

LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK IN KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION

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Abstract — This study investigated the current status of leadership in kindergarten education with an end-in-view of proposing a Leadership Framework in Kindergarten Education. The performance of leadership roles and responsibilities in the six key components by school heads from public and private schools and the traits and leadership styles they exemplified was looked into. This study made use of quantitative and qualitative research. The perceptions of the school heads and the kindergarten teachers were obtained through questionnaires and interviews. The number of participants in the study was 265. The difference in the perceptions of the participants was computed using the z-test. Results showed that the school heads were guided by RA No. 10157 (Kindergarten Education Act) in the performance of their roles and responsibilities. The professional traits exemplified by the school heads include: having a clear understanding of the vision, mission and goals of the program, maintaining one's integrity, treating others with respect and supports staff and their professional development. The personal traits include: committed, dedicated, nurturing, kind, trustworthy, honest, and being a visionary. The leadership styles employed were: Distributive, Pedagogical, Contextual, Principle-centered and Transformational. The challenges encountered by school heads from public schools were: the lack of funds for the improvement of physical environment and for the purchase of instructional materials, the insufficient supply of resources and the shortage of qualified kindergarten teachers while in private schools these were the negative reactions of parents towards a play-based execution of the lessons; and the confusion in the use of the Mother Tongue as medium of instruction. Based on the results, it is recommended that teachers should qualify themselves in the field, leadership responsibilities should be shared with other stakeholders, linkages with them must be established and a playground for kindergarten pupils should be present in the program.

Keywords: *Kindergarten Education, Leadership Roles, curriculum, school heads, kindergarten teachers, challenges*

I. INTRODUCTION

The early childhood years, from birth to six, are unquestionably, the most important years in the development of an individual (Davies, 2011; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Zero to Three, 2003). Educational leaders are unanimous in saying that the early years of childhood are crucial years because these determine much of what happens later in life. Described as “the critical years”, “the foundation age”, and “the decisive age of formation”, it is during this period when basic character, values, abilities, skills, aptitudes and knowledge are formed. These qualities when properly developed shape the individual's overall perspective and preparedness for life.

A myriad of research findings show that the foundations of human intelligence are built during the early childhood years.

Scientists found that a child's brain develops over one hundred trillion brain synapses. The more synapses, the more the brain will learn. These scientists point out that during the early years; the human brain has the highest potential for new learning. On the other hand, according to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, 2009), “during this period, the brain develops most rapidly, almost to its fullest”. Jones (2003) on the other hand said, “It is during the first few years of life when vital neural connections are made, thus all learning and experiences of the child during this period serve as foundation for subsequent intellectual development”.

Cognizant of the significant role the early childhood years play in the life and future of an individual, high quality early childhood education should be provided to all young children. NAEYC (2000) described high quality early childhood education as one which promotes intellectual, language, physical, social and emotional development, creating school readiness and building a foundation for later academic and social competence.

The importance of providing high quality early childhood education to young children has been recognized by governments around the world prompting them to formulate policies in consonance with the Millennium Development Goals on achieving Education for All (<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>). Efforts are made to continually improve the delivery of quality education to young learners through new teaching strategies, approaches and activities, the use of technology and improvement of the learning environment.

In the Philippines, the establishment of kindergarten programs both in private and public schools throughout the country was a response to the call of providing quality education to the Filipino children during the early years. At the onset, the early childhood programs were found mostly in private schools where children aged 4-6 were accommodated. It was in 1985 when kindergarten classes were organized in public schools (MECs Order No.41, s. 1985). Children, 5 years of age, whose parents cannot afford to send them to private schools were given all the opportunities to receive quality education and to develop all their potentials to the fullest. Early childhood education classes were organized with so much enthusiasm so that in no time, early childhood programs in public schools grew so rapidly all throughout the country.

Many laws, DepEd Orders and Memoranda were signed and released in support of the Early Childhood Education Program. However, it was only in January 20, 2012 when President Benigno Simeon C. Aquino signed into law Republic Act (RA) No. 10157 entitled “An Act

Institutionalizing the Kindergarten Education into the Basic Education System and Appropriating Funds Thereof” also known as the “Kindergarten Education Act”. Kindergarten/Early childhood education, became a prerequisite before pupils, aged 6 years old, could enter Grade One. This is a proof of the government’s strong advocacy of providing quality education to early childhood pupils.

Republic Act 10157 contains the mission of Kindergarten Education and that is to give equal opportunities for all children to avail of accessible mandatory and compulsory kindergarten education that effectively promotes physical, social, intellectual, emotional, skills stimulation and values formation to sufficiently prepare them for formal elementary schooling. This makes kindergarten as an integral part of basic education.

No mention was found in the Republic Act 10157 about the qualifications needed of school heads to enable them to head the kindergarten education program. DECS Order No.107, s. 1989 however said that individuals who manage and supervise preschool programs should have at least 18 units in preschool/early childhood education.

The laws and department orders in kindergarten education are a proof of the government’s continuing efforts of providing quality education to young Filipino learners. However, quality education can only be delivered to these children through an effective leadership in the kindergarten education program. Authorities in this field such as Nupponen (2005) said that crucial to the delivery of quality services to young learners is effective leadership. Rodd (2013) confirmed the link between quality leadership and quality of early years’ provision. Vernon (2015) stated that the more effective leadership is, the higher the quality of early childhood education and the greater the contribution to positive learning outcomes for children. According to Bloom (2000), Rodd (2006) and Grey (2004), “effective leadership is an important contributory factor to quality in early childhood education”. Bush (2012), on the other hand, pointed out that children’s early learning experiences strongly influence pupils’ learning outcomes and leadership is an important factor in making the education of young learners successful. The Scottish Executive Education (2005) established the connection between effective leadership and pupils’ school success. The HM Inspectorate of Education (2000) also emphasized that effective leadership has a great impact on pupils’ learning.

Leadership in early childhood education is currently plagued worldwide by a number of issues such as the lack of a clear understanding and definition of the concept, the confusion between the concepts of leadership and management, the need of a different leadership framework since the early childhood education sector has a different mission, goals, objectives and components (such as curriculum, assessment of child progress, teaching, strategies and many more) and the lack of hierarchical structure in the profession since leadership in Early Childhood Education is viewed as a process whereby leadership is shared among the staff, children, parents and the community (Kagan & Hallmark, 2001).

In the Philippines, the concept of leadership in kindergarten/early childhood education is relatively an unexplored area which is badly in need of an investigation.

School heads – the persons in charge of the kindergarten education programs in public and private schools, act as

managers. They take charge of running the programs and in supervising the kindergarten teachers. They see to it that the components of kindergarten education are implemented, tasks are accomplished and performance of the teachers is high. Following the current worldwide trend that early childhood education is in need of effective leaders not mere managers in order to attain quality provision for young learners, these school heads should therefore become leaders rather than just school managers. These school heads can go beyond managing alone but instead leading these programs. An effective leadership framework may serve as a starting point towards ensuring quality in kindergarten education.

This study determined how the school heads in public and private schools perform their leadership roles and responsibilities in implementing the different components of the kindergarten program, what are the perceptions of the kindergarten teachers regarding their school heads’ performance of their leadership roles and responsibilities, what are the professional and personal traits and leadership styles exemplified by these school heads and what are the challenges in leadership that the school heads encountered in the Kindergarten Program. Based from the findings of the study, a leadership framework for kindergarten education was proposed.

The researcher chose “Leadership in Kindergarten Education” as the focus of this study because of its relevance to her since she is into the field of Kindergarten Education. At present, she teaches students at the graduate and undergraduate level specializing in Kindergarten education. It is also her desire to play the role of a leader in Kindergarten Education in the future. The researcher also wants to contribute new knowledge in this field since Leadership in Kindergarten Education is an unexplored area; badly in need of an investigation

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study aimed to investigate the performance of school heads on their leadership roles and responsibilities in Kindergarten Education Programs and to come up with a proposed Leadership Framework in Kindergarten Education.

Specifically, this study answered the following questions:

1. How do school heads from public and private schools perceive their own performance of their leadership roles and responsibilities in kindergarten education in terms of six key components?
 - 1.1. Curriculum
 - 1.2. Teacher
 - 1.3. Relationship with children, teachers, parents and community
 - 1.4. Health
 - 1.5. Physical Environment
 - 1.6. Monitoring and Evaluation
2. How do kindergarten teachers from public and private schools perceive their school heads’ performance of their leadership roles and responsibilities in kindergarten education in terms of the six key components?
 - 2.1. Curriculum
 - 2.2. Teacher
 - 2.3. Relationship with children, teachers, parents and community
 - 2.4. Health
 - 2.5. Physical Environment

2.6. Monitoring and Evaluation

3. Are there significant differences in the school heads' performance of leadership roles and responsibilities in public and private schools as perceived by:
 - 3.1 School heads themselves
 - 3.2 Kindergarten teachers
 - 3.3 School heads and kindergarten teachers from public schools
 - 3.4 School heads and kindergarten teachers from private schools
4. What are the professional and personal traits, and leadership styles exemplified by the school heads?
5. What are the challenges encountered by school heads in the performance of their leadership roles and responsibilities in the Kindergarten Education Programs?
6. Based on the findings of the study, what leadership framework can be proposed to strengthen leadership in Kindergarten Education?

III. METHODOLOGY AND MATERIALS

A. Research Design

This study employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative research. It focused on the perceptions of school heads and kindergarten teachers regarding the school heads' performance of leadership roles and responsibilities in the Kindergarten Education Program.

In the qualitative aspect of this study, the researcher looked into how the leadership roles and responsibilities are performed by the school heads from the public and private sectors. In both quantitative and qualitative approaches, the components included are: a) curriculum – curriculum content activities and assessment of child progress; b) teachers – teacher qualifications and continuing professional development; c) relationship with children, teachers, parents and community; d) health – health and nutrition of pupils; e) physical environment – classrooms, play area, facilities, equipment, instructional materials; and f) monitoring and evaluation – submission of reports and conduct of researches.

The researcher also investigated the common leadership traits exemplified by school heads that helped them in the performance of their roles and responsibilities. She also looked into the leadership styles employed by the school heads in the performance of their leadership roles and responsibilities in kindergarten education and how these styles helped them in the performance of their roles and responsibilities. The challenges of leadership encountered by school heads in kindergarten education were also investigated. Perceptions, insights and opinions of the subjects namely: school heads (principals/directors) and kindergarten teachers from public and private schools were obtained through the open-ended questions in the Questionnaires and during the individual and focused group interviews.

B. Research Procedure

The Questionnaires and the Interview Guides for School Heads and Kindergarten Teachers were prepared. The statements found in the Questionnaires for School Heads and Kindergarten Teachers were constructed based on foreign and local literature and studies that were reviewed, from RA 10157, from other DepEd Orders and Memoranda on Kindergarten Education and from the NAEYC Program

Standards on Early Childhood Education. Likewise, the questions found in the Interview Guides for School Heads and Kindergarten Teachers were based on the above mentioned sources.

Permission to distribute the Questionnaires and conduct interviews among the School Heads and Kindergarten Teachers was obtained from the Superintendents of the Tarlac City Schools Division and the Schools Division of Tarlac Province. Permission to administer questionnaires and to conduct interviews was also obtained from the School Heads (Principals and Directors) in public and private schools. The nature, purpose and the process/procedure of the study was explained to them. They were assured of the confidentiality of the information which they and their kindergarten teachers provided.

The Questionnaires for School Heads and Kindergarten Teachers were administered and interviews were conducted. The school heads (principals/directors) were interviewed either individually or through focused group interviews. Focused group interviews were also conducted among the kindergarten teachers. All interviews were recorded with the use of a Stereo IC Recorder. Transcriptions of the interviews were done for a better analysis of data.

An analysis of documents and other pertinent records was also made.

C. Instrumentation and Validation

a. Questionnaires

Questionnaire for School Heads

Part I – Section A consisted of a checklist composed of thirty five (35) items the intention of which was to investigate the school heads' perceptions of their performance of leadership roles and responsibilities in the Kindergarten Education program. Items 1-13 focused on Curriculum (Curriculum Content and Assessment of Child Progress), items 14-15 centered on Teachers (Qualifications and Continuing Professional Education), items 16-20 dealt with Relationship with Children, Teachers, Parents and the Community, items 21-24 focused on Health, items 25-32 looked into the Physical Environment and items 33-35 focused on Monitoring and Evaluation.

Part II – Section A consisted of 25 items. It contained the professional traits exemplified by the School Heads. Section B, which consisted of 20 items, looked into the personal traits/ characteristics which the school heads possessed. Section C which consisted of 5 items dealt with the leadership styles that the school heads employed in carrying out their leadership roles and responsibilities in the Kindergarten Education program. Section B and C were answered by the participants by putting a check in the traits and styles which they think they exemplified. Section D contained an open-ended question which looked into the challenges in leadership encountered by the school heads from public and private schools in the performance of the leadership roles and responsibilities in the Kindergarten Education Program.

Questionnaire for Kindergarten Teachers

Part I – Section A contained thirty five (35) statements which attempted to look into the perceptions of the kindergarten teachers regarding their school head's performance in the implementation of their leadership roles and responsibilities in the Kindergarten Education program. Items 1- 13 investigated Curriculum, items 14-15 looked into the Teacher Component, items 16-20 looked into the

Relationship with Children, Teachers, Parents and the Community, items 21-24 investigated the Health Component, items 25-32 looked into Physical Environment and items 33-35 looked into Monitoring and Evaluation.

Part II – Section A, which is composed of twenty five (25) items, investigated the Professional Traits exemplified by the school heads as perceived by the kindergarten teachers; Section B, was made up of twenty (20) items and it looked into the Personal Traits of the school heads and Section C which contained five (5) items, investigated the Leadership Style(s) employed by the school heads. Section B and C were answered by the participants by putting a check in the traits and styles which they think their school heads exemplified.

The Questionnaires for the school heads and kindergarten teachers were validated by three experts in the field of kindergarten education for their comments and suggestions.

b. Interview Guides

The Interview Guide for School Heads was made up of six key components namely: Curriculum, Teacher, and Relationship with Children, Teachers, Parents and the Community, Health, Physical Environment and Monitoring and Evaluation. Under each component were open ended questions. The questions sought to clarify and dig deeper into how the school heads performed their leadership roles and responsibilities in the kindergarten education program.

The Interview Guide for Kindergarten Teachers was made up of six key components namely: Curriculum, Teacher, and Relationship with Children, Teachers, Parents and the Community, Physical Environment and Monitoring and Evaluation. Under each component were open ended questions. The questions sought to clarify and dig deeper into how the kindergarten teachers perceived their school head’s performance of their leadership roles and responsibilities in the kindergarten education program.

The Interview Guide for the school heads and kindergarten teachers were likewise validated by three experts in the field of kindergarten education for their comments and suggestions.

A review of records such as the Republic Act 10157, DepEd Orders and Memorandums, announcements regarding the Kindergarten Education Program, minutes of Faculty and PTA meetings and other relevant documents were also examined.

Data triangulation was achieved in the study. Triangulation refers to the use of more than one approach to the investigation of a research question in order to enhance confidence in the ensuing findings (Yin, 2014). Thus, a single method can never adequately shed light on a phenomenon. Using multiple methods can help facilitate deeper understanding. In this study, questionnaires, interviews and documentary analysis were used.

D. Participants

The participants in this study were the school heads (principals/directors) and kindergarten teachers from both public and private schools in Tarlac City and Tarlac Province. They come from schools with Kindergarten Education programs.

Twenty percent (20%) of the population of school heads and kindergarten teachers from public and private schools constituted the sample size.

Table 1 shows that total number of participants from public and private schools who participated in the study.

Participants	Public		Private		Total
	Population (N)	20% of the Population (n)	Population (N)	20% of the Population (n)	
School Heads	378	76	154	31	107
Kindergarten Teachers	456	91	334	67	158
Total Number of Participants					265

Distribution of Participants from Public and Private Schools from Tarlac City and Tarlac Province

From the public schools, there were seventy six (76) school heads and ninety one (91) kindergarten teachers who participated in the study. A total of one hundred sixty seven (167) participants came from public schools. From the private schools, there were thirty one (31) school heads and sixty seven (67) kindergarten teachers who participated in the study. The total number of participants from private schools was ninety eight (98). The total number of school heads from public and private schools was one hundred seven (107) and the total number of kindergarten teachers from public and private schools is one hundred fifty eight (158). A grand total of two hundred sixty five (265) participated in this research.

This study was conducted in Tarlac City and the different towns in the province of Tarlac. There are seventy six (76) public schools and thirty one (31) private schools with kindergarten education programs from Tarlac City and Tarlac Province.

E. Data Analysis

To describe the performance of leadership roles and responsibilities of the school heads in the Kindergarten Education Programs, their responses were tallied and the weighted mean was computed and described using the following scheme:

Point	Range	Verbal Description
3	2.51 – 3.00	Always (A)
2	1.51 – 2.50	Sometimes (S)
1	1.00 – 1.50	Never (N)

Always – task is consistently and extensively implemented
 Sometimes – task is occasionally/ to a certain extent implemented
 Never – task is not at all implemented

The standard deviation (SD) was also computed to quantify the amount of variation or dispersion of data values which in this case was the perceptions of school heads and kindergarten teachers from public and private schools. To determine the significant difference in the perceptions of school heads and kindergarten teachers in public and private schools regarding the performance of leadership roles and responsibilities, the z-test of difference between means of two independent samples which is large in size was used, with the following formula:

$$z = \frac{(\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2) - (\mu_1 - \mu_2)}{\sqrt{\frac{\sigma_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{\sigma_2^2}{n_2}}}$$

Where:

- \bar{x}_1 = mean of first set of values
- \bar{x}_2 = mean of second set of values
- σ_1^2 = variance of first set of values
- σ_2^2 = variance of second set of values
- n_1 = total number of values in first set
- n_2 = total number of values in second set
- μ_1 = mean of first set of values

Table 1

The leadership traits (personal and professional) and styles exemplified by school heads from both public and private schools as assessed by the school heads themselves and as perceived by the kindergarten teachers were added and ranked according to their percentage.

To determine the challenges encountered by school heads from public and private schools in their leadership in the Kindergarten Education, the frequency distribution was used. All statistical data were treated using the Microsoft Office Excel software.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Performance of Leadership Roles and Responsibilities in the Kindergarten Education Program of School Heads in Public and Private Schools as Perceived by School Heads Themselves

1.1. Curriculum

The grand mean of the responses of school heads from public schools regarding their performance in the implementation of the Curriculum component is 2.65. This suggests that generally, the school heads from public schools “always” performed their roles and responsibilities in implementing the curriculum component.

The grand mean of the responses of school heads from private schools in their performance of their leadership roles and responsibilities in implementing the Curriculum component is 2.60. This means that generally, the school heads from private schools “always” performed their leadership roles and responsibilities in implementing the curriculum component.

The grand mean of the responses of school heads from public schools (2.65) was higher than the grand mean of the responses from private schools (2.60) though both groups “always” implemented the curriculum component.

These results depict that the school heads in public and private schools performed their leadership roles and responsibilities in the kindergarten program in six key components. To sum it up, as based on the results derived from questionnaires and interviews in terms of the Curriculum Component, the school heads in public and private schools implemented a developmentally appropriate Kindergarten Curriculum which is focused on the child’s total development – social, physical, emotional, intellectual, language, aesthetic including character and values. In the public schools, the school heads implemented a curriculum which is thematic and it integrates the themes to five learning areas to develop the six domains. They also enforced a play-based manner of executing the learning experiences and used the mother-tongue as the medium of instruction. In the private schools, the school heads used the traditional way of teaching the different learning areas and the medium of instruction is English or Filipino. The Mother Tongue was taught as a separate subject. To assess the progress of the Kindergarten pupils, the school heads in the public schools implemented the “School Readiness Year-End Assessment (SReYA)” as well as the ECD Checklist. In the private schools, a teacher-made test is used to assess the progress of the kindergarten pupils.

1.2. Teachers

The grand mean of the responses of school heads from public schools with regards to their performance of their

leadership roles and responsibilities is 2.82 which means that the school heads from public schools “always” performed their leadership roles and responsibilities.

The grand mean of the responses of school heads from private schools is 2.24 which means that they “sometimes” performed their roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the Teacher component.

The grand mean of the responses of school heads from public schools (2.82) is higher than the grand mean of the responses of school heads from private schools (2.24). This suggests that the school heads from public schools performed better in terms of the teacher component than school heads from the private schools only performed to a certain extent their roles and responsibilities in the teacher component.

Results imply that in the Teacher Component, the school heads from public and private schools motivated their kindergarten teachers to align themselves in the field by taking the required 18 units in Preschool/Early Childhood Education and to pursue continuing professional development by taking a Master’s degree also in the same field. They also encouraged and permitted their kindergarten teachers to participate in in-service trainings, seminar-workshops in Kindergarten/Early Childhood Education. The school heads assigned/designated some leadership roles and responsibilities to the Kindergarten teachers such as planning and implementing programs and activities related to the kindergarten program and they motivated the Kindergarten teachers to work as a team in planning innovations that would enhance teaching in the kindergarten classes.

1.3. Relationship with Children, Teachers, Parents and Community

The grand mean of the responses of school heads from public schools was 2.36 which means that generally, the school heads from public schools “sometimes” performed their roles and responsibilities in implementing the component on Relationships with children, teachers, parents and members of the community.

The grand mean of the responses of school heads from private schools with regard to this component is 2.01 indicating that the school heads from private schools “sometimes” performed their roles and responsibilities in implementing the component on Relationship with children, teachers, parents and community.

The grand mean of the responses of school heads from public schools (2.36) was higher than the grand mean of the responses of school heads from private schools (2.01).

These results suggest that in the Relationship with Children, Teachers, Parents and the Community Component, the school heads from public and private schools solicited financial help from the parents through the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) for the improvement/repair of kindergarten classrooms and facilities and for the purchase of instructional materials and equipment, but were not able to establish strong ties/linkages with members of the community (private individuals, professional and civic organizations) and with Local Government Units (LGUs) who could assist them in improving the classrooms and facilities, in purchasing instructional materials and equipment and in implementing a program that will benefit the pupils.

1.4. Health

The grand mean of the responses of school heads from public schools was 2.68 indicating that generally, the school

heads “always” performed their roles and responsibilities in implementing the health component.

The grand mean of the responses of the school heads from private schools was 2.95 implying that generally, the school heads “always” performed their roles and responsibilities in implementing the Health component.

The grand mean of the responses of school heads from private schools (2.95) was higher than the grand mean of the responses of school heads from public schools (2.68) though both groups “always” performed their roles and responsibilities in implementing the health component.

The results reveal that in the Health Component, the school heads in public and private schools ensured the proper and efficient delivery of health services to all Kindergarten pupils such as the annual physical and dental checkups, they initiated programs and activities that promote good health, proper nutrition and cleanliness of the kindergarten pupils and teachers, they made sure that health facilities like toilets, lavatories, handwashing and toothbrushing facilities, drinking fountains and many more that are necessary in the delivery of health services among the pupils are present in the kindergarten program.

1.5. Physical Environment

The grand mean of the responses of the school heads from public schools is 2.64 and this implies that generally, the school heads from public school “always” performed their roles and responsibilities in implementing the physical environment component.

The grand mean of the responses of kindergarten teachers from private schools is 2.55 which means that the kindergarten teachers perceived their school heads to have “always” performed their roles and responsibilities in implementing the curriculum component.

As based on the results and interviews, the kindergarten teachers confirmed the earlier statements of their school heads that the Kindergarten Curriculum that they implement is aimed to develop the child holistically (social, physical, emotional, intellectual, language, aesthetic). The kindergarten teachers in public schools said that their school heads enforced the play-based manner of executing the learning experiences, the use of the MTB-MLE or mother tongue in teaching their pupils and the implementation of the “School Readiness Year-End Assessment (SReYA)” as well as the ECD Checklist to assess pupils’ progress. The kindergarten teachers in private schools said that their school heads implemented the traditional way of teaching the different learning areas, the use of English or Filipino as the medium of instruction and the use of a teacher made test to assess the progress of their pupils.

1.6. Monitoring and Evaluation

The school heads from public and private schools obtained a mean of 3.00 and a standard deviation of 0.00 in all indicators of the monitoring and evaluation component. They “always” monitored the effective implementation of the Kindergarten Education Program and its activities, they “always” supervised the kindergarten teachers in the implementation of the kindergarten education curriculum and they “always” submitted the necessary reports on time. The school heads from public and private schools performed their leadership roles and responsibilities with regard to the implementation of the monitoring and evaluation component.

2. Perceptions of Kindergarten Teachers from Public and Private Schools Regarding Their School Heads’

Performance of Leadership Roles and Responsibilities in the Kindergarten Education Program

2.1. Curriculum

The grand mean of the responses of kindergarten teachers from public schools is 2.55 which means that the kindergarten teachers perceived their school heads to have “always” performed their roles and responsibilities in implementing the curriculum component.

The perceptions of kindergarten teachers from private schools regarding the performance of their school heads were similar in nine indicators of the curriculum component where the mean of their responses is 3.00 and the standard deviation is 0.00.

The grand mean of the responses of kindergarten teachers from private schools is 2.48 implying that the kindergarten teachers from private schools perceived their school heads as having “sometimes” performed their roles and responsibilities in implementing the curriculum component.

The grand mean of the responses of kindergarten teachers from public schools is 2.55 with a verbal description of “always”. This is higher than the grand mean of the responses of kindergarten teachers from private schools which is 2.48 with a verbal description of “sometimes”. Based from the responses of the kindergarten teachers, the school heads from public schools performed better in implementing the curriculum component.

2.2. Teachers

The grand mean of the responses of public school teachers is 2.49 which means that generally, their school heads “sometimes” performed their roles and responsibilities in implementing the teacher component.

The grand mean of the perceptions of the kindergarten teachers from private schools is 1.69 which means that the kindergarten teachers from private schools believed that their school heads “sometimes” performed their roles and responsibilities in the teacher component.

These results unveil that in the Teacher Component, the kindergarten teachers in public and private schools said that their school heads motivated them to align themselves in the field by taking the required 18 units in Preschool/Early Childhood Education, to pursue continuing professional development by taking a Master’s degree also the same field and to participate in in-service trainings, seminar-workshops in Kindergarten/Early Childhood Education and were assigned/designated some leadership roles and responsibilities such as planning and implementing programs and activities related to the kindergarten program.

2.3. Relationship with Children, Teachers, Parents and Community Component

The grand mean of the kindergarten teachers’ responses from public schools is 2.18. This means that the kindergarten teachers believed that their school heads “sometimes” performed their roles and responsibilities in implementing the relationship with children, teachers, parents and community component.

The grand mean of the responses of the kindergarten teachers from private schools is 2.21 indicating that they believed that their school heads “sometimes” performed their roles and responsibilities in implementing the Relationship with children, teachers, parents and community component.

Results disclose that, the kindergarten teachers from public and private schools said that their school heads solicited financial help from the parents through the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) and verified their school head’s

statements that the latter were not able to establish strong ties/linkages with members of the community (private individuals, professional and civic organizations) and with Local Government Units (LGUs) who could assist them in the various programs, needs and concerns of the kindergarten program.

2.4. Health

The grand mean of the responses of kindergarten teachers from public schools is 2.63 which means that the kindergarten teachers believed that their school heads “always” performed their roles and responsibilities in implementing the health component.

The grand mean of the responses of kindergarten teachers from private schools is 2.84 which means that the kindergarten teachers believed that their school head “always” performed their roles and responsibilities in implementing the health component.

Results in this aspect divulge that the kindergarten teachers in public and private schools said that their school heads ensured the proper and efficient delivery of health services to all Kindergarten pupils such as the annual physical and dental checkups, they initiated programs and activities that promote good health, proper nutrition and cleanliness of the kindergarten pupils and teachers, they made sure that health facilities that are necessary in the delivery of health services among the pupils are present in the kindergarten program.

2.5. Physical Environment

The grand mean of the responses of the kindergarten teachers from public schools is 2.32 which means that the kindergarten teachers believed that their school heads “sometimes” performed their leadership roles and responsibilities in implementing the physical environment component.

The grand mean of the responses of kindergarten teachers from private schools is 2.85 which means that they perceived their school heads to have “always” performed their roles and responsibilities in implementing the physical environment component.

To sum up, results uncover that in the Physical Environment Component, the kindergarten teachers in public and private schools said that their school heads ensured that the kindergarten classrooms met the DepEd required size of 2.10 sq. meter per child (DO No. 32, s. 2012), the latter made sure that the health facilities are suitable to the height and weight of the kindergarten pupils, they worked for the provision of furniture such as tables, chairs and shelves and they encouraged their kindergarten teachers to beautify their classrooms. In the public schools, the kindergarten teachers said that their school heads were not able to provide a play area that contains the necessary equipment (ex. slide, swing, sand box and many others) exclusively for kindergarten pupils while the kindergarten teachers in the private schools, said that their school heads were able to provide a play area for the pupils.

2.6. Monitoring and Evaluation

The grand mean of the responses of the kindergarten teachers from public schools is 2.86. The kindergarten teachers from public schools believed that their school heads “always” performed their roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the monitoring and evaluation component.

The grand mean of the responses of the kindergarten teachers from private schools is 2.97 which means that the kindergarten teachers from private schools described their school heads as “always” performing their roles and

responsibilities in implementing the monitoring and evaluation component.

The grand mean of the responses of kindergarten teachers from private schools which is 2.97 was higher than the grand mean of the responses of kindergarten teachers from public schools which is 2.86, though both groups obtained a verbal description of “always”.

These results imply that in the Monitoring and Evaluation Component the kindergarten teachers in public and private schools said that their school heads monitored the effective implementation of the Kindergarten program and its activities in their respective schools and supervised the teachers in the proper implementation of the Kindergarten curriculum.

3. Differences on the School Heads’ and Kindergarten Teachers’ Perceptions in the Implementation of Leadership Roles and Responsibilities

The researcher determined the differences in the perceptions of school heads from public and private schools, perceptions of kindergarten teachers from public and private schools, perceptions of school heads and kindergarten teachers from public schools and the perceptions of school heads and kindergarten teachers from private schools on the school heads’ implementation of their leadership roles and responsibilities in the Kindergarten education program.

3.1. Difference in the Perceptions of the School Heads from Public and Private Schools in the Implementation of their Leadership Roles and Responsibilities in the Kindergarten Education Program

After evaluating the results using the z-test, results show that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of school heads from public and private schools regarding their performance of leadership roles and responsibilities in terms of the following: Curriculum Component where computed $z = 2.00$ while critical value of $z = 1.96$ thus null hypothesis is rejected.

Therefore, there is a significant difference in the perceptions of school heads from public and private schools regarding the implementation of the Curriculum component. Teacher Component where computed $z = 9.06$ while critical value of $z = 1.96$ thus null hypothesis is rejected. There is a significant difference in the perceptions of school heads from public and private schools regarding the implementation of the Teacher component. Relationship with Children, Teachers, Parents and Members of the Community where computed $z = 8.80$ while critical value of $z = 1.96$ thus null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the perceptions of school heads from public and private schools regarding the implementation of the Relationship component. Health where computed $z = -9.27$ while critical value of $z = 1.96$ thus, null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the perceptions of school heads from public and private schools regarding the implementation of the Health component. Physical Environment where computed $z = -14.69$ while critical value of $z = 1.96$, thus, null hypothesis is rejected. There is a significant difference in the perceptions of school heads from public and private schools regarding the implementation of the Physical Environment component. Monitoring and Evaluation where $z = 0.00$ while critical value of $z = 1.96$, thus null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the perceptions of school

heads from public and private schools regarding the implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation component.

3.2. Difference in the Perceptions of the Kindergarten Teachers from Public and Private Schools in the Implementation of their School Head's Performance of Leadership Roles and Responsibilities in the Kindergarten Education Program

In the *Curriculum Component* where $z = 3.41$ while critical value of $z = 1.96$ thus null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the perceptions kindergarten teachers from public and private schools regarding the implementation of the Curriculum component. *Teacher* where $z_c = 10.55$, thus null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the perceptions kindergarten teachers from public and private schools regarding the implementation of the Teacher component. *Health* where $z_c = -7.78$, thus null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the perceptions kindergarten teachers from public and private schools regarding the implementation of the Health component. *Physical Environment* where $z_c = -17.70$, thus null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the perceptions of kindergarten teachers from public and private schools regarding the implementation of the Physical Environment component. *Monitoring and Evaluation* where $z_c = -4.95$ thus null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the perceptions kindergarten teachers from public and private schools regarding the implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation component. *Relationship with Children, Teachers, Parents and Community* where $z_c = -0.65$ thus null hypothesis is accepted.

3.3. Difference in the Perceptions of School Heads and Kindergarten Teachers in Public Schools in the Implementation of the School Head's Performance of Leadership Roles and Responsibilities

The results in abovementioned aspects reveal that the School heads from public and private schools, the kindergarten teachers from public and private schools, school heads and kindergarten teachers from public and private schools differed significantly in their perceptions regarding the performance of school heads of their leadership roles and responsibilities in implementing the Curriculum Component, Teacher Component and Relationship with Children, Teachers, Parents and the Community Component (except for kindergarten teachers from public and private schools whose perceptions did not differ significantly), Health Component (except for school heads and kindergarten teachers from public schools whose perceptions did not differ significantly), Physical Environment Component and Monitoring and Evaluation Component (except for school heads in public and private schools whose perceptions did not differ significantly).

3.4. Difference in the Perceptions of School Heads and Kindergarten Teachers in Private Schools in the Implementation of the School Head's Performance of Leadership Roles and Responsibilities

There is a significant difference in the perceptions of school heads and kindergarten teachers from private schools regarding the school heads' performance of their leadership roles and responsibilities in terms of the following: *Curriculum Component* where computed $z = 4.22$ while critical value of $z = 1.96$ thus null hypothesis is rejected.

Therefore, there is a significant difference in the perceptions of school heads and kindergarten teachers from private schools regarding the implementation of the curriculum component. *Teacher Component* where $z_c = 7.01$ thus null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the perceptions of school heads and kindergarten teachers from private schools regarding the implementation of the Teacher component. *Relationship with Children, Teachers, Parents and Community Component* where $z_c = -4.11$ thus null hypothesis is rejected. There is a significant difference in the perceptions of school heads and kindergarten teachers from private schools regarding the implementation of the Relationship with Children, Teachers, Parents and Community component. *Physical Environment Component* where $z_c = 4.02$ thus null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the perceptions of school heads and kindergarten teachers from private schools regarding the implementation of the Physical Environment component. *Health Component* where $z_c = 4.29$ thus null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the perceptions of school heads and kindergarten teachers from private schools regarding the implementation of the Health component. *Monitoring and Evaluation Component* where $z_c = 2.69$ thus null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the perceptions of school heads and kindergarten teachers from private schools regarding the implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation component.

There is a significant difference in the perception of school heads and kindergarten teachers in private schools in terms of the following components: curriculum, teachers, relationship with children, teachers, parents and community, health, physical environment and monitoring and evaluation.

4. Professional and Personal Traits and Leadership Styles Exemplified by the School Heads

The researcher looked into the professional and personal traits exemplified by school heads in public and private schools as perceived by the school heads themselves and by the kindergarten teachers.

The two professional traits possessed by school heads from public and private schools as perceived by the school heads themselves and by the kindergarten teachers that obtained the highest frequency and percentage are: has a clear understanding of the program's mission, vision and goals as well as maintaining one's integrity and dignity with the total of 253 or 95.47% responses. Next trait that was chosen by the participants was "respects and treats others with dignity" with a total of 251 or 94.72% of participants who chose it. Other traits chosen were as follows: supports staff by encouraging professional development (250 or 94.35%), builds/maximizes the strengths of individual staff (247 or 93.21%), encourages participatory actions toward responding to children, family and program stakeholders (246 or 92.83%), honest and transparent about the program's strengths and weaknesses (244 or 92.07%), knowledgeable of the theories of learning and development and of the different curriculum approaches in kindergarten education, their strengths and weaknesses (244 or 92.07%), solved problems effectively and diplomatically (242 or 91.32%), has good communication and discourse skills (239 or 90.19%), fosters relationships and positive work environments built on trust (239 or 90.19%), courageous enough to do the right thing and take stands on unpopular issues (238 or 89.81%), initiates dialogues to better understand everyone's views (237 or

89.43%), has a keen interest in kindergarten education (234 or 88.30%), exhibits time-management skills and understands how to manage change (233 or 87.92%), encourages and rewards collaboration by acknowledging positive outcomes (233 or 87.92%), open to new ideas (232 or 87.55%), respects differences of opinion, attitudes and culture (231 or 87.17%), assumes responsibility for problems, learns from mistakes and helps the group move forward (231 or 87.17%), inspires and empowers all those he/she supervises (230 or 86.79%), recognizes the diversity of experiences, backgrounds and contributions that educators bring to their work with children (229 or 86.41%), communicates initiatives and decisions affecting the program and staff (229 or 86.41%), is willing to do research and find out new thinking about children's learning (218 or 82.26%), recognizes and celebrates the small and large achievements of individuals (216 or 81.51%) and commands and offers respect for others (215 or 81.13%).

The personal traits which the participants believed the school heads best possessed were their commitment and dedication. A total of 243 or 91.70% participants chose this trait as being possessed by the school heads from public and private schools. Being nurturing and kind as well as being trustworthy were the next traits in which 240 or 90.57% participants chose to describe the personal traits which the school heads possessed. Next traits were their being honest, transparent and knowledgeable or intelligent. A total of 237 or 89.43% participants chose these traits to describe the school heads. Other personal traits which the participants believed the school heads possessed were as follows: visionary, patient and supportive (236 or 89.06%), responsible (233 or 87.92%), passionate and maintains his/her integrity (232 or 87.55%), flexible or resilient (231 or 87.17%), fair, just and prudent (229 or 86.42%), has initiative (227 or 85.66%), goal oriented and proactive (226 or 85.28%), accountable (223 or 84.15%), assertive (222 or 83.77%), enthusiastic (215 or 81.13%), creative (210 or 79.25%), charismatic and influential (208 or 78.49%) and has a good sense of humor (199 or 75.09%).

The two leadership styles chosen by 239 or 90.19% of the participants as commonly used by the school heads from public and private schools were: "Leadership is sharing the responsibilities with the kindergarten teachers, staff including the parents and members of the community in order to effectively implement kindergarten practices" and "Leadership is guiding teaching practice, managing and supervising the curriculum work, ensuring quality instruction, taking care of teachers' professional needs, students' safety and security, maintaining contact with parents and ensuring enrollment. This may be summarized into a) developing educational practices, taking care of human relations and c) administrative management."

The next leadership style employed by the school heads from public and private schools as perceived by 232 or 87.55% of the participants was "Leadership is adhering to the mission, vision and goals of the kindergarten education program which defines the core tasks".

There were 229 or 86.42% participants who said that another leadership style employed by the school heads from public and private schools was "Leadership is possessing the qualities/characteristics of effective leaders which help in setting the tone, administering for change, having followers focus on long term vision, setting direction, practice

conservation of time and having eyes fixed on new developments.

A total of 224 or 84.53% of the participants said that another leadership style employed by the school heads from public and private school was "Leadership is inspiring, motivating, empowering the teachers, staff, parents and members of the community to help in the effective implementation of the kindergarten program. This includes having a vision for the kindergarten education program.

5. Challenges in Leadership Encountered by School Heads from Public and Private Schools in their Performance of their Leadership Roles and Responsibilities

Based from the answers that were given by 76 or 100% of the school heads from public schools, the first three challenges in leadership they encountered were: the lack of funds for the improvement of the physical environment and facilities as well as the purchase of instructional materials and equipment, insufficiency of instructional support such as manipulative toys, learning resources (Reading Skills Workbook, Big and Small books and ECD Checklist) and the inadequacy of facilities such as handwashing and toothbrushing areas, toilets and other supplies such as toothpaste, soap, potable water and many others.

There were 71 or 93.42% of the school heads who said that the next two challenges that they encountered were: the hiring of new teachers without specialization or units in Kindergarten or Preschool Education and the shortage of qualified regular teachers (Preschool/ ECE graduates or with 18 units in ECE).

Sixty eight or 89.47% of the school heads found the deployment of Kindergarten teachers as one of their challenges while sixty seven or 88.16% of them found the indigenization and localization of the Kindergarten curriculum as another challenge in their leadership.

There were sixty four or 84.21% of the school heads who said that confusion in the definition or understanding in the use of the Mother tongue as the medium of instruction and the lack of instructional materials in the mother tongue were also challenges which they encountered as leaders of the program.

There were fifty two or 68.42% of the school heads who found the resistance of parents and the community towards the Kindergarten Education Program and their negative reaction towards the play-based execution of the lessons in the Kindergarten curriculum.

There were other challenges in leadership encountered by the school heads from public schools. Forty six or 60.53% of them pointed out that there was the lack of support or reinforcement from parents, forty two or 55.26% of them said that there was the lack of linkages/ networking with government and non-government agencies and LGUs, thirty two or 42.11% of them emphasized that there was poor attitudes of kindergarten teachers, twenty six or 34.21% of them said that there was the overlapping of activities and this led to poor time management while twenty or 26.32% of them said that they lacked leadership trainings for school heads on kindergarten education.

There were thirty one or 100% of the school heads who said that the first two challenges which they encountered were: the inconsistency between the DepEd prescribed play-based

manner of executing the learning experiences and the traditional teaching-learning process used in private schools and the parents' and community's negative reaction towards the play-based execution of the lessons in the kindergarten curriculum.

There were twenty nine (29) or 93.55% of the school heads from private schools who said that the next two challenges that they encountered were: confusion in the definition or understanding in the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in Kindergarten classes and the insufficiency of instructional materials written in the mother tongue.

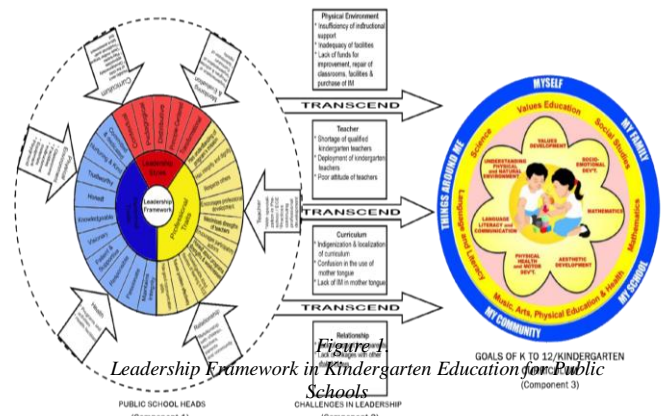
The other challenges in leadership in the kindergarten education program encountered by school heads from private schools were: scarcity of qualified teachers whose specialization is on Preschool or Early Childhood Education (28 or 90.32%), the small number of enrollees which was not enough to defray the salaries of the kindergarten teachers (24 or 77.42%), the lack of funds for the repair, improvement and maintenance of the physical environment and facilities as well as the purchase of instructional materials and equipment (23 or 74.19%), the lack of support from the Parents and the Community (21 or 67.74%), lack of linkages with other stakeholders like government and non-government agencies including LGUs (19 or 61.29%), poor attitude of teachers (14 or 45.16%) and scarcity of leadership trainings for school heads in the field of kindergarten education (10 or 32.26%).

As a summary, these results imply that the challenges in leadership in the kindergarten education program encountered by school heads in public schools in terms of the following components were: Physical Environment – the insufficiency of instructional support, inadequacy of facilities, lack of funds for the improvement/repair of classrooms and facilities and for the purchase of instructional materials; Teacher – shortage of qualified teachers, the deployment of kindergarten teachers, poor attitude of teachers; Curriculum – indigenization and localization of curriculum, confusion in the use of the mother tongue, lack of instructional materials in the mother tongue and the resistance of parents towards the play-based manner of executing the learning experiences; Relationship with Stakeholders – lack of support from parents and the lack of strong linkages/networking with members of the community and local government units. The challenges in leadership in the kindergarten education program encountered by school heads in private schools in terms of the following components were: Curriculum – inconsistency between DepEd prescribed play-based curriculum and traditional way of teaching the learning areas, the resistance of parents towards the play-based manner of executing the learning areas, confusion in the use of the mother tongue, insufficiency of instructional materials in the mother tongue; Teacher - shortage of qualified teachers, small number of enrollees to defray the salary of teachers, poor attitude of teachers; Relationship with Stakeholders – lack of support from parents and the community, lack of linkages/networking with members of the community and local government units; Monitoring and Evaluation – lack of leadership trainings for school heads in the field of kindergarten education.

6. Leadership Framework in Kindergarten Education

Public Schools

The proposed Leadership Framework in Kindergarten Education for Public Schools has three components: (1) school heads, (2) challenges in leadership and (3) goals of the K to 12 Kindergarten Curriculum.



Component 1 on Public School Heads shows that they should possess *personal traits*, *professional traits* and *leadership styles*.

As leaders of the kindergarten education program, school heads from public schools possessed innate personal and acquired professional traits. The *personal traits* which the school heads possessed include: committed and dedicated, nurturing and kind, trustworthy, honest, knowledgeable/intelligent, visionary, patient and supportive, responsible, passionate and maintains integrity.

The *professional traits* possessed by the school heads were: having a clear understanding of the program's mission, vision and goals, maintains integrity and dignity, respects and treats others with dignity, supports staff by encouraging professional development, maximizes strengths of individual staff, encourages participatory actions towards responding to children, family and other stakeholders, honest and transparent about the program's strengths and weaknesses, knowledgeable about the theories of learning and development and of different curriculum approaches in ECE, solves problems effectively and diplomatically, and has a good communication and discourse skills.

Aside from the personal and professional traits which the school heads from public schools exemplified, the school heads from public schools employed *leadership styles* in leading and supervising the kindergarten program. The leadership styles include:

a) *Contextual Leadership* which is defined as adhering to the mission and goals of the kindergarten education. In the proposed Leadership Framework, the school heads, as leaders of the Kindergarten Program should always put the Mission as the center, the primary purpose for which the program was established. It is the leader's duty/role to clarify the mission, then guide and steer the implementation of the mission. After clarifying the mission, the leader constructs the vision of the Kindergarten Program in collaboration with the teachers, the parents and other stakeholders. The organization's vision is connected with strategy and defines the core tasks. In the Kindergarten Education Program, goals for the leader's work are based on the vision of the program and this is further developed by leadership (thus, the nature of leadership is always visionary and oriented in the future).

b) *Pedagogical Leadership* – is described as supporting the educational goals, accomplishing curriculum and its decision making. In the proposed Leadership Framework for Kindergarten Education, three elements of pedagogical leadership are taken into consideration. The three elements are: a) Instructional leadership (Educational Practices) - seen as the ability to guide teaching practice, managing and supervising the effective delivery of the Kindergarten Curriculum to the pupils, ensuring quality of instruction, and taking care of the teachers’ professional growth. Human Relations Leadership is the ability to establish a positive, warm and a collaborative relationship with the children, the teachers, the parents, and the community. Administrative Leadership includes the maintenance of structures of the program, safety and well-being of the pupils and staff, property maintenance, curriculum dissemination and other inclusive practices.

c) *Distributed Leadership* is sharing or dispersing the responsibility with the teachers, parents and members of the community. The School Heads, teachers and staff, parents, and members of the community share the responsibility in achieving the mission of the Kindergarten Program, in planning its vision, in carrying out the core tasks and in performing the roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the different components of the three pedagogical elements. All these individuals enact leadership roles. Distributed leadership is therefore understood as a practice “where leadership is distributed or dispersed over the leaders, the teachers, the parents and community context – those who hold either formal leadership positions and informed leadership responsibilities.

d) *Principle-Centered Leadership* – is exemplifying the personal and professional leadership traits and styles. In the study, the traits (personal and professional) were looked into. These traits helped the school heads in performing their roles and responsibilities as leaders of the program.

e) *Transformational Leadership* is inspiring, motivating, empowering subordinates to achieve high levels for the organization.

The personal and professional traits and leadership styles which school heads exemplified as leaders of the kindergarten education in public schools, helped them in performing their roles and responsibilities in implementing the six essential components of the kindergarten education program such as: *Curriculum* (develops the child in all aspects, developmentally appropriate, play-based in executing the learning experiences, uses the mother tongue as medium of instruction, uses an assessment tool such as the ECD Checklist, and many others); *Teacher* (with specialization in Preschool/Early Childhood Education and practices continuing professional development); *Relationship with Children, Teachers and members of the Community* forming linkages with stakeholders from the community and Local Government Units); *Health* (programs and activities, health facilities); *Physical Environment* (classrooms, facilities, instructional materials, equipment and playground); *Monitoring and Evaluation* (the implementation of Kindergarten program and its activities, the supervision of teachers in the implementation of the Kindergarten curriculum, the submission of reports on time).

Component 2 dealt on the *challenges in leadership* in kindergarten education which school heads in public schools encountered. The challenges focused on essential components which were: *Physical Environment*

(insufficiency of instructional support such as manipulative toys, big and small books, and CDs; inadequacy of facilities such as toilets, tooth brushing and hand washing facilities; lack of funds for the improvement/repair of classrooms/facilities and the purchase of instructional materials), *Teacher* (shortage of qualified teachers, deployment of kindergarten teachers, poor attitude of teachers), *Curriculum* (indigenization and localization of the curriculum, confusion in the use of the mother tongue, lack of instructional materials in the mother tongue, resistance of parents towards the play-based manner of executing learning experiences), *Relationship with Children, Parents and Community* (lack of support from parents, lack of strong linkages/networking with members of the community and Local Government Units).

The public school heads used their leadership styles, professional traits and personal traits to transcend over these challenges on (a) physical environment, (b) teachers, (c) curriculum and (d) relationship; thereby being able to appropriately implement, manage, and supervise the goals of the K to 12 Kindergarten Curriculum which is clearly shown in *Component 3* of the framework.

A “Leadership Framework in Kindergarten Education for Public Schools” will serve as guide for school heads in performing their tasks as leaders of the kindergarten program.

Private Schools

The proposed Leadership Framework in Kindergarten for Private Schools has three components: (1) school heads, (2) challenges in leadership, and (3) goals of the K to 12 Kindergarten Curriculum.

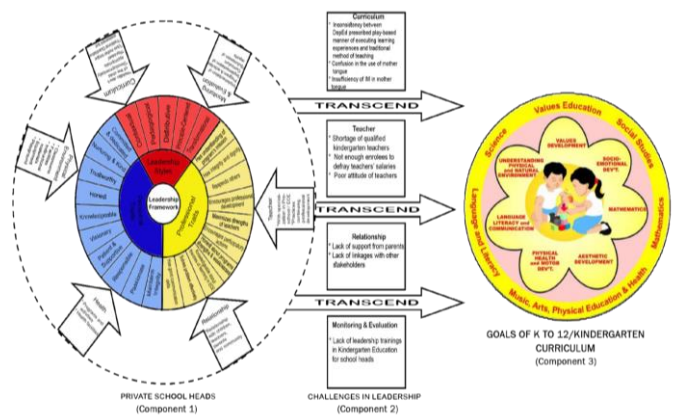


Figure 2. Leadership Framework in Kindergarten Education for Private Schools

Component 1 on Private School Heads shows that they should possess *leadership styles, professional traits, and personal traits* which are similar to the public school heads. The difference between the two proposed leadership frameworks lies on the performance in the Kindergarten curriculum which uses the traditional method of teaching the different learning areas, the use of English and Filipino as the medium of instruction and the use of traditional/quantitative assessment tools as well as the challenges on leadership that these two groups of school heads face.

Component 2 of the proposed leadership framework for private school heads is on challenges of leadership which focuses on *Curriculum* (inconsistency between DepEd prescribed play-based curriculum and the traditional way of teaching the learning areas, confusion in the use of the mother tongue, insufficiency of instructional materials in the mother

tongue), *Teacher* (shortage of qualified kindergarten teachers, small number of enrollees to defray teachers' salary, poor attitude of teachers), *Relationship with Children, Teachers, Parents and Community* (lack of support from parents and community, lack of strong linkages with members of the community and local government units), *Monitoring and Evaluation* (lack of leadership trainings in Kindergarten education for school heads). Component 1 of this framework shows that private school heads leadership styles, professional traits and personal traits helped them transcend over the aforementioned challenges in order to implement, manage, and supervise their kindergarten curriculum in conjunction to K to 12 Kindergarten curriculum.

It is proposed in this Leadership Framework that leadership roles and responsibilities can be carried out by other persons aside from the school heads thus, Kindergarten teachers, parents and the community can also perform as leaders and can work collaboratively towards the attainment of the mission and shared vision of the Kindergarten Education Program. The traits and leadership styles in the last circle may also be exemplified by the teachers, parents and members of the community.

V. CONCLUSION

As per results stated above, it is therefore concluded that:

1. The school heads in public and private schools perceived themselves to have performed their leadership roles and responsibilities in implementing the six components namely: curriculum; teacher; relationship with children, teachers, parents and community; health, physical environment and monitoring and evaluation.
2. The kindergarten teachers in public and private schools perceived their school heads to have performed their leadership roles and responsibilities in implementing the six components namely: curriculum; teacher; relationship with children, teachers, parents and community; health, physical environment and monitoring and evaluation.
3. There is a significant difference in the perceptions of school heads from public and private schools, the kindergarten teachers from public and private schools, school heads and kindergarten teachers from public and private schools regarding the performance of school heads of their leadership roles and responsibilities in implementing the six components.
4. The professional and personal traits and leadership styles exemplified by the school heads in public and private schools helped them in the performance of their leadership roles and responsibilities in implementing the six components in the kindergarten education program.
5. The challenges in leadership encountered by school heads in public schools focused on the following components: physical environment, teacher, curriculum and relationship with stakeholders while the challenges in leadership encountered by school heads in private schools centered on: curriculum, teacher, relationship with stakeholders and monitoring and evaluation.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. The advantages of using a play-based manner of executing the learning experiences and the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in the Kindergarten level should be explained to school heads, parents and other stakeholders by citing authorities in the field of Kindergarten education as well as findings in research studies proving their positive benefits.
2. Kindergarten teachers as well as private individuals with talents should be encouraged to write songs, poems, stories and riddles in the mother tongue of their pupils or their community by giving them incentives and other forms of rewards. This is in order to solve the dearth of instructional materials written in the mother tongue.
3. Kindergarten teachers who lack specialization in Kindergarten/Early Childhood Education should align themselves in the field by taking the required 18 units and to continue growing professionally by enrolling in a Master's degree program major in Kindergarten/Early Childhood Education.
4. Kindergarten teachers should attend more trainings and seminar-workshops in Kindergarten/Early Childhood Education where they can learn effective strategies and techniques in teaching their young pupils, ways on how to handle the challenging behaviors of children, how to assess the progress of their young learners and many more.
5. Kindergarten teachers should be given/assigned leadership roles and responsibilities in the kindergarten program because they too have something to contribute for the enrichment of the program.
6. The school heads from public and private schools should establish linkages and strengthen their networks with stakeholders like parents, private individuals, professional and civic organizations and local government units who can extend professional and financial help to the Kindergarten program. Collaborative relationships with them will redound to the solution of inadequacies in terms of instructional materials, equipment, classrooms, facilities and medical supplies.
7. Physical and dental examinations of kindergarten pupils should not only be conducted once a year but twice a year as recommended by international associations like the NAEYC on kindergarten education.
8. All kindergarten education programs should comply with the DepEd required classroom size of 2.10 sq. meters per child for the free movement of the kindergarten pupils.
9. All kindergarten education programs should have a play area that contains the necessary equipment (slides, swing, see-saw, jungle gym, sand box, balance beam and many more) and is exclusively for kindergarten pupils.
10. School heads in public and private schools should attend leadership trainings and other seminar-workshops in the field of kindergarten/early childhood education to keep them abreast of the latest trends, innovations and issues in this field.

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