank 1; along with developing self and others, was pursuing personal and professional development with the frequency of 9, rank 1; and along with building connections, exhibiting inclusive practice with a frequency of 7, rank 1.
4. A continuing intervention was designed to enhance the leadership of newly assigned school administrators.

## Conclusions

Based on the salient findings of the study, the following are the conclusions:

1. The level of leadership readiness of newly assigned school administrators is high.
2. The challenges experienced by newly assigned school administrators were underutilization of research, neglect of school facilities and equipment, not frequently conducting school-based curriculum review and contextualization, limited support for learning and development, and struggle in managing diverse relationships.
3. The specific strategies utilized by newly assigned school administrators to cope with and overcome the identified challenges are leading in school planning and implementation, managing school data and implementation, creating a positive learning environment, pursuing personal and professional development, and exhibiting inclusive practice.
4. A designed continuing intervention to enhance the leadership of newly assigned school administrators was proposed.

## Recommendations

Based on the following findings obtained and the conclusions drawn from them, the following are recommended:

1. The level of leadership readiness of newly assigned school administrators be enhanced through attendance at seminars, trainings, and graduate studies.
2. Responding to the challenges experienced by newly assigned school administrators, be given priority in all five dimensions of PPSSH.
3. The specific strategies to cope with and overcome the identified challenges be utilized by the newly assigned school administrators to enhance their leadership capability.
4. The proposed continuing intervention to enhance the leadership of newly assigned school administrators be adopted by schools.
5. Further research is recommended, similar to the present undertaking:
  - a. From Classroom to Corner Office: A Phenomenological Study on the Transition Experiences of Newly Assigned School Administrators.
  - b. Navigating the Unseen: Political Dynamics and Cultural Challenges Faced by Novice School Heads in the First Two Years.

- c. Leadership Readiness and Its Relationship to Administrative Stress and Burnout Among Newly Assigned School Administrators.
- d. The Role of Mentorship in Enhancing Leadership Competence of Beginning School Principals: A Mixed-Methods Study.
- e. Sustaining the Leader: Well-Being, Resilience, and Coping Mechanisms of Newly Assigned School Administrators in Post-Pandemic Schools.

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