

The Strategies in Enhancing the School Management Competencies of the Newly Promoted Principals in the Public Elementary Schools in the Division of Quezon

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ARTICLE INFORMATION	ABSTRACT
Article history: Published: August 2026 Keywords: School Management Competencies Newly Promoted Principals Decision-Making Leadership Development	This study examined the school management competencies of newly promoted public elementary school principals in the Division of Quezon, the strategies used to strengthen those competencies, and their perceived influence on decision-making. A descriptive-correlational design and total enumeration involved 264 principals appointed or promoted from 2023 to 2025. A validated researcher-made questionnaire generated weighted means, rank orders, Kendall's W, and Spearman correlations at $\alpha=.05$. All six management domains were Much Evident ($M=4.28-4.45$), with managerial leadership highest and strategic thinking and innovation lowest. Competency-development strategies were also Much Evident (grand $M=4.33$), led by relationship building ($M=4.38$). Their influence on decision-making was Much Influential (grand $M=4.46$), particularly for staff supervision ($M=4.47$). Four district groups showed very high concordance in management, strategy, and decision-making rankings ($W=.963-.999$; $\chi^2=34.675-35.959$; $df=9$; $p<.001$). School management had negligible relationships with strategy ratings and decision-making influence (both $rs=.051$, n.s.), whereas strategy and decision-influence composites were perfectly correlated ($rs=1.00$). The perfect association produced exact multicollinearity; consequently, the reported multiple-regression result is not interpretable as an independent predictive effect. Findings support structured induction, mentoring, strategic-thinking development, operational simulations, and construct refinement before outcome evaluation.

1. Introduction

School leadership is a central organizational condition for translating educational policy into coherent classroom practice. Although school heads influence learning indirectly, they shape the goals, routines, professional relationships, resource decisions, and accountability structures through which teachers work. Leadership is therefore most consequential when administrative competence is joined with instructional purpose and when improvement priorities are understood by staff and stakeholders (Leithwood et al., 2020).

The Governance of Basic Education Act locates substantial responsibility for school-level management within a decentralized system. This responsibility requires school heads to interpret national directives, organize human and material resources, maintain transparent processes, and respond to local needs. The Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads further organizes effective practice around strategic leadership, operations, teaching and learning, people development, and stakeholder relationships (Department of Education, 2020; Republic Act No. 9155, 2001).

Competence in school management is not reducible to procedural compliance. Effective leaders diagnose conditions, set priorities, use evidence, mobilize collective expertise, and communicate a credible direction. They also create the relational conditions under which teachers can take professional risks, share problems, and sustain improvement. Relational trust is thus an operational resource: it lowers coordination costs, supports candid dialogue, and increases the likelihood that organizational decisions will be implemented (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

Distributed leadership provides a complementary lens because the work of school improvement is stretched across people, routines, and situations. Principals remain accountable, but effective governance depends on purposeful participation by teachers, coordinators, parents, local officials, and community partners. Collaboration becomes productive when roles are clear, decision processes are transparent, and participation is linked to defined learning goals rather than treated as consultation for its own sake (Spillane, 2006). Leadership learning is especially important when responsibilities change, local conditions differ, or administrative demands compete with instructional work. Formal training can build conceptual knowledge, yet transfer to practice depends on coaching, deliberate rehearsal, feedback, peer learning, and opportunities to solve authentic school problems. Professional capital develops through the interaction of individual expertise, social relationships, and sound professional judgment (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

Time, attention, and organizational capacity are finite. School heads who spend disproportionate effort on routine reporting, interruptions, and fragmented transactions may have less opportunity to observe instruction, coach teachers, engage families, and monitor improvement. Evidence on principal time use suggests that management skill is associated not only with productivity but also with perceived effectiveness and occupational stress (Grissom et al., 2015).

Stakeholder engagement adds another layer of complexity. Community participation can extend resources and legitimacy, but it requires leaders to manage expectations, protect fairness, and maintain alignment with educational purposes. Communication must

therefore be reciprocal and evidence-informed. It should clarify why a decision is necessary, whose needs are affected, how implementation will be monitored, and what evidence will indicate improvement.

Within this policy and organizational context, particular attention is required for the competencies, developmental strategies, and decision-making processes of principals during the transition into school leadership.

Survey ratings can establish a useful implementation baseline by identifying domains perceived as strong, comparatively weak, or uneven across groups. However, high self-reported or respondent-reported ratings do not by themselves demonstrate improved teaching or learner achievement. Ratings describe perceived practice; they should be triangulated with observations, administrative records, professional-learning outputs, and outcome indicators before causal claims are made.

Rank-based inferential procedures are appropriate when the analysis concerns ordered assessments or non-normal data. Their interpretation nevertheless requires care. A difference between groups indicates variation in rank distributions, while concordance indicates similarity in ordering; neither statistic estimates the causal effect of a leadership practice. This distinction is essential when translating findings into policy and training priorities.

Against this background, the study provides locally grounded evidence on the competencies, developmental strategies, and decision-making processes of principals during the transition into school leadership. Its value lies in connecting descriptive profiles with implementable leadership-development priorities while preserving the limits of cross-sectional perception data.

1.1 Research Purpose and Analytical Focus

The study pursued four linked purposes: to profile six school management competency domains; to assess six strategies intended to enhance those competencies; to determine the perceived influence of management strategies on four decision-making areas; and to examine rank concordance and relationships among the resulting composites. The analysis also sought an evidence base for a training design responsive to the transition needs of newly promoted principals.

The null hypotheses concerned the absence of concordance among the four congressional-district groups and the absence of relationships among school management, strategies employed, and perceived influence on decision-making. Because the measures were perceptual and collected concurrently, the term influence is retained as the measured construct but is not interpreted causally.

1.2 Conceptual and Empirical Synthesis

The analytical model treats leadership development as a progression from competence to strategic action and decision practice. Management competence supplies knowledge and judgment; professional learning and relationship-building create opportunities for that competence to be enacted; and decisions translate leadership intentions into supervision, operations, continuity, and personal sustainability. The PPSSH offers a standards-based frame for interpreting the six competency domains. Strategic thinking and innovation concern direction-setting and adaptation; managerial and instructional leadership organize conditions for teaching and learning; personal excellence supports ethical and reflective practice; teaching-position experience provides professional grounding; and stakeholder engagement extends leadership beyond formal authority.

The model also recognizes that strategies and decisions can become empirically indistinguishable when questionnaire items describe the same leadership act from two perspectives. Construct separation is therefore a measurement requirement, not merely a statistical preference.

2. Methodology

A descriptive-correlational survey design was used. The descriptive component summarized respondents' assessments of current competencies, strategies, and decision-making influence. The correlational component examined associations among composite variables, while Kendall's W assessed common ordering among four district groups.

The setting comprised public elementary schools in the Division of Quezon. Purposive selection established the locale, and total enumeration included 264 newly promoted principals appointed or promoted between 2023 and 2025. The First, Second, Third, and Fourth Congressional Districts contributed 65, 39, 76, and 84 respondents, respectively.

The researcher-made questionnaire contained 160 items distributed across three parts. Sixty items measured six school-management domains, sixty measured six competency-enhancement strategies, and forty measured four decision-making areas. Items used a five-point scale with domain-appropriate verbal interpretations.

Content alignment was guided by a table of specifications, and the instrument underwent expert review and validation before administration. The analysis used frequency counts, percentages, weighted and combined means, rank orders, Kendall's coefficient of concordance, Spearman's rho, and a planned multiple-correlation procedure.

For Kendall's W, each domain comprised ten ranked indicators evaluated across four district groups. The chi-square approximation therefore used $df=9$. Reported chi-square values were compared with the .05 critical value of 16.92 and, where applicable, the .001 value of 27.88. Spearman correlations were interpreted as monotonic associations rather than causal effects. A perfect predictor correlation creates a singular correlation matrix and makes a conventional multiple-regression F test undefined. That condition was treated as an analytic limitation rather than evidence of infinite explanatory power.

Table 1. Research Design, Participants, Measures, and Analysis

Component	Specification
Design	Descriptive-correlational, cross-sectional survey
Participants	264 newly promoted public elementary school principals
District distribution	First=65; Second=39; Third=76; Fourth=84

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Component	Specification
Instrument	Validated researcher-made questionnaire; 160 items
Competency domains	Strategic thinking; managerial; instructional; personal; teaching experience; stakeholder engagement
Strategy domains	Professional development; leadership training; relationships; community; communication/branding; data use
Decision domains	Staff supervision; school operations; predecessor legacy; work-life balance
Analysis	Weighted means, ranks, Kendall's W, Spearman's rho; $\alpha=.05$

2.1 Analytical Rigor and Boundaries

The complete district distribution supports coverage of the defined population of newly promoted principals in the locale. Nevertheless, total enumeration does not remove nonresponse, social-desirability, or common-method risks; it only minimizes sampling error for the enumerated frame.

A reproducibility check confirmed that the Kendall chi-square statistics exceed the $df=9$ critical values and support highly significant concordance. The correlation matrix, however, contains a perfect association between strategy and decision-influence composites. Because exact multicollinearity prevents estimation of unique predictor effects, no substantive interpretation is assigned to an infinite F statistic. The article consequently gives greatest evidentiary weight to descriptive profiles, district concordance, and the two non-significant bivariate relationships. The perfect composite correlation is reported transparently as a measurement signal requiring scale revision.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Participant Distribution

All four congressional districts were represented, with the largest share from the Fourth District and the smallest from the Second District.

Table 2. Distribution of Newly Promoted Principals by Congressional District

District	Frequency	Percent
First	65	25%
Second	39	15%
Third	76	29%
Fourth	84	32%
Total	264	100%

The distribution reflects the administrative geography of the division rather than equal allocation. This matters because district context can shape access to supervisors, peer networks, training venues, community resources, and opportunities for mentoring. Concordance testing appropriately examined whether such contextual differences altered the ordering of leadership priorities.

The broad coverage strengthens the study as a division-level implementation baseline. It does not, however, imply that the four districts faced identical leadership conditions or that one standardized intervention would be equally responsive in all settings.

3.2 School Management Competencies

Table 3. Perceived School Management Competencies

Competency Domain	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Managerial leadership	4.45	Much Evident	1
Personal excellence	4.40	Much Evident	2
Stakeholder engagement	4.37	Much Evident	3
Teaching-position grounding	4.36	Much Evident	4
Instructional leadership	4.35	Much Evident	5
Strategic thinking and innovation	4.28	Much Evident	6
Grand mean	4.37	Much Evident	—

Managerial leadership received the highest mean, suggesting that newly promoted principals were most confident in organizing people, processes, and immediate operational requirements. Personal excellence and stakeholder engagement also rated strongly, indicating attention to professional conduct and relational legitimacy during leadership transition.

Strategic thinking and innovation ranked last, although it remained Much Evident. The relative gap is substantively important: operational competence stabilizes schools, but strategic foresight is needed to diagnose emerging needs, align resources with long-term goals, and lead change beyond compliance. Induction should therefore preserve managerial strengths while deliberately developing scenario analysis, innovation planning, and evidence-informed experimentation.

The narrow .17 range shows a generally favorable profile rather than severe domain weakness. Prioritization should be based on relative need and the strategic importance of each domain, not on deficit labeling.

3.3 Concordance in Competency Rankings

Table 4. Agreement among Four District Groups on Competency Rankings

Domain	Kendall's W	χ^2	df	Decision
Strategic thinking and innovation	.963	34.675	9	p<.001
Managerial leadership	.972	34.988	9	p<.001
Instructional leadership	.983	35.398	9	p<.001
Personal excellence	.999	35.959	9	p<.001
Teaching-position grounding	.995	35.809	9	p<.001
Stakeholder engagement	.983	35.371	9	p<.001

All coefficients were exceptionally high and all chi-square values exceeded the .001 critical value. The four district groups therefore ordered the ten indicators within each competency domain similarly. Shared policy standards, comparable role expectations, and common leadership preparation may explain this convergence.

Concordance is useful for division-wide planning because it indicates a common perception of priorities. It should not be mistaken for equality of mean levels or proof that practice was uniformly effective. District-specific diagnostics remain necessary to determine the intensity and delivery mode of support.

3.4 Competency-Enhancement Strategies

Table 5. Strategies Employed to Enhance School Management Competencies

Strategy	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Building relationships	4.38	Much Evident	1
Professional development	4.34	Much Evident	2
Community engagement	4.33	Much Evident	3
Data-driven decision-making	4.32	Much Evident	4
Leadership training	4.31	Much Evident	5.5
Communication and branding	4.31	Much Evident	5.5
Grand mean	4.33	Much Evident	—

Relationship building led the strategy profile. For newly appointed leaders, trust, access, and communication are immediate prerequisites for obtaining reliable information and mobilizing staff. The finding aligns with relational-trust scholarship and supports coaching that helps leaders convert interpersonal goodwill into shared instructional work.

Leadership training and communication and branding were tied at the lowest mean. Their position suggests that formal preparation and strategic communication may be less sustained or less embedded in everyday work than informal relationship-building. Modular training, mentoring, communication planning, and authentic implementation projects can make these strategies more practice-oriented.

Across the six strategy domains, W ranged from .983 to .996 and χ^2 from 35.385 to 35.850 (df=9, p<.001), indicating highly consistent ordering among district groups.

3.5 Influence on Decision-Making

Table 6. Perceived Influence of Strategies on Decision-Making

Decision Domain	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Staff supervision	4.47	Much Influential	1
Managing predecessor legacy	4.46	Much Influential	2
Work-life balance	4.45	Much Influential	3

Decision Domain	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
School operations	4.43	Much Influential	4
Grand mean	4.46	Much Influential	—

Staff supervision was the highest-rated decision domain. Classroom observation, feedback, performance expectations, and coaching provide principals with direct evidence for decisions affecting teaching quality. The salience of predecessor legacy also reflects the transition task of preserving functional routines while establishing a credible leadership direction.

School operations ranked last but remained strongly rated. This relative position may indicate that operational decisions are framed as compliance tasks rather than strategic choices. Simulation-based preparation in budgeting, procurement, facilities, risk, and workflow design can strengthen operational judgment without reducing time for instructional leadership.

District concordance was again very high ($W=.98-.99$; $\chi^2=35.34-35.83$; $df=9$; $p<.001$), showing a common ordering of decision priorities.

3.6 Relationships among the Study Variables

Table 7. Spearman Correlations among Composite Variables

Variable Pair	rs	Test Result	Interpretation
Management $\times$ strategies	.051	$t=.83$; n.s.	Negligible
Management $\times$ decision influence	.051	$t=.83$; n.s.	Negligible
Strategies $\times$ decision influence	1.000	Perfect association	Exact overlap / collinearity

School management ratings were not meaningfully associated with either the strategy composite or the decision-influence composite. This pattern is consistent with a transitional context in which formal competence, strategic action, and broader management outcomes may not yet move together.

The perfect association between strategies and decision influence is not evidence that one construct perfectly causes the other. It indicates that the two composites had identical rank ordering. Exact overlap can arise from duplicated or near-duplicated content, scoring dependencies, or insufficient construct separation. Because a predictor correlation of 1.00 makes the correlation matrix singular, the planned multivariate model cannot estimate unique effects.

A defensible next step is to review item wording, conduct cognitive interviews, examine inter-item and cross-scale correlations, and test a revised measurement model before re-estimating structural relationships.

3.7 Integrated Interpretation of the Findings

The findings portray newly promoted principals as operationally capable, relationally oriented, and broadly aligned across districts. Managerial leadership, personal excellence, and relationship building form a stable foundation for early tenure. The strongest development need is not basic compliance but the conversion of that foundation into strategic thinking, innovation, formal leadership learning, and purposeful communication.

Very high concordance suggests that division-wide standards and common modules are feasible. Yet training should not be entirely uniform. District context, prior role experience, school size, geographic isolation, and access to coaching can shape how quickly a principal applies the same priority. A common core with localized action projects offers a better design than undifferentiated seminar delivery. The correlation results change the interpretation of the conceptual model. Management competence did not covary with strategy or perceived decision influence, while the latter two constructs were statistically indistinguishable. The evidence therefore supports an integrated practice model but not a valid independent-effects model. Measurement refinement is a prerequisite for claims about prediction or mediation.

For leadership development, the practical sequence should be diagnosis, coached application, evidence collection, reflection, and reassessment. Outputs should include a strategic priority map, an instructional-supervision cycle, an operational decision protocol, a stakeholder communication plan, and a personal workload-sustainability plan.

4. Conclusions and Implications

4.1 Conclusions

Newly promoted principals demonstrated Much Evident school management competencies across all six domains. Their strongest area was managerial leadership, while strategic thinking and innovation represented the most important relative development priority.

Competency-enhancement strategies were also Much Evident, with relationship building foremost. The strategies were perceived as Much Influential in staff supervision, managing predecessor legacy, work-life balance, and school operations. District groups showed highly significant concordance in their rankings of all major domains.

School management was negligibly related to strategy and decision-influence composites. The perfect strategy–decision association produced exact multicollinearity, preventing valid interpretation of independent multivariate effects. Training recommendations are therefore supported by descriptive priorities and shared rankings, not by a causal model.

4.2 Study Limitations

The cross-sectional design captures perceptions at one point in time and cannot establish temporal order or causal influence. High ratings should therefore be interpreted as evidence of perceived implementation or effectiveness, not as proof that the practices caused improved organizational or learner outcomes.

The measures rely on structured questionnaire responses and may be affected by social desirability, recall, common-method variance, and differences in how respondents interpreted scale anchors. Observation, document review, interviews, and performance records were not integrated into the principal statistical estimates.

Rank-based comparisons summarize ordering among indicators or groups but do not quantify the practical size of an intervention effect. Generalization is bounded by the specified locale, participant selection, school year, and organizational conditions represented in the study. Future applications should retain item-level data, document missing-data procedures, report reliability coefficients for every multi-item scale, and publish reproducible test statistics with degrees of freedom and exact probability values.

Exact overlap between two composite variables is a major measurement limitation. The scales should be revised and independently validated before regression, mediation, or path analysis is attempted.

4.3 Implications for Practice and Policy

The Division Office should institutionalize a transition pathway for beginning principals aligned with the PPSSH. The pathway should combine orientation with mentoring, shadowing, coaching, peer consultation, and school-based improvement projects assessed through evidence of implementation.

Strategic thinking should be developed through scenario planning, problem framing, data interpretation, innovation protocols, and risk assessment. Operational leadership should be reframed as purposeful resource and workflow design rather than routine compliance. Communication and relationship building should be integrated. Principals need structured consultation, conflict-resolution, public communication, and stakeholder-mapping skills so that trust becomes a platform for instructional improvement and accountable resource mobilization.

Evaluation should examine changes in observed leadership practice, teacher support, implementation quality, and learner-facing processes. Participant satisfaction alone is insufficient evidence of training effectiveness.

5. Policy and Implementation Priorities

Table 8. Leadership Development and Implementation Matrix

Priority Area	Recommended Direction	Expected Evidence
Induction and mentoring	Establish a PPSSH-aligned first-year pathway with trained mentors and monthly coaching.	Mentor logs; competency reassessment; action-project portfolio
Strategic foresight	Use scenario planning, data inquiry, and innovation-cycle modules.	Strategic priority map; tested improvement prototype
Instructional supervision	Calibrate observation, feedback, coaching, and professional-learning routines.	Observation evidence; coaching plans; LAC outputs
Operational judgment	Use simulations in budgeting, procurement, facilities, risk, and workflow design.	Decision protocols; resource plan; process-improvement output
Stakeholder leadership	Develop consultation, partnership, conflict-resolution, and communication plans.	Stakeholder map; communication plan; partnership evidence
Measurement quality	Separate strategy and decision constructs; pilot and validate revised scales.	Reliability/validity report; non-singular correlation matrix

6. Directions for Future Research

Longitudinal studies should follow principals from appointment through multiple school years to determine how competence, strategy use, decision practice, and organizational outcomes develop over time.

A revised instrument should undergo cognitive interviewing, expert content validation, pilot testing, reliability analysis, exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, and assessment of discriminant validity before structural relationships are tested.

Mixed-methods research should combine survey profiles with observations, decision records, mentoring artifacts, teacher interviews, school-improvement evidence, and learner indicators. Comparative analysis may examine newly promoted and experienced principals, as well as remote, resource-constrained, and urban settings.

Training evaluation should use baseline and follow-up measures, implementation-fidelity evidence, and comparison conditions where feasible to determine whether the proposed leadership-development pathway improves observable practice.

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