

School Heads' Implementation, Compliance, and Effectiveness on DepEd Order No. 14, S. 2023 Or Aral

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Abstract

This study determined the school heads' implementation, compliance, and effectiveness in carrying out DepEd Order No. 14, s. 2023, otherwise known as the ARAL Program, in public schools in the Schools Division of Iloilo, Philippines for the School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, the study sought to determine the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, school size, and length of teaching experience; assess the level of implementation, compliance, and effectiveness of school heads in carrying out the ARAL Program; determine whether significant differences existed in these variables when respondents were grouped according to profile variables; and ascertain the significant relationships among implementation, compliance, and effectiveness.

The study employed the descriptive-correlational research design. The respondents of the study were 181 randomly selected school heads from the five congressional districts in the Schools Division of Iloilo. Stratified proportionate random sampling and fishbowl technique were utilized in selecting the respondents. Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire which underwent validation and reliability testing. Frequency, percentage, mean, t-test, ANOVA, and Pearson's r were used as statistical tools in analyzing the data.

The findings revealed that the majority of the respondents were old, female, bachelor's degree holders, assigned in medium-sized schools, and possessed long teaching experience. The level of implementation, compliance, and effectiveness of school heads in carrying out the ARAL Program when taken as a whole were all "High." Furthermore, there were no significant differences in the level of implementation, compliance, and effectiveness when respondents were grouped according to profile variables. However, significant relationships existed among implementation, compliance, and effectiveness, indicating that school heads who demonstrated higher levels of implementation and compliance also exhibited higher levels of effectiveness in carrying out the ARAL Program.

The study concluded that effective implementation and strong compliance with DepEd Order No. 14, s. 2023 significantly contribute to the effectiveness of the ARAL Program. Strong instructional leadership, accountability, and policy compliance among school heads are essential in sustaining learning recovery initiatives and improving learner outcomes in public schools.

Keywords: ARAL Program, implementation, compliance, effectiveness, school heads, educational leadership, learning recovery, DepEd Order No. 14 s. 2023, public schools, Schools Division of Iloilo

Introduction

The quality of educational leadership plays a significant role in ensuring the successful implementation of government educational programs and policies. In the Philippine educational system, school heads are

expected to perform multiple leadership responsibilities that contribute to instructional improvement, organizational effectiveness, and learner achievement. As educational reforms continue to evolve, school heads are challenged to demonstrate strong leadership competencies, compliance with policies, and effective program implementation to address learning gaps and improve educational outcomes. Studies have emphasized that effective school leadership contributes significantly to the success of educational programs, teacher performance, learner engagement, and institutional effectiveness (Avergonzado, 2025; Patiga, 2025).

The Department of Education continuously develops programs and policies aimed at improving learning recovery and educational quality in response to the challenges experienced in the educational sector. One of these initiatives is DepEd Order No. 14, s. 2023, otherwise known as the ARAL Program, which focuses on providing learning interventions and academic recovery opportunities to learners experiencing difficulties in achieving learning competencies. The implementation of the ARAL Program requires effective leadership, proper resource management, monitoring, and compliance with educational standards to ensure that program objectives are achieved successfully.

Research studies have shown that the implementation of educational programs often encounters challenges related to instructional leadership, resource management, accountability, and policy compliance. Otadoy and Buquia (2023) found that school heads generally demonstrated very high competence and compliance in implementing School-Based Management (SBM), although difficulties related to resource management and learning environment challenges were still experienced. Similarly, Patiga (2025) revealed that strong adherence to the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH) significantly contributed to improved school performance and effective educational management.

Educational leadership also requires school heads to effectively implement programs while ensuring accountability and compliance with policies and guidelines. Studies highlighted that education recovery and innovation programs require sustained leadership performance, effective resource management, and strong policy implementation to address systemic educational challenges (Cyimah, 2021; Wilson, 2022; Mendoza & De Jesus, 2024). These realities emphasize the importance of examining the implementation, compliance, and effectiveness of school heads in carrying out the ARAL Program in public schools.

In the Schools Division of Iloilo, the implementation of the ARAL Program plays a vital role in addressing learning gaps and supporting learners' academic recovery. School heads are expected to lead the planning, organization, supervision, and evaluation of program activities while ensuring adherence to DepEd guidelines and standards. However, variations in leadership practices, resource availability, and school contexts may influence the effectiveness of program implementation. Understanding how school heads implement and comply with the ARAL Program is essential in determining its effectiveness and identifying areas for improvement.

Hence, this study was conducted to determine the school heads' implementation, compliance, and effectiveness in carrying out DepEd Order No. 14, s. 2023, or the ARAL Program in public schools in the Schools Division of Iloilo, Philippines for the School Year 2025–2026. The respondents of the study were 181 randomly selected school heads from the different congressional districts in the Schools Division of Iloilo. Specifically, this study aimed to assess the level of implementation, compliance, and effectiveness of school heads in the ARAL Program and determine the significant relationships among these variables. The findings of the study may provide valuable insights to educational leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders in strengthening program implementation, leadership practices, and learning recovery initiatives in public schools.

This study was conducted to determine the school heads' implementation, compliance, and effectiveness in carrying out DepEd Order No. 14, s. 2023, otherwise known as the ARAL Program, in public schools in the Schools Division of Iloilo, Philippines for the School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it sought to determine the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, school size, and length of teaching experience; assess the level of school heads' implementation, compliance, and effectiveness in carrying out the ARAL Program when taken as a whole and when grouped according to profile variables; determine whether significant differences exist in the level of implementation, compliance, and effectiveness when respondents are grouped according to their profile variables; and ascertain whether significant relationships exist among implementation, compliance, and effectiveness in carrying out the ARAL Program.

Methodology

This study employed the descriptive-correlational research design to determine the school heads' implementation, compliance, and effectiveness in carrying out DepEd Order No. 14, s. 2023, otherwise known as the ARAL Program, in public schools in the Schools Division of Iloilo for the School Year 2025–2026. Descriptive research design was utilized to systematically describe the characteristics, practices, and conditions related to the implementation of the ARAL Program, while correlational research design was used to determine the significant relationships among implementation, compliance, and effectiveness. This design was considered appropriate because the study sought to examine the extent and direction of relationships among the variables without manipulating them.

The respondents of the study consisted of 181 randomly selected school heads from the Schools Division of Iloilo for the School Year 2025–2026. The sample size was determined using Slovin's Formula to ensure adequate representation of the target population. Stratified proportionate random sampling was employed to ensure equitable distribution of respondents from the five congressional districts in the division. Specifically, 57 respondents were taken from the First District, 28 from the Second District, 24 from the Third District, 41 from the Fourth District, and 31 from the Fifth District. The lottery or fishbowl technique was used in selecting the final respondents to minimize selection bias and ensure equal opportunity for participation.

The study utilized a structured questionnaire as the primary data gathering instrument. The questionnaire consisted of four major sections. The first section gathered the respondents' personal profile in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, school size, and length of teaching experience. The second section measured the level of school heads' implementation of the ARAL Program using a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Very Low" to "Very High." The third section focused on compliance with DepEd Order No. 14, s. 2023, particularly in planning, organizing, and managing resources for the ARAL Program. The fourth section measured the effectiveness of school heads in implementing the ARAL Program in terms of learning recovery, teacher support, learner engagement, and academic outcomes.

To ensure the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire underwent content and face validation by a panel of five experts in educational leadership, program implementation, and policy compliance. Their comments and recommendations were incorporated into the final version of the instrument. Good and Scates' Criteria of Validation were likewise applied to determine the clarity, appropriateness, comprehensiveness, and relevance of the questionnaire items. To establish reliability, the instrument was pilot-tested among 30 school heads who were not included in the actual respondents of the study.

Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument, with a coefficient value of 0.70 or higher considered acceptable.

Prior to the conduct of the study, formal permission was secured from the Schools Division Superintendent, Public Schools District Supervisors, and participating school heads in the Schools Division of Iloilo. Ethical considerations such as confidentiality, voluntary participation, and respect for respondents' rights were strictly observed throughout the conduct of the study. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the respondents and allowed sufficient time for them to complete the instrument. After retrieval, the accomplished questionnaires were carefully checked, tallied, computer-processed, analyzed, and interpreted based on the objectives of the study.

The data gathered were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. Frequency and percentage were used to determine the distribution of respondents according to profile variables. Mean was utilized to determine the level of implementation, compliance, and effectiveness of school heads in carrying out the ARAL Program. The t-test was employed to determine significant differences when respondents were grouped according to variables with two categories, while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used for variables with three or more categories. Pearson's *r* was utilized to determine the significant relationships among implementation, compliance, and effectiveness. All statistical analyses were processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software with an alpha level set at 0.05.

Results and Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that the majority of the respondents were classified as old, with 109 or 60.22 percent, while 72 or 39.78 percent were young. In terms of sex, slightly more than half of the respondents were female, accounting for 93 or 51.38 percent, while 88 or 48.62 percent were male. Regarding educational attainment, most respondents were bachelor's degree holders with 95 or 52.49 percent, followed by master's degree holders with 70 or 38.67 percent, while only 16 or 8.84 percent had doctorate degrees. In terms of school size, the majority of the respondents came from medium-sized schools with 77 or 42.54 percent, followed by large schools with 56 or 30.94 percent, and small schools with 48 or 26.52 percent. Finally, in terms of length of teaching experience, most respondents had long teaching experience comprising 115 or 63.54 percent, while 66 or 36.46 percent had short teaching experience. These results highlighted that most respondents were older, female, bachelor's degree holders, assigned in medium-sized schools, and possessed long teaching experience.

The findings further revealed that the level of school heads' implementation of DepEd Order No. 14, s. 2023, or the ARAL Program when taken as a whole was "High." This means that most school heads consistently employed strategies and practices that strongly supported the objectives of the ARAL Program. They regularly guided, monitored, and supported teachers and learners in implementing learning recovery interventions. These findings suggest that school heads demonstrated strong leadership practices in ensuring the successful implementation of the program. The findings support the study of Patiga (2025), which revealed that strong manifestation of leadership standards among school heads significantly contributes to improved school performance and effective program implementation.

In terms of compliance, the findings showed that the level of school heads' compliance with DepEd Order No. 14, s. 2023, or the ARAL Program when taken as a whole was also "High." This indicates that most school heads complied with the requirements of the ARAL Program by following schedules, planning activities, organizing resources, preparing reports, and supervising program implementation. These findings imply that school heads consistently adhered to DepEd guidelines and policies to ensure proper

delivery of the ARAL Program. The findings corroborate the study of Otadoy and Buquia (2023), which found that school heads generally exhibited very high competence and compliance in implementing educational programs and school-based management initiatives.

The findings also revealed that the level of school heads' effectiveness in carrying out the ARAL Program when taken as a whole was "High." This means that school heads effectively managed the implementation of the ARAL Program, resulting in noticeable improvements in teacher support, learner engagement, and learning recovery outcomes. The findings imply that effective leadership practices and proper program management contributed positively to the successful realization of the goals and objectives of the ARAL Program.

Inferential analysis further revealed that there were no significant differences in the level of implementation, compliance, and effectiveness of school heads in carrying out the ARAL Program when respondents were grouped according to age, sex, highest educational attainment, school size, and length of teaching experience. This indicates that the respondents generally demonstrated similar levels of implementation, compliance, and effectiveness regardless of their demographic and professional characteristics.

Moreover, the findings showed that significant relationships existed among implementation, compliance, and effectiveness in carrying out DepEd Order No. 14, s. 2023, or the ARAL Program. School heads who demonstrated higher levels of implementation and compliance also exhibited higher levels of effectiveness in program delivery and learning recovery initiatives. These findings imply that proper implementation of program strategies and adherence to DepEd guidelines significantly contribute to the effectiveness of the ARAL Program in addressing learning gaps and improving learner outcomes in public schools.

Summary

This study was conducted to determine the school heads' implementation, compliance, and effectiveness in carrying out DepEd Order No. 14, s. 2023, otherwise known as the ARAL Program, in public schools in the Schools Division of Iloilo, Philippines for the School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, the study sought to determine the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, school size, and length of teaching experience; assess the level of implementation, compliance, and effectiveness of school heads in carrying out the ARAL Program; determine whether significant differences existed in these variables when respondents were grouped according to profile variables; and ascertain the significant relationships among implementation, compliance, and effectiveness.

The study employed the descriptive-correlational research design. The respondents of the study were 181 randomly selected school heads from the five congressional districts in the Schools Division of Iloilo. Stratified proportionate random sampling and fishbowl technique were utilized in selecting the respondents. Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire which underwent content and face validation by experts and pilot testing for reliability. Statistical tools used in analyzing the data included frequency, percentage, mean, t-test, ANOVA, and Pearson's r .

The findings revealed that the majority of the respondents were old, female, bachelor's degree holders, assigned in medium-sized schools, and possessed long teaching experience. The level of school heads' implementation of the ARAL Program when taken as a whole was "High," indicating that school heads consistently employed strategies and practices that supported learning recovery interventions and program objectives. Likewise, the level of compliance was "High," showing that school heads properly adhered to DepEd guidelines, schedules, reporting procedures, and supervisory responsibilities related to the ARAL

Program. Furthermore, the level of effectiveness was also “High,” which implies that school heads effectively managed the implementation of the ARAL Program resulting in improved teacher support, learner engagement, and learning recovery outcomes.

The findings further revealed that there were no significant differences in the level of implementation, compliance, and effectiveness when respondents were grouped according to age, sex, highest educational attainment, school size, and length of teaching experience. However, significant relationships existed among implementation, compliance, and effectiveness, indicating that school heads who demonstrated higher levels of implementation and compliance also exhibited higher levels of effectiveness in carrying out the ARAL Program.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that school heads in the Schools Division of Iloilo demonstrated high levels of implementation, compliance, and effectiveness in carrying out DepEd Order No. 14, s. 2023, or the ARAL Program. School heads consistently implemented strategies, supervised learning recovery interventions, complied with DepEd guidelines, and effectively managed program delivery to support learners’ academic recovery and improve educational outcomes.

The study further concluded that demographic and professional characteristics such as age, sex, highest educational attainment, school size, and length of teaching experience did not significantly influence the implementation, compliance, and effectiveness of school heads in carrying out the ARAL Program. This suggests that school heads generally demonstrated similar levels of leadership performance and commitment regardless of their profile variables.

Moreover, the significant relationships among implementation, compliance, and effectiveness indicate that effective program implementation and strong adherence to DepEd policies contribute significantly to the success and effectiveness of the ARAL Program. Therefore, strong instructional leadership, accountability, and policy compliance are essential in sustaining effective learning recovery programs and improving learner outcomes in public schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are hereby offered:

1. School heads should continue strengthening their implementation practices in carrying out the ARAL Program to ensure sustained learning recovery and improved learner outcomes.
2. School administrators should consistently comply with DepEd guidelines, schedules, reporting procedures, and supervisory responsibilities to ensure effective program delivery and accountability.
3. The Department of Education may provide continuous professional development programs, trainings, and seminars to further enhance school heads’ competencies in implementing learning recovery programs and educational innovations.
4. School heads should intensify monitoring and supervision of teachers and learners involved in the ARAL Program to ensure that learning interventions are effectively implemented.
5. Greater collaboration among school heads, teachers, parents, and stakeholders should be encouraged to strengthen support systems for learners participating in the ARAL Program.
6. Schools should allocate sufficient resources and instructional support to sustain the effective implementation of learning recovery interventions and address learners’ educational needs.
7. Future researchers may conduct similar studies using other variables and larger groups of respondents

to further validate and enrich the findings of the present study.

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