International Journal of Social Science and Human Research

ISSN (print): 2644-0679, ISSN (online): 2644-0695

Volume 09 Issue 10 October 2026

DOI: 10.47191/ijsshr/v9-i10-61, Impact factor- 8.361

Page No: 9102- 9107

Curriculum Leadership Practices and Perceived Curriculum Implementation Effectiveness Among Public School Heads in Three Schools Divisions

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ABSTRACT: Curriculum reform depends on how school leaders support its everyday implementation. This study examined the relationship between curriculum leadership practices and perceived curriculum implementation effectiveness among public school heads in Albay, Ligao City, and Iriga City, Philippines. Guided by Hallinger and Murphy's instructional leadership model, a cross-sectional descriptive-correlational design was used. Fifty school heads voluntarily completed a questionnaire containing 60 items across six subscales. Analyses included descriptive statistics, internal consistency estimates, Pearson correlation, and simultaneous multiple regression, supplemented by rank-based correlation, robust standard errors, and influential-case checks. Respondents reported very high leadership practices ($M = 4.702$, $SD = 0.375$) and implementation effectiveness ($M = 4.678$, $SD = 0.359$). However, 71.2% of item responses received the highest rating, indicating a ceiling effect. Overall leadership and implementation scores were strongly associated ($r = .804$, $p < .001$). The regression model explained 66.8% of the observed variance. Positive learning climate was the only dimension with a significant unique association ($B = 0.535$, $\beta = .595$, $p = .002$), a finding retained in sensitivity analyses. Mission definition and instructional management did not contribute significant additional variance after their overlap with learning climate was considered. Findings suggest that collaboration, recognition, inclusion, and professional learning deserve attention in curriculum support. Nevertheless, the voluntary sample, common source of measurement, unverified content validity, and overlapping predictors limit interpretation. The results describe perceptions rather than independently demonstrated effectiveness and cannot establish causation. Larger studies using validated instruments, teacher reports, observations, and documentary evidence are needed to test these relationships.

KEYWORDS: curriculum leadership; curriculum implementation; instructional leadership; school heads; learning climate; Philippines

I. INTRODUCTION

Curriculum reform reaches learners through decisions made in schools. School heads help teachers interpret standards, organize instructional support, review classroom evidence, and respond to difficulties that emerge during implementation. A curriculum may be clearly specified, yet its enactment still depends on the time, guidance, resources, and professional relationships available to teachers. Understanding these conditions requires attention to leadership practices as well as formal curriculum plans.

In the Philippines, the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads identifies strategic direction, teaching and learning, professional development, and stakeholder connections as leadership responsibilities (Department of Education, 2020). The policy guidelines for the MATATAG Curriculum likewise connect implementation with instructional supervision, monitoring, and technical assistance (Department of Education, 2024). These policy documents provide the context for the study; the questionnaire assessed general curriculum processes and did not independently evaluate compliance with MATATAG requirements.

Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) instructional leadership model provides the theoretical basis for this inquiry. Its three dimensions—defining the school mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive learning climate—connect leadership with the organization of teaching and learning. Mission definition establishes shared priorities. Instructional management supports curriculum coordination, supervision, and progress monitoring. Learning climate concerns the conditions that sustain teachers' work, including professional learning, recognition, and support.

Research has linked instructional leadership with classroom practice and instructional quality (Bellibaş et al., 2021). Leadership practices closely connected with teaching and teacher learning also feature prominently in the synthesis by Robinson et al. (2008). In a Philippine setting, Aquino et al. (2021) examined school heads' leadership practices in relation to teacher performance. These

studies establish the relevance of leadership, but their outcomes differ from the curriculum planning, delivery, and improvement processes examined here.

The present study brings these processes together in a pooled sample from the Schools Divisions of Albay, Ligao City, and Iriga City. Curriculum implementation effectiveness was operationalized as school heads' perceptions of planning and alignment, instructional delivery and learning experiences, and curriculum support and continuous improvement. The distinction between perceived and independently demonstrated effectiveness is essential: the study collected school heads' ratings rather than classroom observations or measures of learner achievement.

The study addressed three questions: What levels of curriculum leadership and implementation effectiveness did participating school heads report? How strongly were the overall constructs associated? Which leadership dimensions retained a unique association with perceived implementation when entered together? The analysis tested the null hypotheses of no overall association and no unique association for each leadership dimension. Its contribution is an exploratory account of these relationships in the participating schools, rather than a population estimate or causal test.

II .METHODS

A. Design and Participants

A quantitative, cross-sectional descriptive-correlational design was used. Participants were currently designated public school heads or administrators who performed curriculum management and instructional leadership functions. Electronic submissions were recorded from August 5 to August 14, 2026. The sample comprised 50 respondents: 17 from Albay Division (34%), 17 from Ligao City Division (34%), and 16 from Iriga City Division (32%).

Participation was voluntary. Although an earlier methodological plan proposed probability sampling, the available study records did not establish a sampling frame, random selection, population-based allocation, or the number of invitations issued. The completed study is therefore described as a voluntary response survey. The near-balanced division counts indicate geographical coverage, not population representativeness. No response rate could be established. Respondent-level division codes and professional profiles were absent from the analytical file, so all analyses were pooled and no division comparisons were undertaken.

B. Instrument and Scoring

The researcher-developed questionnaire contained 60 items, organized into six subscales of 10 items each. Leadership subscales covered defining the school mission, managing instructional programs, and promoting a positive learning climate. Implementation subscales covered curriculum planning and alignment, instructional delivery and learning experiences, and curriculum support and continuous improvement. The leadership items were informed by Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model; the instrument was not presented as a standardized measure.

Leadership responses ranged from 1 (not practiced) to 5 (very highly practiced), and implementation responses ranged from 1 (not effective) to 5 (very highly effective). Each subscale score was the mean of its 10 items. Each overall score was the mean of its three subscales. Scores from 4.21 to 5.00 were classified as very highly practiced or very highly effective. These labels summarize respondents' ratings and do not establish externally verified performance. An earlier draft included an additional assessment and monitoring section, but it was not represented in the administered response file and was excluded from scoring.

Three-expert content review had been planned, but completed review forms, content-validity ratings, and a revision record were unavailable. Content validity and the proposed factor structure therefore remain unestablished. Cronbach's alpha was estimated from the study sample. High internal consistency was interpreted as evidence of score consistency, not as proof of validity or distinct constructs (Taber, 2018).

C. Data Management and Ethical Considerations

All 50 records contained complete responses to the 60 items, and all values were within the permitted range. No imputation or case deletion was required for the primary analyses. The respondent information statement described participation as voluntary and promised confidentiality. The original export nevertheless included usernames in 25 records; these were removed from the analytical file and replaced with respondent codes. Data collection was therefore confidential rather than fully anonymous.

The materials available for this manuscript did not contain verifiable institutional ethics clearance, division permissions, separate consent documentation, or a data-retention protocol. No claim of ethics approval or exemption is made here. The authors must resolve the applicable approval and consent documentation before submission; any approval or exemption statement must accurately reflect what occurred.

D. Statistical Analysis

Descriptive analyses summarized composite means, standard deviations, and confidence intervals. Pearson correlation assessed the association between overall leadership and implementation. Simultaneous multiple linear regression estimated the unique association of each leadership dimension with overall implementation, using two-tailed tests at $\alpha = .05$. Reported estimates included

unstandardized coefficients, standardized coefficients, confidence intervals, and variance inflation factors (VIFs). The regression was explanatory within this sample and was not evaluated for prediction in an independent sample.

Because ratings were concentrated near the top of the scale and residuals were non-normal, sensitivity analyses included Spearman correlation, heteroscedasticity-consistent HC3 standard errors, and a regression excluding cases above the Cook's distance screening threshold of 4/n. This exclusion was diagnostic only; the primary model retained all 50 cases. These procedures assess dependence on selected statistical assumptions but do not address sampling or measurement bias.

III. RESULTS

A. Response Distribution and Scale Scores

The dataset contained 3,000 item responses. Of these, 2,137 (71.2%) were rated 5, 798 (26.6%) were rated 4, 63 (2.1%) were rated 3, and two (0.1%) were rated 2. No response was rated 1. The marked ceiling effect reduced the instrument's ability to distinguish among respondents. Table I combines descriptive statistics and reliability estimates for the six subscales and two overall scores.

Table I. Descriptive Statistics and Internal Consistency

Scale	M	SD	95% CI for M	α
Defining the school mission	4.682	0.402	4.568–4.796	.927
Managing instructional programs	4.698	0.391	4.587–4.809	.919
Promoting a positive learning climate	4.726	0.398	4.613–4.839	.935
Curriculum planning and alignment	4.704	0.385	4.595–4.813	.929
Instructional delivery and learning experiences	4.718	0.385	4.609–4.827	.932
Curriculum support and continuous improvement	4.612	0.412	4.495–4.729	.924
Overall curriculum leadership	4.702	0.375	4.595–4.809	.970
Overall curriculum implementation	4.678	0.359	4.576–4.780	.966

Note. N = 50. Subscales contain 10 items; overall scales contain 30 items. All means fall within the highest descriptive category (4.21–5.00). Confidence intervals quantify model-based uncertainty and do not correct voluntary response bias.

Overall leadership was rated very highly practiced (M = 4.702, SD = 0.375), and overall implementation was rated very highly effective (M = 4.678, SD = 0.359). Learning climate had the highest leadership mean. Instructional delivery had the highest implementation mean, while support and continuous improvement had the lowest. These are descriptive rankings; no paired comparisons were conducted to establish differences among dimensions.

Several comparatively lower item means pointed toward review and feedback routines: improving implementation plans using evidence (M = 4.52), establishing monitoring mechanisms (M = 4.58), and regularly evaluating curriculum practices (M = 4.48). Stakeholder involvement in leadership initiatives (M = 4.56) and curriculum support (M = 4.50) was also relatively lower. These values identify possible discussion priorities within otherwise favorable ratings, not independently established deficiencies.

Subscale alpha coefficients ranged from .919 to .935; overall leadership and implementation coefficients were .970 and .966, respectively. The full-instrument alpha was .981. Because the questionnaire covers multiple intended constructs, this last coefficient was descriptive only and was not evidence of a single underlying dimension.

B. Association Between Overall Scores

Overall curriculum leadership and perceived implementation were strongly positively associated, $r(48) = .804$, 95% CI [.678, .885], $p < .001$. The rank-based sensitivity analysis yielded the same direction and conclusion (Spearman $\rho = .751$, $p < .001$). The null hypothesis of no overall association was rejected. The reported shared variance was approximately 64.7%, but this quantity does not indicate the proportion of implementation caused by leadership.

C. Unique Associations of Leadership Dimensions

The simultaneous regression model was statistically significant, $F(3, 46) = 30.856$, $p < .001$, with $R^2 = .668$ and adjusted $R^2 = .646$. Thus, the three leadership dimensions jointly accounted for 66.8% of the observed variance in perceived implementation in this sample. Table II presents the coefficient estimates.

Table II. Multiple Regression of Perceived Curriculum Implementation

Predictor	B	SE	β	p	95% CI for B	VIF
Intercept	1.053	0.383	—	.009	0.282–1.824	—
Defining the school mission	0.215	0.144	.241	.143	−0.075–0.504	3.607
Managing instructional programs	0.019	0.193	.021	.921	−0.370–0.408	6.160
Promoting a positive learning climate	0.535	0.165	.595	.002	0.204–0.867	4.642

Note. N = 50. Ordinary least squares estimates; criterion: overall perceived curriculum implementation. R^2 = .668; adjusted R^2 = .646; F(3, 46) = 30.856, p < .001.

Positive learning climate was the only dimension with a significant unique association (B = 0.535, β = .595, p = .002). Holding the other dimensions constant, a one-point difference in climate score corresponded to an estimated 0.535-point difference in perceived implementation. Its reported unique contribution was approximately 7.6 percentage points of explained variance. Mission definition (p = .143) and instructional management (p = .921) did not contribute significant additional variance in the joint model.

The predictors overlapped substantially, with VIFs ranging from 3.607 to 6.160. The residual Shapiro–Wilk test indicated non-normality (p = .002), and the Breusch–Pagan result was borderline (p = .050). Four cases exceeded the Cook's distance threshold of .080. Learning climate remained significant with HC3 standard errors (p = .009) and after the four cases were omitted for sensitivity analysis (β = .549, p < .001). These checks support the stability of the reported association under the tested alternatives; they do not resolve common-source measurement or establish causation.

IV. DISCUSSION

A. Interpreting Favorable Ratings

Participating school heads viewed both their leadership and curriculum implementation positively. The overall pattern is compatible with the instructional responsibilities outlined in Philippine school leadership policy. However, the response distribution is as important as the high means: more than seven in ten answers were at the maximum rating. The survey consequently offers limited separation between respondents and may conceal differences that would be visible in classroom evidence or teacher accounts.

Favorable ratings may reflect strong practice, but broad positive wording and self-evaluation can also encourage socially desirable responses. The present data cannot separate these explanations. Small differences among high item means should therefore guide inquiry rather than serve as a basis for ranking schools or judging individual leaders. The relatively lower ratings for evidence-based review, monitoring, and stakeholder participation suggest useful questions for local follow-up: What evidence is routinely examined? Who takes part in interpreting it? How are decisions revised when implementation falls short?

B. Leadership and Implementation as Related Processes

The strong overall association is consistent with Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) view that leadership organizes the conditions for instructional work. It also accords with research connecting leadership to instructional quality and teacher performance (Aquino et al., 2021; Bellibaş et al., 2021). This study extends that discussion to school heads' perceptions of curriculum planning, delivery, and continuing support in the three participating divisions.

The association nevertheless requires careful interpretation. Leadership and implementation were rated by the same person, in the same survey, at the same time. Such a design is vulnerable to common-method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Some content also overlaps: professional learning, collaboration, alignment, and improvement appear in both the leadership and implementation domains. Part of the relationship may therefore reflect respondents' general assessment of their schools or similarity between item content. The data cannot determine how much of the association reflects distinct practices rather than shared measurement.

C. The Role of a Positive Learning Climate

Learning climate retained a unique association after the other leadership dimensions were considered. This finding directs attention to the everyday conditions under which teachers implement the curriculum: opportunities for professional dialogue, recognition of useful efforts, reflective practice, inclusion, and support for professional growth. Hallinger (2011) describes leadership for learning as a process shaped by organizational conditions. Research on professional development similarly emphasizes sustained collaboration and support connected to teachers' instructional work (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). These accounts offer plausible explanations for the observed pattern, although the study did not directly test the mechanisms involved.

The nonsignificant mission and instructional-management coefficients should not be taken to mean that these practices lack value. Their reported bivariate correlations with implementation were .727 and .749, respectively. The joint model asks a narrower question: whether each dimension contributes information beyond its overlap with the others. With interrelated predictors and only

50 respondents, estimates of unique contributions are less stable. Learning climate warrants further investigation, but it should not replace attention to clear direction or instructional support.

D. Implications for Practice and Measurement

School heads can use these findings to review existing support routines with teachers. Protected time for collaborative planning, discussion of learner work, feedback after classroom observation, and follow-through on agreed adjustments provide practical ways to connect professional learning with curriculum needs. Stakeholders can contribute to specific problems, such as access to materials or contextualized learning activities, when their roles are clearly defined. These are reasonable practice considerations, not interventions whose effectiveness was demonstrated by this survey.

A stronger evidence base also requires a revised measurement strategy. Expert review, cognitive interviews, pilot testing, and examination of dimensionality should precede wider use of the questionnaire (Boateng et al., 2018). High alpha values alone cannot settle whether leadership and implementation are distinct constructs (Taber, 2018). Teacher ratings, school planning documents, observation records, and learner evidence would allow future studies to compare perceptions with observable practices. Any expert review completed after this study should be identified as post-administration work and should not be represented as validation conducted before data collection.

V. LIMITATIONS

The voluntary sample was small, and population denominators, invitation counts, and response rates were unavailable. The findings cannot be generalized confidently to all school heads in the participating divisions. Missing respondent-level division codes and demographic information prevented subgroup analysis and examination of sample comparability. Confidence intervals and significance tests do not remove these selection limitations.

The instrument lacked documented content validation and a tested factor structure. Self-reporting, overlapping item content, the ceiling effect, and possible social desirability limit interpretation of both levels and associations. Multicollinearity, non-normal residuals, and influential observations further constrain coefficient comparisons, even though sensitivity checks supported the climate finding. No independent validation sample was used. The cross-sectional design cannot establish temporal order, rule out reciprocal relationships, or support causal claims. In addition, the missing ethics and consent records require author clarification before journal submission.

VI. CONCLUSION

Among the 50 participating public school heads, reported curriculum leadership and perceived curriculum implementation were strongly associated. Positive learning climate retained a significant unique association after mission definition and instructional management were considered together. The finding draws attention to collaboration, recognition, inclusion, and professional learning as conditions worth examining in curriculum support. It remains preliminary evidence from a voluntary, self-report survey. Future work should establish measurement validity, document recruitment, and use multiple sources of implementation evidence before drawing broader conclusions about leadership effectiveness.

VII. DECLARATIONS

Ethics and consent: [Authors must insert the verified approval or exemption status, relevant institutional or division permissions, and the actual consent procedure. Do not insert an approval number unless documented.]

Funding and competing interests: [Authors must confirm all funding sources and any competing interests, or explicitly declare their absence if accurate.]

Author contributions and data availability: [Authors must confirm individual contributions and specify whether de-identified data and analysis materials can be shared, subject to consent and institutional requirements.]

Generative AI assistance: ChatGPT was used to assist with language revision, organization, and manuscript formatting. Numerical findings were retained from the supplied research report; the underlying dataset was not provided for independent reanalysis during this revision. The authors must review and approve the final manuscript and confirm the complete disclosure of AI assistance used throughout the study.

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