

Comparative Analysis of Professional Competence of School Principals in District IV, Division of Manila

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Abstract

This study was designed to determine the level of professional competence of principals in District IV in the Division of Manila. Results of the assessment of the supervisors, principals and teachers were gathered and analyzed to determine the significant difference on their level of professional competence. The descriptive method was used. Eleven public schools in Manila were included using the convenience and total enumeration sampling design. The researcher used standard survey questionnaire derived from Alberta Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders validated by two experts in school administration and management. Unstructured interview was also used to gather the additional needed data. The data gathered were statistically treated using the weighted mean, percentage, f-test and Yates correction formula. The level of professional competence of principals was evaluated in terms of seven key areas namely fostering effective relationships, embodying visionary leadership, leading a learning community, providing instructional leadership, developing and facilitating leadership, managing school operations and resources and understanding and responding to the larger societal context. It was found out that the principals were rated “very effective” in all seven areas based on the assessment of the three groups of respondents. There was a significant difference on the responses of the three groups while there is no significant relationship of the principals’ profile to their level of professional competence. At the end, an action plan was deduced and made based from the findings to improve the areas of professional competence that need to be improved by the principals.

Keywords: comparative analysis, professional competence, principals

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Introduction

School principals are considered educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special program administrators, and expert overseers of legal, contractual and policy mandates and initiatives. They also mediate to the often-conflicting interests of parents, teachers, students, district office officials, unions, state and federal agencies and they need to be sensitive to the widening range of student needs. While their job descriptions and job specifications sound overwhelming, it signals that the field has begun to give overdue recognition to the critical role and mounting demands on school principals. A range of critics such as district supervisors, teachers and principals themselves, raise a litany of concerns about the quality and effectiveness of the leadership competence of principals. Christine De Vita, President of the Wallace Foundation mentioned some of the most defined concerns with regard to leadership and professional competence of principals which are as follows: (a) That the leadership practices are disconnected from real-world complexities; (b) That the knowledge base is weak and out-dated; (c) That curricula often fail to provide grounding in effective teaching and learning; (d) That mentorships and internships often lack depth or opportunities to test leadership skills in real situations; and (e) That admissions standards being implemented lack rigor and as a result, too many graduates will eventually be “certified” but not truly “qualified” to effectively lead school-wide change. Meanwhile, Stanford Educational Leadership Institute in California pointed out that in recent years, a number of reports depict that principals are in a state of crisis largely precipitated by two troubling factors: (1) Schools are struggling to attract and retain an adequate supply of highly qualified candidates for leadership roles (Knapp, Copland and Talbert, 2003); and (2) Principal candidates and existing principals are often ill-prepared and inadequately supported to organize schools to improve learning while managing other demands related to their job (Levine, 2005). This idea is also evident in most public schools in the country nowadays. A shortage of highly qualified principals who are competent to lead and manage school organizations has been reported by school districts across the nation. To address these issues, an increasing number of professional development programs were created to provide intense support system for school principals to build the skills they need to effectively lead schools. While there is increasing number of researches that focus on how principals influence school effectiveness, less is known about how to help principals develop the capacities and competencies that make a difference in leading and managing schools. What desperately needed is a deeper analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the leadership competence of school principals. There is a need for a clearer picture of what is and what is not known about the specific leadership concepts and practices that can influence the principals’ beliefs and behaviors in ways that improve the organization in general.

With the aforementioned ideas, it is on this light that the researcher became interested to assess the professional competence of school principals in District IV in the Division of Manila. Furthermore, the results of this study will be beneficial in the making of strategic direction/action plan to provide the school principals wider view on how to run the organization effectively.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

The principals in the district are mostly females, more or less 49 years old, married, masteral undergraduate and have been in the service for around 23 years.

The principals are very effective in all areas of professional competence.

There is no significant relationship between principals' profile and their level of professional competence.

There is no significant difference on the area *developing and facilitating leadership* while there is significant difference on the other remaining six areas of professional competence of principals.

There is no significant difference on the assessment of the three groups of respondents as regards to the seven areas of professional competence of principals.

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