

School Administrators' Communicative Competence and Challenges: Basis for Professional Development

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Abstract

This descriptive-correlational study examined the level of communicative competence among school administrators in Ilocos Norte and explored the relationship between their socio-demographic characteristics and communicative competence. It utilized a survey questionnaire and underwent face-to-face interviews to gather data. The study found a balanced age distribution among administrators, with the majority in their late 40s to early 50s. Progress towards gender equity was observed, and most administrators were married. The hierarchical structure predominantly comprised Head Teacher positions, and administrators had diverse educational backgrounds. They demonstrated a dedication to professional development, and their length of service varied. School administrators perceive their communicative competence in conversational management as highly competent, although teacher evaluations suggest a more moderate level. There are identified communicative challenges that are rooted within the personal, professional, and cultural aspects of diversity such as limited vocabulary, mismatched preparation, low confidence, misguided information, cultural clashes, power struggle, lack of knowledge on educational jargon, overlapping speech, misunderstandings, power and pride, and out-of-focus conversation. Socio-demographic characteristics, such as age and position, demonstrate significant positive correlations with communicative competence, highlighting the influence of experience and professional development. Recommendations include implementing professional development programs, addressing communication challenges, and considering individualized approaches to enhance communicative competence among school administrators. Further research is needed to explore additional factors and gain a comprehensive understanding of effective communication in educational leadership.

Keywords: *Communicative Challenges, Communicative Competence, School Administrators, Socio-Demographic Characteristics*

INTRODUCTION

School leaders have experienced significant changes in their roles, requiring resilience, adaptability, and flexibility. They now need to demonstrate leadership both inside and outside of schools, addressing challenges like local governance, increased accountability, conflicts between management and leadership, community interactions, and school choice. They also act as mediators in educational reforms, bridging national policies with the needs of teachers and stakeholders.

In the Philippine education system, effective communication is crucial for school leaders to implement policies and enhance teaching practices. Communication tools facilitate interaction and engagement, strengthening institutions. Communicative leaders engage in dialogue, seek feedback, and promote participative decision making. However, communication challenges and barriers, such as environmental and cultural factors, exist in organizations.

Several studies have explored the impact of gender on the communicative competence of school administrators. Male administrators may display more assertive and direct communication styles, while female administrators may exhibit more collaborative and relationship-oriented communication styles (Schueneman, 2023). Moreover, each generation has different preferences when it comes to communicating, whether it's through a specific medium, frequency or at a certain speed (Ndmu, 2019). Therefore, it's crucial that people in cross-generational workplaces understand the best way to communicate with others. Likewise, research supports the notion that administrators with higher levels of education and extensive professional experience tend to possess stronger communication skills.

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This study aimed to describe school administrators' socio-demographic characteristics, communicative competence, and challenges. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

What are the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents in terms of:

age;

gender;

position;

highest educational attainment, and

length of service?

What is the school administrator's level of communicative competence in:

public speaking;

writing office correspondence, and

conversational management?

Is there a significant relationship between the school administrators' socio-demographic characteristics and communicative competence?

What are the challenges encountered by the school administrators along the indicators of communicative competence?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

One of the most significant processes for the success of administrator and efficiency of organizations is the process of communication. This supports the study of Hakam, Juma and Issan (2018) that in educational administration, communication is an important component of the teaching and learning process, as well as the administrative processes of the educational institution. The school administration is critical in preparing and educating future generations. As a result, managing their operations is critical, and it necessitates the competence, ability, and special preparation of those who carry out their various operations and tasks. staff, educational supervisors, teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders.

The degree to which the leader can communicate the need for change to members of the organization is a key determinant of the level of success in any situation of change. Even when members of an organization are satisfied with the current situation and thus resistant to the idea of change, the leader's communication skills are equally important in creating dissatisfaction with the current situation among the members (Gaubatz & Ensminger, 2017).

Effective communication is a crucial aspect of all management processes in schools. School administrators must fulfill their responsibilities properly, and employees need to understand these responsibilities for healthy communication to occur. School administrators must possess strong communicative competence in various areas such as public speaking, writing office correspondence, and conversational management. Their interactions with teachers greatly influence teacher behavior, student interactions, and classroom longevity. Communication serves a broader purpose than simply conveying information. It creates a positive environment and facilitates successful school management.

Communicative Competence in Public Speaking. School administrators play a crucial role in effectively communicating ideas and information to various audiences. They should practice and prepare for presentations, adapt their speech to the audience's needs, and utilize nonverbal communication to convey confidence. Using simple language, avoiding jargon, and incorporating visual aids or humor can help engage the audience. Actively listening to feedback and being open to improvement are also essential. Effective public speaking skills are important for administrators to communicate with stakeholders and make informed decisions. Research

highlights the significance of communication skills and competencies for building positive relationships, leading school improvement, and effectively engaging diverse audiences.

Communicative Competence in Writing Office Correspondence. Office correspondence can take many different forms, including memos, circulars, letters, notices, and others. These are very useful because they serve as notices to office staff, notices to specific individuals, orders to the department as a whole or to a specific employee working in the department, and instructions to the department as a whole or to an individual working in the department.

Studies by LaPrairie et al. (2014), Choeda et al. (2020), and Coon et al. (2018) emphasize the significance of effective written communication skills for school administrators in maintaining positive relationships with stakeholders, especially in rural areas with limited face-to-face interactions. Office correspondence, including memos, circulars, letters, and notices, serves as important means of conveying information, issuing orders, and providing instructions. Improving communicative competence in writing is crucial for administrators to effectively communicate with stakeholders, convey important messages, and foster communication within the school community. Lin et al. (2020) suggest that professional development programs can enhance administrators' writing skills and abilities.

Communicative Competence in Conversational Management. To effectively manage conversations and interactions with stakeholders in school communities, school administrators must possess strong communication skills. Conversational management is a crucial aspect of communication, as it involves guiding conversations to achieve desired outcomes while fostering positive relationships. Research by Smith and Szalma (2017) emphasizes the importance of communicative competence in conversational management for school administrators. Their study highlights the significance of active listening, providing feedback, and responding appropriately to stakeholders' needs. Factors such as school culture, stakeholder types, and administrator experience can also influence communicative competence. Additionally, Tennant (2022) found that effective communication for administrators involves active listening, providing feedback, and engaging in dialogue with teachers.

For effective understanding, messages should be delivered at the appropriate time without overwhelming the recipient with excessive information. It is important to use language that is easily understood by the intended audience, considering cultural and gender factors that may influence comprehension. The quality of the relationship between the sender and receiver can either facilitate or hinder effective communication, and stereotypes may impact how messages are encoded. All these factors need to be considered to address communication challenges.

In a recent informal interview, it was confirmed that some school administrators lack the ability to compose office correspondence, despite its importance in their roles. It is crucial for school administrators to comprehend and effectively convey their messages. Unclear communication can lead to chaos.

Aside from the established professional standards that school leaders are supposed to uphold in carrying out their tasks and obligations as education leaders, having specific objectives and expectations can help to better gauge their thoughts and actions (Cabigao, 2021). Under the effective guidance of administrators, they have the power to fill gaps and address issues and concerns through the implementation of various educational programs and projects based on the diverse needs of learners and other local stakeholders.

This study is anchored on Communicative competence theory that was developed by Dell Hymes (1972) as a response to Chomsky's theory of linguistic competence. The theory asserts that communication involves more than just linguistic knowledge or grammatical competence, but also an understanding of the social and cultural context in which communication takes place.

Communicative competence, as outlined by Hymes, consists of four main components: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Linguistic competence involves understanding the rules and structures of a language. Sociolinguistic competence relates to knowing the appropriate language use in different social and cultural contexts. Discourse competence refers to the ability to

use language effectively in various situations. Strategic competence involves using language strategically to achieve communication goals.

According to Hymes, communicative competence is acquired through social interaction and participation in communicative events. It is context-specific, meaning it depends on the specific social and cultural context.

For school administrators, it is crucial to have a strong grasp of the language used in their school community. They should use proper grammar, syntax, and vocabulary when communicating orally or in writing. Understanding social and cultural norms is also important, as it helps administrators use appropriate language for different situations and audiences, considering cultural diversity. Administrators need to effectively use language in various contexts, such as persuasive communication, giving clear instructions, and negotiation. Lastly, they should strategically use language to achieve their goals, including effective communication with stakeholders and navigating complex situations.

METHODOLOGY

This descriptive-correlational study aimed to describe school administrators' socio-demographic characteristics, communicative competence, and challenges. This study is descriptive because the level of communicative competence is described using the mean. Moreover, inductive analysis was used to generate themes from the communicative challenges of the respondents. Meanwhile, this study aimed to determine the relationship between the school administrators' level of communicative competence and their socio-demographic characteristics.

The study was conducted to the three (3) divisions in the province of Ilocos Norte to all the public secondary schools that are under the Department of Education in Schools Division of Ilocos Norte, Schools Division of the City of Batac, and Schools Division of Laoag City. This study involved 1750 respondents. Of this number 95 are secondary school administrators and 1655 are secondary school teachers. From the group, 10 school administrators and 10 teachers were selected purposively as participants in the interview.

A validated self-evaluation and a teacher-version survey questionnaire on communicative competence in Google Forms, a semi-structured interview protocol for communicative challenges which was administered face-to-face were the instruments used to gather data.

The information gathered in this study was organized based on the research questions, research design, and research instrument used. Microsoft Excel (MS Excel) was used to organize and analyze quantitative data. To examine relevant data, descriptive statistical tools such as frequency counts, percentage and mean were utilized. In treating the data on the level of communicative competence of the school administrators, the following range of mean scores with its corresponding descriptive interpretation which was adopted from Bosque (2021), was used: 4.51 – 5.00: Very Highly Competent (VHC); 3.51 – 4.50: Highly Competent (HC); 2.51 – 3.50: Moderately Competent (MC); 1.51 – 2.50: Slightly Competent (SC); 1.00 – 1.50: Not Competent (NC). Moreover, to determine the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and level of communicative competence, Pearson's r and point biserial r tests of correlation were used. Moreover, in the analysis of interview data, inductive analysis, in vivo coding, and line-by-line techniques were observed in the generation of themes.

RESULTS

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents are described using six variables, namely: age, gender, position, highest educational attainment, and length of service. Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents based on their sociodemographic characteristics.

Age. Most secondary school administrators in Ilocos Norte fall within the age range of 48-53, indicating a higher prevalence of administrators in their late 40s to early 50s. There are also notable frequencies in the age ranges of 60-65 and 54-59, suggesting experienced administrators in senior positions. However, the age range of 24-29 has the lowest representation, highlighting the need for succession planning. The age ranges of 42-47, 36-41, and 30-35 have consistent frequencies, indicating a balance between newer and more experienced

administrators. The balanced profile of secondary school administrators indicates a diverse range of experience and expertise. This mix of seasoned administrators brings a wealth of knowledge and practical skills to their roles, contributing to effective school management.

Gender. There is nearly equal representation of male and female secondary school administrators in Ilocos Norte, with females slightly outnumbering males. This indicates progress towards gender equity in administrative roles.

Civil Status. Most surveyed administrators in Ilocos Norte are married, comprising 75.79% of the total. This suggests a higher likelihood of married individuals holding administrative positions in the educational sector.

Position. Secondary school administrators in Ilocos Norte hold various positions, including Head Teacher and School Principal at different levels. The highest percentage is found in the position of Head Teacher III, while School Principal III has the lowest percentage. This suggests a hierarchical structure within administrative positions, with potential career progression from Head Teacher to School Principal as experience and qualifications increase.

Educational Attainment. Secondary school administrators in Ilocos Norte have diverse educational backgrounds. The highest percentage indicates administrators who have completed a bachelor's degree and have pursued advanced studies at the Master's level. This demonstrates their commitment to professional growth and staying updated with educational research and practices.

Length of Service. The length of service among secondary school administrators in Ilocos Norte varies. The highest frequencies are found in the categories of "6-11 years" and "0-5 years," indicating a mix of early to mid-career professionals. This distribution reflects a combination of experienced administrators with longer tenures and those who are newer to their positions. This diversity contributes to a range of perspectives and ideas within the administrative workforce.

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents.

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents.			
No.	Socio-Demographic Characteristics	Total	%
	Age		
	60-65	9	9.47
	54-59	12	12.63
1.	48-53	27	28.42
	42-47	18	18.95
	36-41	15	15.79
	30-35	12	12.63
	24-29	2	2.11
	Gender		
2.	Male	46	48.42
	Female	49	51.58
	Civil Status		
3.	Single	23	24.21
	Married	72	75.79
	Position		
	Head Teacher I	7	7.37
4.	Head Teacher III	52	54.74
	School Principal I	17	17.89
	School Principal II	6	6.32

	School Principal III	2	2.11
	School Principal IV	11	11.58
	Highest Educational Attainment		
	BS with MA units	42	44.21
5.	MA/MS	22	23.16
	MA/MS with EdD/PhD units	19	20.00
	EdD/PhD	12	12.63
	Length of Service		
	30-35	3	3.16
	24-29	9	9.47
6.	18-23	3	3.16
	12-17	11	11.58
	6-11	38	40.00
	0-5	31	32.63

LEVEL OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN PUBLIC SPEAKING

Education leaders must be comfortable speaking in front of large groups of people. Public speaking is required in a variety of situations, from leading a meeting to pitching an innovative idea in front of a room filled with other education leaders.

Table 2. Mean ratings of the school administrators' level of communicative competence in public speaking

Dimensions	Self-Evaluation (n=95)		Teacher Evaluation (n=1655)	
	WM	DI	WM	DI
<i>I/The school administrator can...</i>				
A. Linguistic Competence:				
1. construct grammatically correct, well-structured, and complete sentences.	4.09	HC	3.61	HC
2. use variety of vocabulary for effective communication.	4.02	HC	3.59	HC
3. speak clearly and distinctly all the time with minimal mispronounced words	4.10	HC	3.61	HC
4. pronounce vowel and consonant sounds.	4.28	HC	3.60	HC
5. use metaphors and other figures of speech to effectively convey point.	3.90	HC	3.57	HC
6. employ quotations, facts and statistics that complement ideas or the messages.	4.00	HC	3.59	HC
7. speak or read speech with proper intonation, enunciation, and phrasing.	4.22	HC	3.57	HC
8. speak free of heavy accent as an effect of local dialect.	3.98	HC	3.57	HC
9. use the fitting terms or vocabulary to convey the meaning.	4.13	HC	3.59	HC
10. use variety of sentence types and structures based on the purpose of the statement or meaning being conveyed.	4.09	HC	3.59	HC
Composite Mean	4.08	HC	3.59	HC
B. Socio-linguistic Competence:				
11. use word/s that are not offensive to the audience and to their culture, religion, or institution where they belong.	4.43	HC	3.54	HC
12. address audience with appropriate politeness and formality.	4.54	VHC	3.57	HC
13. greet and address my audience using appropriate expressions to their culture and context.	4.51	VHC	3.59	HC
14. give high regard and courtesy to audience's background.	4.51	VHC	3.59	HC
15. build rapport or connection with the audience.	4.36	HC	3.58	HC
Composite Mean	4.47	HC	3.57	HC
C. Discourse Competence:				
16. deliver speech with clear and obvious organization patterns.	4.16	HC	3.60	HC
17. deliver speech with highly detailed and structured pattern of ideas.	4.11	HC	3.57	HC
18. organize the content of speech with fluid transitions to capture and hold the listeners' attention.	4.03	HC	3.58	HC
19. use gesture and movement naturally to describe things, underscore transitions and emphasize points.	4.20	HC	3.59	HC
20. lead audience to grasp the focus of my speech.	4.23	HC	3.60	HC
21. use appropriate word/s to create a dominant effect during discourse.	4.18	HC	3.60	HC
22. persuade audience to accept opinion.	4.12	HC	3.62	HC
Composite Mean	4.15	HC	3.59	HC
D. Strategic Competence:				

23.	modify speech and the manner of talking based on the audience behavior and purpose.	4.25	HC	3.59	HC
24.	use appropriate language based on the immediate needs of the audience and the situation.	4.36	HC	3.59	HC
25.	incorporate relevant stories and examples to sustain the interest of the listeners and further develop or clarify the main ideas.	4.16	HC	3.61	HC
26.	express appropriate tones of voice and body language.	4.27	HC	3.60	HC
Composite Mean		4.15	HC	3.60	HC
Overall Mean		4.24	HC	3.59	HC
Legend: Range of Means	Descriptive Interpretation (DI)				
4.51 – 5.00	Very Highly Competent (VHC)				
3.51 – 4.50	Highly Competent (HC)				
2.51 – 3.50	Moderately Competent (MC)				
1.51 – 2.50	Slightly Competent (SC)				
1.00 – 1.50	Not Competent (NC)				

Table 2 shows the mean ratings of the school administrators’ level of communicative competence in public speaking. It can be gleaned from the table that the school administrators rated themselves as highly competent in public speaking as shown by the overall mean of 4.24. This is further supported by the evaluation of the teachers that their school administrators are highly competent in public speaking as shown by the overall mean of 3.59.

Proficient public speaking skills in school administrators facilitate effective communication of their vision, ideas, and goals to stakeholders, resulting in improved school functioning and success. Strong public speaking abilities also aid in building positive relationships, resolving conflicts, and establishing trust within the school community. Administrators who excel in public speaking represent the school externally, enhancing its reputation and attracting resources and support. Additionally, these skills boost administrators' confidence, enabling them to actively participate in meetings and advocate for their school and students. Moreover, administrators proficient in public speaking serve as positive role models, showcasing effective communication, critical thinking, and leadership skills to students.

According to Handayani (2018), proper grammar and usage are essential for clear and effective communication, particularly in public speaking. Grammar controls how words are used and combined in sentences. Eke (2021) emphasizes that public speaking involves imparting knowledge, thoughts, or opinions on a subject that captivates and engages the audience. The speaker's responsibility is to maintain the audience's interest and focus throughout the speech. Nadiah, Arina, and Ikhrom (2019) highlight the importance of a speaker's ability to effectively communicate ideas, arguments, and the topic to the audience during a public speech. Confidence in conveying tasks and responsibilities is crucial for successful communication.

LEVEL OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN WRITING OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

Table 3 shows the mean ratings of the school administrators’ level of communicative competence in writing office correspondence. It can be gleaned from the table that the school administrators rated themselves as highly competent in writing office correspondence as shown by the overall mean of 4.35. This is further supported by the evaluation of the teachers that their school administrators are highly competent in public speaking as shown by the overall mean of 3.60.

Table 3. Mean ratings of school administrators’ level of communicative competence in writing office correspondences.

Dimensions		Self-Evaluation (n=95)		Teacher Evaluation (n=1655)	
		WM	DI	WM	DI
<i>I/The school administrator can...</i>					
A. Linguistic Competence:					
1.	construct grammatically correct, well-structured, and complete sentences.	4.25	HC	3.60	HC
2.	use relevant and variety of vocabulary for effective communication.	4.20	HC	3.60	HC

3.	use short and concise sentences to express ideas.	4.41	HC	3.61	HC
4.	use appropriate parts of speech, especially the verbs and its tenses.	4.33	HC	3.62	HC
5.	use appropriate sentence types and structures based on the purpose of the letter.	4.34	HC	3.63	HC
Composite Mean		4.30	HC	3.61	HC
B. Socio-linguistic Competence:					
6.	use appropriate word/s to express point.	4.46	HC	3.60	HC
7.	greet and address the receiver or reader with appropriate politeness and formality based on their culture and context.	4.50	HC	3.58	HC
8.	use or reflect the proper and respectful tone based on the purpose of communication.	4.41	HC	3.58	HC
9.	give high regard and courtesy to audience's background information.	4.47	HC	3.60	HC
Composite Mean		4.46	HC	3.59	HC
C. Discourse Competence:					
10.	construct paragraphs with clear and obvious organization patterns.	4.33	HC	3.59	HC
11.	clarify the points or purposes of the letter by proper organization of details.	4.35	HC	3.60	HC
12.	organize the content with fluid transitions to capture and hold the reader's attention.	4.24	HC	3.60	HC
13.	lead readers to grasp the point of the correspondence.	4.33	HC	3.62	HC
Composite Mean		4.31	HC	3.62	HC
D. Strategic Competence:					
14.	edit the written letters	4.35	HC	3.59	HC
15.	customize the letter based on the recipient and purpose	4.34	HC	3.62	HC
16.	express appropriate tones and modes of the letter.	4.30	HC	3.60	HC
Composite Mean		4.33	HC	3.61	HC
Overall Mean		4.35	HC	3.60	HC
Legend: Range of Means Descriptive Interpretation (DI)					
		4.51 – 5.00	Very Highly Competent (VHC)		
		3.51 – 4.50	Highly Competent (HC)		
		2.51 – 3.50	Moderately Competent (MC)		
		1.51 – 2.50	Slightly Competent (SC)		
		1.00 – 1.50	Not Competent (NC)		

Good writing skills are crucial for school administrators. They facilitate positive relationships, ensure compliance, and improve time management. Administrators with strong writing skills can communicate clearly, build rapport, meet regulatory requirements, and complete tasks efficiently. Overall, effective writing skills enhance administrators' effectiveness and benefit the school and stakeholders.

Flora and De Vera (2019) stated that office correspondence should be free from grammatical errors for it relays information in the workplace. Hence, it must be concise, coherent, and direct to the point to better serve its purpose.

Amadi (2019) pointed out that for an office correspondence, the tone of such a letter is usually very polite, written for official or formal purposes. The writer does not risk familiarity by compromising the convention. Even when the recipient is well known to the writer, the basic rules, and conventions for writing such a letter must be observed.

LEVEL OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN CONVERSATIONAL MANAGEMENT

Table 4 displays the average ratings of school administrators' communicative competence in conversational management. According to the table, administrators themselves rate their competence level highly, with an overall mean of 4.29. However, teachers' evaluations suggest a different perspective, rating administrators as moderately competent in conversational management, with an overall mean of 3.35. These findings indicate a

potential disparity between administrators' self-perception and how they are perceived by others. This underscores the importance of professional development programs to bridge any skill gaps and enhance their communicative abilities.

Table 4. Mean ratings of school administrators' level of communicative competence in conversational management.

Dimensions	Self-Evaluation	Teacher Evaluation		
	(n=95)	DI	WM	DI
I/The school administrator can...	WM	DI	WM	DI
A. Linguistic Competence:				
1. construct grammatically correct, well-structured, and complete sentences.	4.20	HC	3.60	HC
2. use variety of vocabulary for effective communication.	4.20	HC	3.59	HC
3. speak clearly and distinctly all the time with minimal mispronounced words	4.15	HC	3.58	HC
4. pronounce vowel and consonant sounds.	4.25	HC	3.58	HC
5. use creative or figurative language sparingly, relevant to the context of the conversation.	4.11	HC	3.56	HC
6. speak with proper intonation, phrasing, and rate.	4.27	HC	3.57	HC
7. speak free of heavy accent as an effect of local dialect.	4.14	HC	3.57	HC
8. use of simple and specific words to express ideas.	4.34	HC	3.58	HC
9. employ quotations, facts and statistics that complement ideas or the messages.	4.13	HC	3.57	HC
Composite Mean	4.20	HC	3.58	HC
B. Socio-linguistic Competence:				
10. use words and terms that are not offensive and prejudiced.	4.41	HC	3.33	MC
11. address them with appropriate politeness and formality.	4.48	HC	3.30	MC
12. use humor in a relevant manner and style not offensive to the people talking with	4.29	HC	3.26	MC
13. give them high regard and courtesy in accordance with their background information.	4.41	HC	3.27	MC
14. employ empathetic listening to acknowledge and understand their feelings and experiences.	4.38	HC	3.43	MC
15. observe turn-taking process during the conversation.	4.36	HC	3.33	MC
B. Socio-linguistic Competence:				
16. display appropriate gestures and expressions that are not offensive to the people I/his/her am talking with.	4.34	HC	3.34	MC
17. talk in appropriate tone based on context and purpose of the conversation.	4.25	HC	3.35	MC
18. use appropriate tone and volume of voice that do not offend or antagonize the people talking with.	4.34	HC	3.23	MC
Composite Mean	4.36	HC	3.50	MC
C. Discourse Competence:				
19. relay message in spontaneous and coherent manner.	4.33	HC	3.26	MC
20. discuss purpose and message using appropriate and complete details.	4.35	HC	3.27	MC
21. relay message with fluid transitions to capture and hold attention of people I am/he/she is talking with.	4.22	HC	3.26	MC
22. lead them to grasp the point of the conversation.	4.25	HC	3.24	MC
Composite Mean	4.29	HC	3.26	MC
D. Strategic Competence:				
23. redirect the conversation if it is swaying away from the intended purpose.	4.21	HC	3.26	MC
24. correct unintentional mistakes or slips of the tongue.	4.29	HC	3.25	MC
25. clarify what have been said if I/he/she feel the people I am /he/she is talking with becomes confused.	4.34	HC	3.25	MC
26. apologize for unintentional mistakes or slips of the tongue.	4.37	HC	3.25	MC

	Composite Mean	4.30	HC	3.25	MC
	Overall Mean	4.29	HC	3.35	MC
Legend: Range of Means	Descriptive Interpretation (DI)				
4.51 – 5.00	Very Highly Competent (VHC)				
3.51 – 4.50	Highly Competent (HC)				
2.51 – 3.50	Moderately Competent (MC)				
1.51 – 2.50	Slightly Competent (SC)				
1.00 – 1.50	Not Competent (NC)				

The moderate rating of school administrators in conversational management by teachers highlights the importance of professional development programs to address skill gaps. Administrators need to develop their conversational management skills to establish rapport, foster collaboration, and manage conflict effectively. The gap between administrators' self-perception and teachers' evaluation suggests a need for self-assessment and feedback mechanisms. Improved collaboration and communication between administrators and teachers are necessary to establish shared understanding and expectations. Clear communication channels and ongoing feedback can facilitate this process.

Ruden (2018) declared that it is simpler to understand someone who uses good grammar. Hence, the first thing to do when having a conversation is to consider the grammar because it will make understanding easier. Even though a grammar mistake may not seem important to the person speaking, consider it from the listener's perspective. Even a minor typographical or grammatical error can stop a speaker in mid-sentence and make the audience lose interest in what they are saying. Canagarajah (2020) reiterated that when people with very different linguistic and cultural backgrounds interact, their interactions are inevitably complicated, complex, adaptive, dynamic, and emergent. Hence, a possibility of misunderstanding and conflicts.

COMMUNICATIVE CHALLENGES OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

School leaders face various communication challenges in their roles, including effectively communicating with diverse stakeholders and managing communication during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic (Bush, 2022). To address these challenges, school leaders need to recognize the importance of investing time and effort into communication, ensuring clarity and timeliness (Robbins, 2021). They should focus on developing strong communication skills and strategies, such as transparent and collaborative leadership, active listening, and utilizing multiple communication channels.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS' LINGUISTIC COMMUNICATIVE CHALLENGES

Linguistic communicative challenges occur when individuals have difficulties in effective communication due to language-related factors. These challenges include problems with grammar, vocabulary, syntax, pronunciation, and other language skills necessary for effective communication. Those who struggle with linguistic competence may find it difficult to express themselves clearly or understand and respond appropriately to others, leading to misunderstandings, frustration, and social isolation. The interviews revealed three themes related to linguistic communicative challenges: public speaking, writing office correspondence, and conversational management.

Limited Vocabulary. School administrators who have a limited vocabulary may encounter difficulties in accurately and clearly expressing themselves, which can result in misunderstandings and breakdowns in communication. Furthermore, the appropriate use of words is crucial for effective communication, and challenges can arise when individuals struggle with using words in a suitable manner. These challenges may involve using unfamiliar words to the audience, using words with multiple meanings, or using words in a manner that is unclear or ambiguous.

This claim is supported by the statements of the respondents as follows:

In using the written word in textual organization as well as in analyzing such, I usually look at coherence, cohesion, focus, angling as matters of style. At some points, I am challenged about the fact that grammatical use does occur because of dynamicity of language, and as such, I often have doubts as to what words to use in specific instances.

School Administrator F

My listeners, at times misconstrue what I am saying because I mispronounce some words and, my intonation and diction sounds like Chinese to my listeners. I say "sounds like Chinese" because I am tongue-twisted and tend to speak faster than normal when pronouncing some English words.

School Administrator D

Mismatched Preparation. Mismatched background knowledge and experience in using appropriate language and words present challenges for individuals in public speaking, writing office correspondences, and conversational management. Effective communication requires clear articulation, persuasive language, and the ability to connect with the audience using suitable language and vocabulary. Administrators lacking such knowledge may struggle to engage their audience, leading to misunderstandings and reduced credibility.

This claim is supported by the statement of the respondent as follows:

As a school head, I still struggle in terms of public speaking. Almost all the dimensions mentioned above have issues and concerns regarding my communicative competence.

School Administrator A

I am challenged in all the dimensions of communicative competence the fact that my major field is biology which is I am more on communicating the concept or idea and not mindful of all other aspects in communication.

School Administrator B

Low Confidence. Lack of confidence impacts communicative competence. Confidence is essential for effective communication, including expressing thoughts clearly, active listening, and responding appropriately to social cues. The relationship between confidence and communicative competence is reciprocal, as low confidence hinders communication while high confidence enhances perception of competence (Ramachandran & Kaur, 2021). This claim is supported by the statements of the respondents as follows:

I had difficulty in terms of linguistic competence. I realized that some factors affecting my incompetency are that I lack confidence with myself.

School Administrator A

I easily get intimidated and lost my confidence to speak in front of colleagues who are expert in the English language.

School Administrator B

School Administrators' Socio-linguistic Communicative Challenges

Socio-linguistic communicative challenges arise when individuals face difficulties in communicating across diverse social and cultural contexts. These challenges stem from differences in language, cultural norms, and beliefs. People who lack socio-linguistic communicative competence may struggle to effectively interact with individuals from different backgrounds, leading to misunderstandings and social isolation. The interviews identified three main areas of communicative challenges related to socio-linguistic competence: public speaking, writing office correspondence, and conversational management.

Misguided Information. Misguided information from higher-ups can have serious consequences for an organization and its employees. It can lead to confusion, miscommunication, and ultimately, poor decision-making.

This claim is supported by the statements of the respondents as follows:

I consider communication as my strength as an administrator. However, the challenge for me is when the instruction/directive coming from the top isn't clear.

School Administrator F

Sometimes, we are left to improvise an instruction or just leave some questions unanswered for cautiousness' sake which I think falls on socio-linguistic competence.

School Administrator G

Cultural Clashes. These are situations where people from different cultural backgrounds experience difficulties in communicating effectively due to differences in their cultural norms, values, beliefs, and behaviors. Cultural clashes may arise when people interpret messages differently, use nonverbal cues in different ways, or have different expectations regarding the communication process. These challenges can create misunderstandings, conflict, and mistrust, making effective communication more difficult.

This claim is supported by the statements of the respondents as follows:

Sometimes, we are not familiar with the culture of a particular group of people in their verbal and non-verbal communication which lead to the occurrence of problems and issues later. Sometimes, language barrier among cultures is an issue because we are not familiar to it. Hence, we need to know and study their language culture.

School Administrator G

When speaking to the local community, it pays to use the local language, especially when addressing a crowd. It becomes a challenge for me to apply correct spelling and syntax when making speeches that make use of the Iloko language. I'm more well versed with the use of English and Filipino.

School Administrator J

Power Struggle. Power struggles can lead to communication difficulties when individuals or groups with varying levels of authority compete for influence. These challenges involve manipulation, coercion, and resistance, hindering effective communication and compromising relationships and decision-making.

This claim is supported by the statements of the respondents as follows:

The conversation sometimes is affected by the relationship of the head to his subordinate. There are times that the head feels uncomfortable conversing with his subordinate and vice versa because there is a gap or a conflict between them.

School Administrator G

One the most common challenges I encountered is on socio-linguistic, particularly in my first year in the position as a head teacher. Ideally, all department reports should be finished and submitted before deadlines, therefore the treatment of all teachers must be equal. This strategy didn't go well as planned, I have realized that understanding their social and cultural characteristics is a major step in helping them grow professionally.

School Administrator H

School Administrators' Discourse Communicative Challenges

Discourse communicative competence involves adapting language use in different contexts, which can be challenging for school administrators. The interviews revealed two themes regarding discourse challenges in public speaking, writing office correspondence, and conversational management.

Lack of Knowledge on Educational Jargon. Educational jargon or specialized terminology used within the field of education, can be challenging for administrators to navigate. Different stakeholders in the school environment may have different understandings of these terms, leading to confusion and misunderstandings.

This claim is supported by the statements of the respondents as follows:

Whenever I attend seminars for school heads and as trainers, it is really a challenge to achieve conversational fluency.

School Administrator B

The challenge for me is on the techniques to establish language gaps with listeners.

School Administrator C

Overlapping Speech. School administrators may encounter difficulties in managing conversational turn-taking, including challenges such as overlapping speech, dominating the conversation, and interrupting others. Overlapping speech occurs when individuals speak simultaneously, causing confusion and breakdowns in communication. Dominating the conversation involves one person monopolizing the discussion, depriving others of the opportunity to contribute their thoughts and ideas. Interrupting others is seen as impolite and disruptive to the flow of conversation.

This claim is supported by the statement of a respondent as follows:

I notice sometimes that I dominate the conversation without letting the person I am talking with and vent out his/her sentiments.

School Administrator B

School Administrators' Strategic Communicative Challenges

School administrators face challenges in utilizing strategic communication to achieve goals and establish positive relationships with stakeholders. These challenges are influenced by factors such as communication styles, cultural backgrounds, and the complexity of the issues at hand. In the interviews, three themes emerged regarding the challenges related to strategic competence in public speaking, writing office correspondence, and conversational management.

Misunderstandings. Communication conflicts can occur within school environments involving students, teachers, administrators, and parents. These conflicts often stem from misunderstandings caused by differences in interpretation, assumptions, or miscommunication of information. Additionally, disagreements may arise over disciplinary actions, where parents or students may disagree with the decisions made by teachers or administrators.

This claim is supported by the statements of the respondents as follows:

As school administrator, the communication challenges that I have experienced particularly on the dimensions of communicative competence are the following: There were times that talking to clienteles were not in the right time and right place. There were also times that we could not understand each other because the language/term used was not clear. There is a need also to talk one at a time so that it is easier to understand.

School Administrator D

If the one, I am talking with has no interest in what I am trying to tell him/her or if he/she cannot comprehend.

School Administrator F

Power and Pride. These can often prevent individuals from apologizing and admitting fault. In some cases, people may fear that apologizing will make them appear weak or vulnerable, especially if they hold positions of authority or are seen as successful or competent. They may also believe that apologizing could damage their reputation or impact their future opportunities.

This claim is supported by the statements of the respondents as follows:

As school administrator, it can be noted that some of my fellows hard to accept their fault especially when a commotion happens.

School Administrator E

School administrators are very hysterical when a communication conflict happens. They tend to control things on their way.

Teacher B

Out-of-Focus Conversations. This can occur in any conversation and can be a distraction from the intended purpose of the conversation. Redirecting a conversation back to its intended purpose can be a useful communication strategy in a variety of settings, such as meetings, interviews, or group discussions.

This claim is supported by the statements of the respondents as follows:

As school administrator, I admit that I also experienced off-topic moments, and I lack qualities to redirect the purpose of the conversation.

School Administrator D

During my newbie years, it is hard for me redirect the conversation if it is swaying away from the intended purpose.

School Administrator F

To address these challenges, it is crucial for school administrators to develop their communicative competence through a professional development (PD) program. The program should begin with a communication skills assessment to identify strengths and areas for improvement. This will allow the program to be customized and focused on specific needs. Training should then be provided on relevant communication strategies that are applicable to the administrators' roles. For instance, they can receive guidance on effective communication with teachers, students, and parents, as well as managing difficult conversations.

Coefficients of correlation between each of the socio-demographic characteristics of the school administrators and their level of communicative competence.

This section discusses the relationship between each of the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and their attitudes and beliefs towards ICT. The computed coefficients of correlation are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5. Coefficients of correlation between each of the socio-demographic characteristics of the school administrators and their level of communicative competence.

Socio-demographic Characteristics	Correlation Coefficient (r)	p-value (p)
Gender	.083	.423
Age	.372**	.000
Civil Status	.099	.341
Position	.303**	.003
Highest Educational Attainment	.123	.234
Length of Service	.261*	.011

**p<.01

*p<.05

The correlation analysis in Table 5 examines the relationships between socio-demographic characteristics and communicative competence among secondary school administrators. The findings reveal that gender has a weak positive relationship with communicative competence, although it is not statistically significant. However, age demonstrates a significant positive relationship, indicating that older administrators tend to have better communication skills, underscoring the significance of experience and ongoing professional development. Civil status does not show a significant association with communicative competence. On the other hand, position

exhibits a moderate positive relationship, suggesting that administrators in higher positions tend to possess better communicative competence, likely due to their increased responsibilities and experience. Educational attainment does not significantly relate to communicative competence. Length of service displays a moderate positive relationship, indicating that administrators with longer service tend to exhibit higher communicative competence, emphasizing the importance of experience and professional development.

The findings highlight the significance of experience, professional development, and considering factors such as age, position, and length of service in enhancing communicative competence among school administrators. To improve communication skills, comprehensive training programs that address various aspects of communication and gender-inclusive strategies should be implemented. By investing in these areas, educational institutions can empower administrators to effectively manage stakeholders and contribute to successful educational outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of secondary school administrators in Ilocos Norte reveals a balanced profile with administrators primarily in their late 40s to early 50s. There is progress towards gender equity, and most administrators are married. The positions held follow a hierarchical structure, with a focus on Head Teacher roles. Administrators have diverse educational backgrounds, with a commitment to professional growth. The length of service varies, providing a mix of experienced and newer administrators. Overall, the findings highlight a dynamic administrative workforce in the region.

The school administrators are highly competent in terms of their communicative competence along linguistic, socio-linguistic, discourse, and strategic competence in practicing their communicative roles in doing public speaking, writing office correspondence, and having conversational management. However, these school administrators are moderately competent in terms of communicative competence as perceived by the teacher-respondents. This suggests a need for professional development programs to bridge the gap between administrators' self-perception and the perceptions of other stakeholders.

There are identified communicative challenges encountered by the school administrators in practicing their duties and responsibilities that are rooted within the personal, professional, and cultural aspects of diversity such as limited vocabulary, mismatched preparation, low confidence, misguided information, cultural clashes, power struggle, lack of knowledge on educational jargon, overlapping speech, misunderstandings, power and pride, and out-of-focus conversation.

This study found that age, position, and length of service were significant factors influencing communicative competence among school administrators. Older administrators and those in higher positions demonstrated better communication skills, highlighting the importance of experience. Additionally, administrators with longer service had higher levels of communicative competence. However, gender, civil status, and educational attainment did not significantly impact communicative competence. These findings emphasize the significance of experience and ongoing professional development in enhancing communication abilities among school administrators.

In summary, enhancing communicative competence among school administrators requires considering factors such as age, position, length of service, and the potential gaps between self-perception and external evaluations. Professional development programs can address these challenges and support administrators in developing effective communication skills to navigate conflicts and facilitate positive relationships with stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations can be made: Implement professional development programs to enhance communication skills among school administrators. Encourage mentoring and collaboration among administrators to facilitate knowledge-sharing and skill-building. Establish a feedback and evaluation system to identify areas for improvement in communication effectiveness. Promote cultural sensitivity and awareness in communication practices. Provide training in conflict resolution and collaborative problem-solving to address communication conflicts effectively. By following these recommendations, schools

can improve the communicative competence of administrators and create a positive communication environment for all stakeholders.

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