

Leading Through Connections: Elementary School Leaders' Social Competence and Organizational Success

Jesus R. Mesina, Jr.
Dr. Gloria D. Lacson Foundation Colleges, Inc.
jesus.mesina@deped.gov.ph

Date Submitted:

April 02, 2026

Date Accepted:

May 19, 2026

Date Published:

June 06, 2026

DOI:

10.5281/zenodo.20570518

ABSTRACT

This investigation employed a quantitative, descriptive-correlational framework to assess the social competence of school administrators and its association with organizational success. Specifically, the inquiry sought to determine whether the social competence demonstrated by elementary school leaders contributes to organizational success in public elementary schools. To accomplish this purpose, relevant indicators and research parameters were established in line with the study objectives. The investigation was carried out during the Academic Year 2025-2026 and involved 133 teachers and elementary principals from the San Miguel South District. The study examined how administrators' social competence contributes to institutional effectiveness and influences the delivery of educational services. Findings from the survey

responses revealed a meaningful connection between social competence and organizational success across multiple dimensions. Results indicated that school administrators exhibited a high level of social competence in effective communication, authority, responsibility and accountability, leadership capability, and nonverbal interaction. Likewise, institutional operations reflected very satisfactory practices in planning, organizing, directing, monitoring, and coordinating, signifying excellence in administrative functions. Statistical analysis further established a significant relationship between school leaders' social competence and organizational success, with strong associations observed across the indicators examined. Furthermore, challenges encountered by administrators included conveying management objectives clearly, sustaining productive dialogue with teachers, encouraging staff participation in decision-making activities, delivering meaningful feedback, ensuring the availability of resources and assistance for personnel, maintaining transparent communication with parents and stakeholders, and obtaining professional development opportunities to strengthen interpersonal and communication-related abilities. Based on these outcomes, an enhancement program was proposed to further develop social competence and promote greater organizational success within schools.

Keywords: *Social Competence, Organizational Success, Elementary School Heads, Educational Services*

INTRODUCTION

Within public elementary institutions, administrators assume diverse responsibilities that extend beyond supervision and administration. Their duties encompass cultivating a nurturing culture, promoting productive interactions among stakeholders, and ensuring institutional effectiveness. In this regard, social competence is an essential leadership attribute that significantly contributes to academic excellence and to establishing favorable conditions for teaching and learning. Elementary schools represent foundational settings where children acquire knowledge, values, and lifelong skills. Consequently, examining the influence of administrators' social competence on organizational success becomes increasingly important. Numerous indicators, including learner achievement, instructional effectiveness, stakeholder participation, school culture, and workforce motivation, underscore the

importance of effective leadership. Administrators who effectively establish trust, cooperation, and mutual understanding among educators, pupils, families, and community partners are more likely to strengthen institutional capacity and support sustainable growth.

As educational administration continues to evolve, acknowledging unequal access to opportunities and resources remains imperative. Challenges associated with economic disadvantage, overcrowded classrooms, family circumstances, and social inequities frequently affect institutional outcomes. Nevertheless, effective administrators can address these concerns through relationship-centered leadership. By demonstrating empathy, sensitivity, and awareness when dealing with diverse groups, they foster an atmosphere of inclusion, respect, and support. Their capacity to sustain positive interactions contributes substantially to achieving institutional goals and strengthens stakeholder engagement. Furthermore, administrators possessing strong social competence demonstrate greater adaptability when responding to the changing demands of contemporary educational environments. Essential qualities such as collaboration, transparency, credibility, ethical conduct, and responsiveness enhance leadership effectiveness. The ability to connect with individuals from diverse backgrounds facilitates cooperation and organizational cohesion. Since leadership contexts vary considerably, developing social competence requires flexible approaches tailored to specific institutional realities rather than reliance on a single universal framework.

Likewise, educational managers who understand both their own relational strengths and others' behavioral tendencies are better equipped to resolve concerns and facilitate meaningful dialogue. Evaluating leadership effectiveness often involves navigating competing priorities, addressing disagreements, and managing time-related constraints. Despite these complexities, the influence of capable administrators extends across numerous operational functions, ultimately shaping institutional productivity and overall effectiveness. Garcia and Lopez (2024) highlighted culturally responsive administration as a mechanism for addressing issues related to diversity, inclusion, and equity. These studies provide a broader context for understanding leadership dynamics while emphasizing the necessity for further inquiry into the relationship between social competence and organizational success within elementary educational settings.

Additional evidence presented by Anderson (2022) underscores the importance of meaningful professional relationships and clear communication in fostering institutional excellence. Transformational administrators frequently rely on collective planning, participatory governance, and continuous professional learning opportunities to strengthen organizational performance. Supporting this perspective, Martin et al. (2023) emphasized that openness and transparency contribute significantly to building confidence and cooperation among members of educational communities. Within elementary learning environments, administrators are expected to demonstrate strategic thinking, sound decision-making, and effective relationship management involving teachers, learners, parents, and external stakeholders. Successful leaders display attentiveness, diplomacy, and problem-solving expertise while fulfilling diverse responsibilities, including mentoring, facilitating, counseling, coordinating, and supervising. Their roles encompass not only operational oversight but also financial stewardship, curricular leadership, strategic direction, and conflict mediation.

The Department of Education Memorandum No. 050, s. 2020, identifies critical professional development priorities for educators and administrators. These priorities encompass mastery of subject matter, instructional practices, classroom environment, learner diversity, curriculum implementation, evaluation processes, community partnerships, and professional growth. For administrators, expectations center on visionary leadership, efficient operations, instructional improvement, personal advancement, and the cultivation of productive partnerships across sectors. Consistent with these directives, educators are encouraged to engage in continuous learning experiences that enhance instructional competence and professional practice. Such development is most effectively realized when guided by administrators who promote collegiality and shared responsibility. Ultimately, educational managers bear responsibility for ensuring learner progress while maintaining secure, engaging, and supportive environments. Institutional effectiveness is frequently reflected in enhanced faculty performance and improved educational outcomes. Thompson et al. (2024) further observed that adaptive leadership approaches enable organizations to navigate uncertainty while transforming challenges into opportunities for innovation and advancement.

Despite programs such as the National Qualifying Examination for School Heads (NQESH), numerous public elementary schools continue to struggle to meet desired performance benchmarks. Nevertheless, educational managers must remain committed to fostering mutual respect, strengthening professional relationships, and building confidence among stakeholders. Such efforts should not be motivated by personal recognition but by a commitment to collective improvement. By establishing meaningful connections with community members, administrators transcend routine managerial functions and become catalysts for institutional development. Considering these multifaceted realities, the present study investigated the association between school administrators' social competence and organizational success in public elementary schools within the San Miguel South District. Specifically, the inquiry aims to determine how social competence contributes to institutional effectiveness across various operational dimensions. The anticipated findings are expected to enrich existing scholarship on educational administration and organizational development. Moreover, the results may provide valuable guidance for policymakers and professional development planners in designing initiatives that strengthen administrators' relational capabilities and support greater organizational success in public elementary schools.

METHODS

This investigation adopted a quantitative methodology using a descriptive-associative framework to determine the extent of school administrators' social competence and its relationship to organizational success. The inquiry concentrated on relational commitment, communicative effectiveness, authority-responsibility-accountability, personnel stewardship, and expressive behavioral cues. In addition, the study examined institutional performance indicators encompassing strategic preparation, resource structuring, performance regulation, operational guidance, and collaborative synchronization. The primary purpose was to ascertain whether these leadership attributes were associated with organizational success and to determine the degree to which administrators' social competence contributed to institutional effectiveness. The chosen research design enabled the identification of prevailing conditions and the examination of naturally occurring relationships among variables. Data collection was conducted through a researcher-developed survey instrument designed to capture participants' perceptions regarding leadership competencies and administrative effectiveness in public elementary schools. The investigation was guided by the Input-Process-Output (IPO) model and supported by established theoretical foundations that informed data interpretation. This conceptual framework facilitated a comprehensive examination of how relational capabilities among educational leaders contribute to institutional advancement and educational excellence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The first dimension evaluated administrators' social competence through their dedication to supporting educational personnel and fostering institutional growth. Indicators included clarifying performance expectations, recognizing accomplishments, promoting professional learning opportunities, ensuring the availability of instructional support, engaging personnel in collaborative problem-solving, nurturing an inclusive culture, and encouraging meaningful exchanges of ideas. The composite mean of 4.33, with a standard deviation of 1.24, suggests that respondents consistently viewed administrators as demonstrating a strong level of commitment within their professional responsibilities. These findings indicate that educational leaders are generally perceived as dedicated to creating environments that support professional growth and collaborative engagement. Evidence from Rodds et al. (2025) emphasized that supportive leadership practices, transparent expectations, constructive communication, and continuous professional learning contribute significantly to employee commitment and institutional effectiveness. Their findings reinforce the importance of leadership behaviors that strengthen workforce engagement and organizational productivity.

Among the indicators, support for teacher and learner accomplishments obtained the highest evaluation ($M=4.24$, $SD=1.12$), reflecting administrators' active recognition of achievements. Similarly, facilitating professional development initiatives ($M=4.28$, $SD=1.20$) and establishing clear performance expectations ($M=4.28$, $SD=1.15$) received favorable assessments. Respondents also acknowledged administrators' efforts in providing operational support ($M=4.23$, $SD=1.20$), engaging staff in collaborative decision-making ($M=4.23$, $SD=1.20$), cultivating inclusive environments ($M=4.20$, $SD=1.20$), and encouraging constructive feedback mechanisms ($M=4.16$, $SD=1.20$). Collectively, these results demonstrate a substantial level of professional dedication among educational leaders. Another dimension explored administrators' capacity to exchange information effectively and establish productive interactions within the school community. Areas assessed included attentive listening, message clarity, emotional understanding, adaptability in communication, and conflict management. The overall mean of 4.27 and standard deviation of 1.14 indicate a consistently favorable assessment of administrators' communication practices. These findings suggest that educational leaders possess the ability to facilitate understanding and maintain productive interactions with various stakeholders.

According to Özdemir (2026), communication serves as a fundamental human need and plays a critical role in personal development, professional achievement, and social adaptation. Effective communication enables individuals to express ideas clearly while fostering mutual understanding and cooperation. Results revealed that clarity of expression received the highest evaluation ($M=4.31$, $SD=1.10$), followed by active listening ($M=4.26$, $SD=1.10$), communication adaptability ($M=4.26$, $SD=1.20$), and dispute resolution capability ($M=4.25$, $SD=1.10$). Emotional understanding also received a favorable rating ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 1.20$). These outcomes suggest that administrators effectively employ communication strategies that support positive professional relationships and institutional harmony. The AuRA dimension examined administrators' capacity to exercise leadership authority appropriately while demonstrating responsibility and accountability in fulfilling organizational obligations. Indicators included the equitable use of authority, ownership of decisions, delegation practices, the achievement of institutional objectives, the fulfillment of professional duties, and the dissemination of organizational information. The aggregate mean score of 4.34, accompanied by a standard deviation of 1.11, indicates that participants viewed administrators as highly capable of balancing authority with responsibility and accountability. Brown et al. (2021) emphasized that effective leadership requires the integration of authority, responsibility, and accountability to ensure ethical decision-making and organizational integrity. Their work highlights the importance of these elements in sustaining trust and promoting professional conduct. The highest-rated indicator involved ensuring personnel understand their duties and remain accountable for outcomes ($M=4.41$, $SD=1.10$). Compliance with professional obligations ($M=4.40$, $SD=1.10$), commitment to organizational goals ($M=4.38$, $SD=1.10$), dissemination of institutional updates ($M=4.38$, $SD=1.00$), strategic delegation ($M=4.30$, $SD=1.10$), acceptance of personal responsibility ($M=4.27$, $SD=1.20$), and equitable application of authority ($M=4.26$, $SD=1.20$) also received highly favorable evaluations. These findings reflect strong governance practices among educational leaders.

Furthermore, this component assessed how administrators motivate, guide, and support individuals within educational organizations. Specific indicators included goal setting, mentoring, encouragement of innovation, inspirational leadership, capacity-building initiatives, recognition systems, and accountability for excellence. The overall mean of 4.35, with a standard deviation of 1.07, represents the highest rating among all dimensions examined. The relatively low variability indicates strong consensus regarding administrators' effectiveness in leading personnel. Johnson et al. (2023) observed that successful educational leaders foster growth through mentoring, team development, motivation, and strategic leadership practices. Their findings underscore the importance of leadership behaviors that strengthen organizational capacity. Among the evaluated indicators, ensuring excellence among teachers and learners achieved the highest rating ($M=4.39$, $SD=1.00$), followed by professional development opportunities ($M=4.37$, $SD=1.00$), inspirational leadership ($M=4.36$, $SD=1.10$), encouragement of new challenges ($M=4.36$, $SD=1.10$), mentoring support ($M=4.34$, $SD=1.10$), recognition systems ($M=4.28$, $SD=1.10$), and goal clarification ($M=4.26$, $SD=1.20$). These outcomes indicate strong leadership capacity in managing human resources. This dimension focused on observable behaviors and nonverbal signals that influence professional interactions. Assessed indicators included appreciation, consideration of staff perspectives, positive disposition, professionalism, eye contact, facial expressions, and body language. The combined mean score of 4.29

and standard deviation of 1.16 indicate a favorable evaluation of administrators' behavioral practices. Scherer and Tran (2021) emphasized that nonverbal communication significantly influences leadership effectiveness by shaping perceptions, strengthening relationships, and facilitating successful interactions. Professionalism emerged as the highest-rated indicator ($M=4.36$, $SD=1.10$), followed by eye contact ($M=4.34$, $SD=1.10$), appropriate facial expressions ($M=4.31$, $SD=1.20$), positive disposition ($M=4.28$, $SD=1.20$), effective body language ($M=4.28$, $SD=1.10$), appreciation ($M=4.25$, $SD=1.20$), and respect for staff opinions ($M=4.22$, $SD=1.20$). These findings suggest that administrators effectively utilize behavioral and nonverbal strategies to strengthen workplace relationships.

Across all dimensions, personnel leadership obtained the highest composite score ($M=4.35$, $SD=1.07$), indicating that administrators demonstrate their strongest competency in motivating and guiding personnel. The relatively low standard deviation further suggests consistent perceptions among respondents. Overall, the findings reveal that educational leaders exhibit a high level of social competence across all examined domains. The assessment of organizational success focused on the fundamental managerial functions of strategic planning, resource organization, performance regulation, operational direction, and institutional coordination. Results demonstrated that respondents consistently rated administrators highly across all dimensions, reflecting strong leadership effectiveness and organizational performance.

Also, strategic planning obtained an overall mean of 4.41 and a standard deviation of 1.10. Respondents acknowledged administrators' effectiveness in establishing institutional goals ($M=4.42$, $SD=1.10$) and developing long-term strategic directions ($M=4.40$, $SD=1.10$). These findings indicate a proactive approach to institutional development and future-oriented leadership. The organization dimension yielded a composite mean of 4.31 and a standard deviation of 1.15. Effective allocation of resources ($M=4.32$, $SD=1.10$) and creation of supportive work environments ($M=4.30$, $SD=1.20$) were positively evaluated, suggesting strong organizational capability. Performance regulation recorded a mean of 4.40 and a standard deviation of 1.10. Monitoring institutional outcomes ($M=4.46$, $SD=1.10$) and implementing improvement measures when necessary ($M=4.33$, $SD=1.10$) were perceived as highly effective practices. These findings indicate robust oversight and continuous improvement mechanisms. Additionally, the operational direction component achieved a mean score of 4.33 and a standard deviation of 1.10. Respondents recognized administrators' ability to provide guidance and supervision to both teaching and non-teaching personnel, reflecting effective leadership execution. Coordination generated a composite mean of 4.33 and a standard deviation of 1.15. Collaboration with faculty members ($M=4.33$, $SD=1.10$) and engagement with external stakeholders ($M=4.33$, $SD=1.20$) were consistently viewed as effective practices, demonstrating administrators' ability to foster internal and external partnerships. Correlation analysis revealed statistically significant positive associations between administrators' social competence and organizational success across all examined domains at the 0.01 level of significance. The findings indicate that stronger social competence is associated with higher levels of organizational success. This suggests that educational leaders who demonstrate excellence in commitment, communication, accountability, personnel leadership, and professional behavior are more likely to achieve superior organizational outcomes. The results further affirm that social competence is a critical determinant of institutional effectiveness and sustainable organizational success in public elementary schools.

Relevant to this, the proposed enhancement program focuses on advancing the relational and leadership capacities of school administrators through a systematic and evidence-based approach. The initial phase involves conducting a comprehensive diagnostic evaluation to determine the existing level of social competence among educational leaders. Various assessment tools, including surveys, self-evaluation instruments, and stakeholder feedback mechanisms, will be used to establish benchmarks. The results of this evaluation will serve as the basis for designing appropriate intervention activities tailored to the specific developmental needs of school administrators. Subsequently, capacity-building sessions will be implemented, emphasizing advanced communication strategies, relationship management, emotional awareness, collaborative leadership, and constructive problem-solving techniques. These learning opportunities are intended to strengthen administrators' ability to foster positive interactions, improve workplace dynamics, and support institutional effectiveness. Beyond formal training activities, the program incorporates a professional coaching and peer-support component designed to facilitate continuous growth. Experienced educational leaders will provide guidance and practical insights to

administrators seeking to enhance their professional capabilities. Opportunities for reflective practice, collaborative discussions, and experiential learning will encourage the exchange of innovative ideas and successful leadership practices. Furthermore, structured feedback systems will be established to promote transparency, encourage meaningful dialogue, and reinforce productive working relationships among school personnel. Participation in educational conferences, leadership summits, and professional learning communities will likewise expose administrators to emerging trends and exemplary practices, broadening their perspectives and strengthening their capacity for organizational leadership.

To maintain program relevance and effectiveness, a comprehensive review will be undertaken after one year of implementation. This phase will include a reassessment of social competence indicators, an evaluation of program outcomes, and an examination of participant progress. Data gathered during the review process will be used to refine existing strategies, address identified gaps, and ensure continuous improvement. Ongoing monitoring, documentation, and performance evaluation will support the sustainability of the initiative while ensuring that administrators continue to develop the professional and relational competencies necessary for institutional excellence. Ultimately, this developmental framework seeks to cultivate highly capable educational leaders who demonstrate strong social competence, adaptive leadership, and a sustained commitment to organizational success and continuous professional advancement.

References

- Arikewuyo, M. O. (2019). Professional training of secondary school principals in Nigeria. *Florida Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*
- Ashardis, P. (2021). A validation study of the leadership styles of a holistic leadership theoretical framework. *International Journal of Educational Management*.
- Becket, N., & Brookes, M. (2019). Evaluating quality management in university departments.
- Brown, E., Johnson, C., & Williams, R. (2021). Authority, Responsibility, and Accountability in Ethical Decision-Making: A Multidisciplinary Perspective *Journal of Business Ethics*.
- Brown, L., Johnson, A., & Smith, J. (2021). Challenges and Issues in Interpersonal Communication of School Heads: A Qualitative Study. *Educational Leadership Review*
- Dayaday, Helen T. (2022). Behavior of Public Elementary School Administrators: Its Influence to Teacher's Performance.
- DiPaola, M., Moran, M., & Thomas, C. (2024). School Principals and Special Education, Creating the Context for Academic success. *Focus on Exceptional Children*
- Eagly, A.H. & Johannesen-Schmidt, M.C. (2021). The Leadership Styles of Women and Men. *Journal of Social Issues*.
- Fiedler, F.E. (1974). The Contingency Model: New Directions for Leadership Utilization. *Journal of Contemporary Business*.
- Gardner, H. (2019). *Multiple intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gasim, G. (2022). Social intelligence level among secondary schools' principal in Kuwait and its relationship with organizational stress. *Educational Journal*
- Gregorio, Herman C. (2020). *School Administrator and Supervision*. R. P. Garcia, Publishing Co., Inc.
- Johnson, R., Smith, K., & Brown, S. (2018). The Relationship between School Heads' Interpersonal Intelligence and the Quality of Management: A Quantitative Study. *Journal of Educational Administration and Leadership*
- Johnson, R., Smith, K., & Davis, L. (2020). The Commanding Role of School Heads: Exploring Leadership Practices in Educational Management. *Journal of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies*
- Johnson, R., Thompson, P., & Roberts, M. (2019). The Role of School Heads in Effective School Management: A Focus on Planning Practices. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*
- Jones, S., & Harvey, M. (2017). A distributed leadership change process model for higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*
- Lakhal, L., Pasin, F., and Limam, M. (2019). Quality management practice and them impact on performance. *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management*.
- Lee, S., & Johnson, M. (2019). Enhancing Quality Management Practices in Public Elementary Schools: Comparative Analysis. *International Journal of Educational*
- Mariñas, Rosannah M. (2022). Principals' Leadership Behaviors in Relation to Teacher Empowerment. *Foundation University*.

- Obakpolo, P. (2020). Improving Interpersonal Relationships in Workplaces. *Journal of Research and Method in Education*
- Rhee, K. S., & Sigler, T. H. (2020). Untangling the relationship between gender and leadership. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*.
- Scherer, A. G., & Tran, H. P. (2017). Leadership Nonverbal Behavior in Negotiations: A Framework and Research Agenda", *The Leadership Quarterly*
- Smith, J., Johnson, A., & Brown, K. (2020). The Interplay of Authority, Responsibility, and Accountability in School Heads' Management Practices. *Journal of Educational Administration*
- Smith, J., Johnson, A., & Brown, K. (2018). Teacher Commitment in the Context of Educational Leadership: A Systematic Review
- Smith, L., Johnson, M., & Brown, S. (2017). School Leadership and Effective Organizing: A Study on the Role of School Heads in Organizational Management. *Journal of Educational Leadership*
- Smith, M. K. (2018). Howard Gardner, multiple intelligences and education. In *infed.org*.
- Thompson, M., Johnson, A., & Davis, R. (2019). The Coordinating Role of School Heads: Exploring Leadership Practices in Educational Management. *Journal of Educational Administration*.
- Tyler, D. E. (2016). Communication behaviors of principals at high performing Title I elementary schools in Virginia: School leaders, communication, and transformative efforts. *Creighton Journal of Interdisciplinary Leadership*.
- Vlasic, S., Vale, S., and Puhar, D. K. (2019). Quality management in education. *Interdisciplinary Management Research*
- Wang, D., Peng, J., & Li, Y. (2018). The Role of Leader Behavior in Employee Work Engagement. A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis" *Frontiers in Psychology*
- Wanzare, Z. (2013). Skills and attributes of instructional supervisors: Experience from Kenya. *Academic Journals*.
- Williams, C. (2017). *Organization and Management: Concept and Applications*, Aviva Publishing House, Inc., 288.