ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 12| Issue: 1| January2026|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

LEADERSHIP MANAGEMENT OF PRINCIPAL'S TEST NON-PASSERS: EXPERIENCES AND INSIGHTS IN FOCUS

Julie Christine M. Gallano[1], MAEd, Jean Gladys A. Cadina[1], MAEd,
Jose Marie E. Ocdenaria[2], PhD,
[1]Authors, [2]Co-Author; PhD in Educational LeadershipUniversity of the Immaculate Conception

ABSTRACT

This study explored the experiences and insights of principal's test non-passers in their leadership management. Employing descriptive phenomenology, a qualitative research method as the research approach, the participants were 7 school heads from public elementary and secondary institutions in Davao Region. These participants were purposively identified for focused-group discussion and in-depth interviews and met the set inclusion criteria. The participants experienced administrative leadership and management as school heads who are principal's test non-passers. Research findings show significant leadership challenges and struggle as principal's test non-passers. School heads adopt leadership approaches in overcoming leadership challenges including adaptive leadership and resourcefulness, Transformational and Shared Leadership, Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusion in Leadership; and Feedback Utilization and Responsive Leadership which are very helpful in their leadership management. Professional development and Self-improvement, Relational and Collaborative Leadership, Adaptive and Reflective to Change and Awareness of Systemic Responsibilities are also necessary on continuous improvement, especially in areas such as leadership competency, teacher development, and decision-making of the school heads.

KEYWORDS: *Principal's Test Non-Passers, Leadership Management, Phenomenology, Public Secondary Institutions, Davao Region*

INTRODUCTION

Principals are the most influential educational leaders whose leadership role is inseparably linked to student performance. Thus, he is referred to as an instructional leader. The strategies principals employ to develop and improve learner performance are establishing a clear context (Goodness and Yinusa, 2024). Kellerman (2015) acknowledges that in the ever-evolving landscape of education, the role of school principals is a cornerstone in shaping the quality of learning experiences and student outcomes. Williams (2017) emphasized that school principals have a critical leadership function that extends beyond administration; they are to ensure a school climate that promotes better student performance. A strong principal fosters a positive school climate, improves teacher morale and effectiveness, implements effective instructional strategies, and ensures that resources are used efficiently to support learning. Ultimately, effective principal leadership contributes to higher student achievement, improved graduation rates, and better overall school performance.

Globally, high teacher morale is acknowledged as essential for student learning and achievement. A positive school atmosphere promotes the morale, resulting in better communication, less teacher turnover, and better productivity (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018). Low morale produces several issues. Principals' incompetence plays an imperative role in affecting the school climate and reflecting, in turn, on the overall success of the school. Najeeb & Muhammad (2021) observed that poor leadership management, which overlooks teacher and student welfare, hugely affects low morale among teachers. This principal's mismanagement reflects immediately on the school's overall effectiveness, with a negative impact on the students through reduced teacher motivation, less favorable learning environment, and, eventually, poor academic outcomes.

The Philippine education system is confronted with a major challenge: a 55% vacancy rate for principals in public schools, according to EDCOM II's Year 2 report. This shortage is caused by a combination of issues and factors, such as low NQESH passing rates, high turnover of staff, limited pool of qualified applicants, complicated qualification processes, and inadequate training and support for new school leaders.

Republic Act No. 9155 states that every public elementary and secondary school of the country shall be managed by a school head who is responsible for the financial affairs of the school, curriculum implementation, maintenance and improvement of the physical facilities, and program innovations.

Considering this, the Department of Education (DepEd) made DepEd Order, herein captioned as D.O., No. 42 (2007), amending the guidelines for the selection of applicants for school head. The order outlined the range of leadership dimensions a school head should exhibit like educational leadership, people leadership, and strategic leadership. Educational leadership, as stipulated by RA 9155, is the school head's capability to come up with measures

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 12| Issue: 1| January2026|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

and activities that will ensure curriculum implementation as well as platforms of activities that will support its delivery. They are tasked with communicating the school's vision and mission to all shareholders in a bid to accomplish such endeavors.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s SONA reinforced the importance of school heads and teachers in Philippine education, and he said that schools are mere lifeless objects without them. He reiterated his commitment to prioritizing school heads and teachers' needs. This brings to the forefront the basic necessity of teachers as the foundation of the Philippine education system. School personnel affect the quality of education that the students receive directly. Thus, investing in and supporting educators becomes the key to enhancing the general educational environment of the Philippines (Department of Education, 2025).

Education Secretary Sonny Angara reported that the significant shortage of principals in many schools was a serious concern, as principals serve as the administrative leaders of their schools. He assured that the Department of Education (DepEd) was actively working to resolve this issue (Department of Education, 2025).

In the Division of Davao City, one of the districts with a code number of 016, around 50% of school principals did not pass the National Qualifying Examination for School Heads (NQESH). The solution to this is that these school heads should undergo specifically tailored professional development in areas like educational leadership, curriculum development, school administration, and effective communication techniques. These sessions should include application in practice, mentoring, and continuous support to help bring about long-term improvement in their leadership skills.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the leadership and management experiences of Davao Region school heads who failed the National Qualifying Examination for School Heads (NQESH). Passing this test is a common prerequisite in many educational systems to evaluate the preparedness and competency of school administrators. Even so, several principals maintain their leadership roles despite not fulfilling this official criterion. Also, the goal of this study was to comprehend how these people run their schools, the leadership techniques they used, the difficulties they encountered, and the knowledge they have accumulated over the course of their careers.

Moreover, the aim of this study was to gather individual perspectives and ideas about their leadership management. By recorded experiences, this study has shed light on their opinions of whether formal licensure is a prerequisite for success in leadership or whether other elements, like practical experience, mentoring, and ongoing professional development are more important.

Research Questions

1. What key challenges have you encountered in your leadership journey?
2. How did you utilize your leadership approaches to overcome these challenges?
3. What insights have you gained in leadership from your unique experiences?

Theoretical Underpinnings

This study was based on several leadership theories that describe how non-passers of principal's test successfully run schools and hone their leadership abilities. According to Bass's (1999) transformational leadership theory, successful leaders encourage and inspire their followers to go above and beyond expectations and strive toward common objectives.

In this study, this theory was used in stipulating that school principals, regardless of licensure status, demonstrated transformational leadership by fostering a culture of collaboration, innovation, and professional growth among teaching and non-teaching personnel. Despite not passing the NQESH, it placed a strong emphasis on inspirational motivation, which might assist these school leaders in inspiring and motivating their employees. Transformational leaders can set an example of successful practices that support educational innovation and reorganize the school environment by emphasizing teamwork, community involvement, and the creation of a compelling future vision.

This was further supported by Situational Leadership Theory (Vecchio, 1987), which emphasized that flexibility, not formal training, is the key to effective leadership. Successful leadership is still possible for principals without a license if they modify their approaches to suit the changing needs of their school communities. Despite failing the principal's test, these school administrators will successfully inspire and improve teacher performance, which can result in increased school success. The efficiency of a principal is not only determined by their personal skills; it also depends on their capacity to adapt their style to the demands of their employees and the circumstances of their leadership roles. Additionally, support mechanisms can assist these principals in resolving disputes and navigating complications, allowing them to cultivate a more positive workplace and possibly improving both their own and their school's effectiveness.

In a similar vein, leadership abilities are developed via practical experience, decision- making, and mentoring, according to the Experiential Learning Theory (McCarthy, 2010). This was consistent with the study's emphasis on how non-passers overcome obstacles, apply leadership techniques, and hone their skills via experience rather than formal certification.

This theory supported the study by encouraging a practical approach to professional growth, it greatly assisted school heads who failed the principal's test. It promotes active participation through real-world scenarios, giving these leaders the chance to develop crucial abilities like decision-making, problem-solving,

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 12| Issue: 1| January2026|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

and critical thinking in a useful setting. School heads can improve their leadership skills as they engage in experiential learning opportunities, better equipping them for the responsibilities and difficulties of educational administration. Therefore, with the guidance of these theories, school heads who are non-passers of the principal's test can still be effective.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the leadership experiences of principals who have not passed the principal's test. Creswell (2013) emphasized that, through this method, a researcher will be able to create an event in a broad sense, situation or experience and to arrive at a deeper explanation of the phenomenon.

Qualitative research design was used in the study to understand and study the experiences and insights of the school heads who are not principal's test passers through in-depth interviews and focused-group discussions. Furthermore, this design was appropriate since it helped us to understand human experiences, situations and issues. Data in the form of narratives about the experiences of school heads was explored. It is the most common method of gathering through interviews that can be structured, semi-structured and unstructured.

Phenomenological study focuses on the commonality of a lived experience within a social community and is an approach to qualitative research. The method's main goal is to arrive at a description of the nature of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Moreover, it concerns itself with the description of the participant's encounters in relation to the phenomenon and to the contexts or conditions that shape their experience with regards to the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

We used phenomenological approach because it suited the study of common experiences. It was an effective tool to gain a clear understanding of human experience and to obtain the intended information, with the experiences and insights of school heads who are non-passers of the principal's test.

In general, a qualitative phenomenological approach was appropriate in this study since we gathered data about the experiences of school heads who are non-passers of principal's test. All data that was gathered was used to interpret, analyze and understand the phenomena to describe substantially the data.

Research Site and Participants

In this phenomenological study, seven (7) participants were school heads from various public elementary and secondary academic institutions around Davao region. Four of these participants underwent in-depth interviews, while the remaining participants participated in focused-group discussions. Furthermore, we adhered to Creswell's (1998) recommendation that three (3) to fifteen (15) individuals be considered in phenomenological research. This number of participants, in our view, was adequate to collect data. Given how far away the IDI participants live from the researchers, Zoom was used for the interviews.

Hence, in this study, seven (7) participants were purposively selected to voluntarily participate. Welman and Krugger (1999) emphasized that purposive sampling will allow the researcher to focus on the specific characteristics of the participants that will provide data that will best answer the research questions.

Moreover, the inclusion criteria in identifying the participants were: (1) the school heads are assigned around Davao Region; (2) school heads from public elementary and secondary schools; and (3) non-passers of National Qualifying Examination for School Heads (NQESH). Each of them was given an informed consent allowing them to participate in the study.

Data Gathering Procedures

According to Blog (2019), the primary aim of data collection is to record the standard of evidence used to address all the questions that will be posed. Data collection is a methodological approach to gathering and reviewing relevant information to address pertinent questions and determine outcomes.

The research paper underwent an ethics review in the University of the Immaculate Conception. Upon satisfying the previously mentioned review, the Dean of the Graduate School of UIC was requested to endorse the paper to the regional office of the Department of Education, Davao Region. We appended the letter seeking permission to conduct the study along with the endorsement. The copy of the approved letter for request to conduct a study was forwarded to the office of the Schools Division Superintendent in the different divisions in Davao Region.

Thereafter, a gatekeeper was requested to help the researchers in identifying the participants that satisfied the inclusion criteria. Teachers to whom the participant is their school head acted as gatekeepers. The researcher also requested the gatekeeper to sign a confidentiality agreement.

Moreover, an informed consent form was given to the purposively selected participants. The details of the researchers' contact information were included so that queries related to the study were promptly addressed.

Participants chose based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study. We ensured that the participants were informed about the nature of the study and its purpose. All the participants were also guided by the protocol designed in the data gathering procedures and we ensured that all data that has been extracted remained confidential.

Data gathering through IDI was carried out through Zoom, whereas focused- group discussions were done face to face. The participants' preferences were considered. They were also

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 12| Issue: 1| January2026|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

informed that the interview was recorded, and the files were secured by the researchers. For the participants of IDI and the researchers wore headphones to ensure that only the participants will hear the things to be discussed. Further, the participants were asked to find an area that was free from unnecessary noise and fostered confidentiality.

Lastly, the recorded files were transcribed in MS word. These files along with the subsequent printed versions were stored on our personal computer and were protected with a password to ensure that only we have access to these. When the transcription was done, thematic analysis followed. In the thematic analysis, we were assisted by a data analyst to ensure that the data was correctly analyzed.

Data Analysis

Most of the research projects, as any academic knows, include gathering vast volumes of qualitative data through interviews, conversations, recordings, and observations (De Silva, 2020). However, in the context of our study, we highlighted the usage of data coding and thematic analysis.

The task of identifying themes is at the core of qualitative data analysis. Hence, this study was guided by Clarke & Brauns (2013) framework in data analysis, being one of the most influential approaches for doing thematic analysis.

The steps that were observed in the analysis of data were linear since we can review previous steps taken to ensure that the results will be authentic, a genuine reflection of the narratives of the participants.

First, we culled out the significant statements from the narratives of the participants. Then after, the corresponding English translation was crafted if the statement was in local dialect. The analysis of the statements in the form of core ideas was crafted. This allowed us to present our inference as an analyst based on the narratives of the participants.

Lastly, core ideas that showed familiar thought or manifested a pattern will be grouped together into one emerging theme. Clarke and Braun (2013) define themes as patterns that capture something significant or interesting about the data or research question. Hence, it was be necessary to examine the core ideas and analyze how they can be gathered to fit into a theme relative to the questions of this qualitative inquiry.

Ethical Considerations

The aim of this study was to explore the experiences and insights of school heads who are not principal test passers. To establish ethical consideration, we dabide three core principles, originally set out in the Belmont Report (1979), form the widely agreed foundation for ethical research which was also be observed in this study: respect for persons, beneficence and justice.

Respect for persons includes determination to ensure the autonomy of the study participants and, where autonomy can be limited, to protect people from abusing their vulnerability. The integrity of all participants in research must be respected. Adherence to this principle shall ensure that individuals would not be used solely as a way of achieving research objectives (Msalganik, 2016).

Informed Consent. The informed consent was obtained for a research study, the researcher and the study participant communicated openly and honestly. The readability and understanding of the consent document have been given a lot of thought. It is important to keep in mind, though, that the document is merely a proxy and reference for a discussion. It was critical that the participants understood that taking part in a research study is voluntary; they can leave at any time or decline to participate. After the participant has been given all relevant information, has had ample time to review the consent document, and has had all questions answered, informed consent was obtained. Prior to any study-specific processes, consent should be obtained (Manti & Licari, 2018). **Beneficence** requires a determination to reduce the risks associated with testing, including psychological and social threats and optimizing the benefits to study subjects. Researchers articulated concrete ways in which this would be accomplished (Msalganik, 2016).

This necessitates the researchers ensuring that the participant's participation in the study did not pose any risks by fully disclosing the type of procedures that were involved. To address the concept of beneficence in this study, the participants were treated with utmost care and security. During the orientation, the participants were informed that they can withdraw from the study at any time without worrying about their leadership performance being impacted. The risk of breaching in privacy was addressed by ensuring that only the researchers should have access to their data and that the soft copies in the form of audio recording and the like were protected by passwords in a personal computer.

The school heads were given the opportunity to share their experiences at the same time expressing their point of view. While the participants may not directly benefit from the findings of the study, nonetheless, they were given the opportunity to express their fundamental concerns in relation to their experiences. We ensured that their health and well-being were compromised by their participation.

Justice needs a commitment to ensuring an equal distribution of the costs and benefits resulting from studies. Those who bear the responsibility of engaging in research should share the benefits they have acquired or put it another way, people who are likely to benefit from it. Those who were invited to participate should be from the expertise (Msalganik, 2016).

While the findings may not directly benefit school heads, the discussion and findings draw the academe's attention to aspects of leading the school to be realigned to be more responsive to

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 12| Issue: 1| January2026|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

current circumstances. In addition, the participants were given just compensation in the form of simple tokens for their valuable contribution to the realization of this endeavor.

To avoid bias, the researchers did not include their school heads for a fair selection of participants. Purposive sampling was used in the participant selection process to ensure that they can provide rich narratives related to the study's focus.

Furthermore, the appropriate time, security, and suitability of online platforms was considered. The online platform that was chosen was based on what is most convenient for both the researchers and the participants of in-depth interviews.

In addition, the interview guide was evaluated by experts to ensure that the questions were appropriate to the focus of the study and not to the context of the participants. Themes that were generated in the study were backed up by existing literature and by the narratives of the participants to ensure that there was no bias in the presentation of the analysis and interpretation.

RESULTS

The findings of the study are presented in this chapter. This section looks at the specific experiences gleaned from the study's main interview questions. The results are presented in themes and core ideas and in the order of the research questions. Transcripts of the focused-group discussion and in-depth interview are also used to complement the data presentation. This section describes, analyzes, and explains the data.

Challenges Encountered by Principal's Test Non-passers in their Leadership Journey

After analyzing the responses of the participants about the challenges they faced in their leadership journey, five major themes were determined, (1) *Leadership Challenges and Personal Struggles,* (2) Psychosocial and Community Pressures, (3) *Inadequate Resources,* (4) *Balancing Community Culture; and* (5) *Systemic and Structural Barriers*.

Table 1 shows the challenges of principals test non-passers they encountered in their leadership journey.

Table 1
Major Themes and Core Ideas on Challenges Encountered by Principal's Test Non-passers

Major Themes	Core Ideas
Leadership Challenges and Personal Struggles	● Leadership insecurity ● Self-doubt ● Professional growth need
Psychosocial and Community Pressures	● Fear of judgement and criticism from peers ● Pressure from school community and supervisors ● Stigma associated with non-passing ● Loss of credibility or respect
Inadequate Resources	● Resource scarcity ● Impact on educators ● Need for innovation
Balancing Community Culture	● Navigating diverse needs ● Building a positive culture ● Balancing emerging challenges ● Leadership complexities
Systemic and Structural Barriers	● Lack of access to mentoring or coaching ● Limited professional development opportunities ● Unclear guidelines or support for test preparation

Leadership Challenges and Personal Struggles

School administrators encounter a variety of obstacles, including leadership and governance issues, curriculum and learning, accountability and continuous learning, and resource management. On the other hand, they battle not only with leadership management, but also with personal issues in leading diverse individuals.

This theme focuses on the personal difficulties faced by principals who did not pass the principal's test, such as imposter syndrome, insecurity, and lack of confidence. During the interview, participants shared their leadership and personal challenges.

FGD_01 said that:

> *"Ingon nga usa ka bag-ong school head ug usa usab nga wala kapasar sa Principal's Test, makita nako nga usahay makasinati ko og kakulang sa kumpiyansa sa akong kaugalingon, labi na kon makig-atubang ko sa mga dugay nang magtutudlo ug taas ang ilang gilauman sa usa ka lider."*

(As a new school head and someone who hasn't passed the Principal's Test yet, I admit that I sometimes feel a lack of confidence, especially when faced with experienced teachers and high expectations. The challenges I encounter — such as lack of resources, remote school location, and unfamiliarity with some

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 12| Issue: 1| January2026|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

administrative tasks — sometimes make me doubt my own capacity.)

IDI_02 also shared:

"Makadungog pa jud ko sa mga istorya sa uban nga mao daw wala ko kapasar kay dili man jud daw ko kabalo mu-handle ug school. Sa tinuod lang Ma'am dili nako ma-consider nga nag-struggle ko sa mga trabahuon ug responsibilidad sa isa ka school head but nag-struggle ko emotionally."

(I still hear stories from others that I didn't pass because I don't know how to handle school. Honestly, Ma'am, I can't consider myself struggling with the work and responsibilities of a school head, but I am struggling emotionally.)

IDI_03 added:

"I was just 31 years old Ma'am when I become a school head. Kining mga mas tigulang sa akoa nga teachers, akoa pa ni silang mga teachers sauna. Musulti gyud sila nga nganung mutuman man daw sila sa akoa nga estudyante ra man daw ko nila sa una. Sa akong pagsabot sa ilang istorya kay dili nila madawat nga nalabwan sila sa ilang estudyante sauna."

(I was just 31 years old Ma'am when I became a school head. These older teachers were my teachers before. As I have understood them, they can't be proud of me even though I was their student before.)

These issues can result in burnout, despair, and difficulty dealing with stress. Principals must consider their own well-being and develop emotional management methods to effectively lead their schools and support their staff and students.

Psychosocial and Community Pressures

Managing a variety of psychosocial and community stressors is part of being a school leader, especially when it comes to the mental health and wellbeing of students. Students' stress and anxiety can be greatly exacerbated by social dynamics and academic pressures.

This theme highlights the emotional and social toll of not passing the Principal's Test, especially in close-knit school communities. Many non-passers feel judged not just internally, but externally, by colleagues, former teachers, superiors, and even community members. This includes fear of judgment or criticism from peers, Pressure from school community and supervisors, stigma associated with non-passing and loss of credibility or respect. These are visible in the participants 'responses as stipulated below:

IDI_03 emotionally shared:

"Usahay dili man ang test ang lisod, kundi ang mga tawo sa palibot. Mura ka'g walay bili para nila kung dili ka kapasar."

(Sometimes it's not the test that's hard. It's the people around you. It feels like you're worth nothing to them if you don't pass.)

FGD_03 added:

"Grabe ang pressure kay gina-compare dayon mi sa mga nakapasar. Ang mga ginikanan, mga co-teachers, murag naa dayon assumption nga wala ka kabalo sa imong trabaho."

(The pressure is intense because we're immediately compared to those who passed. Parents and colleagues quickly assume you don't know your job.)

The school climate, connections with staff and students, outside expectations, and policy issues are some of the origins of these pressures. In order to promote a pleasant and encouraging school culture and guarantee the wellbeing of all parties involved, it is imperative that these demands be addressed.

Inadequate Resources

A school is considered disadvantaged if its educational resources are inadequate or nonexistent. The availability of educational resources is correlated with the quality of education.

This theme focuses on one of the challenges of the school heads in their leadership journey as principal's test non-passers which is having inadequate resources. This includes resource scarcity, impact on educators and the need for innovation. These statements are evident on the responses of the participants.

FGD_01 shared:

"Lisod gyud mahimong usa ka school head sa eskwelahan nga naa sa hilit nga komunidad sa mga Lumad. Bisan pa og bag-o ang mga building sa eskwelahan, kulang gihapon mi og mga libro ug mga gamit sa pagkat-on para sa mga estudyante. Tungod niini, lisod para sa ila nga makat-on og maayo."

(Being a school head in a faraway Indigenous community is very hard. Even though the school buildings are new, we don't have enough books or learning things for the students. This makes it hard for them to learn well. We also don't have enough teachers.)

FGD_02 also added:

"Lisod pud para sa mga magtutudlo nga maka-apil og mga training kay layo ang lugar ug hinay ang internet. Mahal ug lisod ang biyahe paingon sa mga training. Tungod niini, dili sila makakat-on og mga bag-ong pamaagi sa pagtudlo, ug ang mga estudyante dili makadawat sa labing maayong edukasyon."

(It's also hard for teachers to learn new things because it's far away and the internet is not good. It's expensive and hard to travel to training. This means the teachers can't learn new ways to teach, and the students don't get the best learning.)

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 12| Issue: 1| January2026|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

FGD_03 emphasized

"Aron masulbad kining mga problema, kinahanglan ang dugang nga pondo, mas maayo nga paagi sa pagkuha ug pagpadayon sa mga magtutudlo, mga materyales sa pagkat-on nga angay sa kultura, ug mas paspas nga internet aron ang mga magtutudlo makakat-on pa og daghan."

(To solve these problems, we need more money, better ways to get and keep teachers, learning materials that fit the culture, and better internet so teachers can learn new things.)

FGD_03 added this to his statement:

"Lisod kaayo ang pagkuha og lig-on nga internet, nga naghimo'g lisod ang paggamit sa mga online nga materyales sa pagtudlo ug sa pag-uswag sa mga magtutudlo. Bisan ang pagtambong sa mga workshop nanginahanglan og daghang panahon ug kwarta, nga maoy babag alang sa mga magtutudlo."

(Getting reliable internet access is a constant battle, which severely limits our ability to use online resources for teaching and professional development. Even attending workshops requires significant time and expense, which is often a barrier for teachers.)

IDI_03 stressed:

"Dili jud malikayan Ma'am nga ang MOOE sa school kay medyo makulang. Akong ginapangitaan jud nako nah ug pamaagi Ma'am nga maka-sustain gyud hangtod mahuman ang isa ka school year."

(It is inevitable, Ma'am, that the MOOE at the school is a bit lacking. I am looking for a way, Ma'am, that will really sustain us until the end of the school year.)

IDI_04 stated:

"Ang resource constraints naa gyud impact sa mga staff sa isa ka school especially sa mga teachers. Akong experience before when I was a classroom teacher, by the time nga mangayo mig mga kagamitan sa supply officer unya wala nay maikahatag, honestly, I felt frustrated and demotivated. Makaluya gyud sya oi. Makadugang sad ug stress Ma'am.

(Resource constraints really have an impact to the staff in a school, especially the teachers. My experience before when I was a classroom teacher, by the time we asked for supplies from the supply officer and then nothing was given, honestly, I felt frustrated and demotivated. It really makes us tired. It adds stress.)

The system is in balance when employees have adequate resources to meet needs. Its employees work effectively, and the organization's objectives are more likely to be achieved. To attain and preserve the balance between demands and resources, educators and administrators in charge of the available resources and total funding for education must collaborate.

Balancing Community Culture

A school's culture is important because it establishes the common history, values, and beliefs of its employees, students, and the community at large. Social norms have an impact on leadership practices, which in turn affect how leadership is exercised in educational institutions.

This theme goes through one of the challenges of a principal's test non-passer school heads, balancing community culture. This includes navigating diverse needs, building a positive culture, balancing emerging challenges and leadership complexities. During the interview, these statements were evident in the participants' responses.

FGD_01 said:

"Lisod pud i-balanse ang kultura sa komunidad ug ang mga palisiya sa Department of Education. Kinahanglan gyud mi nga makig-istorya ug makigsabot sa mga lider sa komunidad aron masabtan ug sugtan sa tanan ang mga programa. Kung dili, mahimong lisod ang pagpatuman sa mga buhat sa eskwelahan."

(It's also hard to work with the community's culture and follow the rules from the Department of Education at the same time. We need to talk to the community leaders to make sure everyone understands and agrees. If we don't, things will get difficult.)

FGD_02 agreed:

"Lain pud nga hagit mao ang pagpatuman sa mga polisiya. Ingon nga bag-ong school head, usahay malibog ko kung giunsa pag-ugmad sa mga polisiya sa nasod ug pag-aplikar niini sa lokal nga kahimtang, labi na sa mga komunidad nga lumad. Aduna gyud mga panahong ang kultura sa komunidad dili dayon mohaom sa mga palisiya sa DepEd, busa kinahanglan nga magpahigayon ko og dialogo ug konsultasyon sa respetado nga paagi."

(Another challenge is policy implementation. As a new school head, I sometimes find it difficult to align the national policies with the local context, especially in Indigenous communities. There are moments when the community's cultural practices don't exactly align with DepEd policies, so I must carefully bridge the gap through dialogues and respectful consultation. These challenges are tough, but they also push me to grow as a leader who is adaptive, culturally sensitive, and grounded in the realities of the school and its community.)

Innovative schools can cultivate environments focused on inclusivity, creativity, and fruitful relationships by establishing and strengthening ties to the community and culture.

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 12| Issue: 1| January2026|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

Systemic and Structural Barriers

In school leadership, structural and systemic obstacles can severely impair leaders' efficacy and restrict educational equity. These obstacles, which are frequently engrained in the educational system, might affect professional growth possibilities, recruiting procedures, and resource accessibility.

This theme focuses on external factors that contribute to non-passing performance, beyond individual struggles. This includes lack of access to mentoring or coaching, limited professional development opportunities and unclear guidelines or support for test preparation. Furthermore, this is clear from the participants' answers during the interview.

As FGD_02 clearly stated:

"Wala may klaro nga giya kung unsa gyud ang gikinahanglan para mupasar. Ang uban nakatake na og review kay naa silay access, pero kami sa bukid, wala jud."

(I didn't have clear guidance on what's really needed to pass. Others have access to reviews, but for us in the uplands, we really don't have any.)

IDI_04 also shared:

"Naglibog ko kung ang PT ba kay base sa actual namong trabaho or theoretical lang ba. Usahay murag dili siya tugma sa tinuod namong kahimtang."

(I'm confused if the Principal's Test is based on our actual work or just theoretical. Sometimes it feels disconnected from our real situation.)

Leadership Approaches of Principal's Test Non-passers

The second research question focuses on the leadership approaches in overcoming challenges in leadership management. After analyzing their responses, four themes emerged: (1) *Adaptive and Leadership resourcefulness*, (2) *Transformational and shared Leadership*, (3) *Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusion in Leadership;* and (4) *Feedback Utilization and Responsive Leadership*.

Table 2 shows the leadership approaches of the principal's test non-passers in overcoming leadership challenges.

Table 2
Major Themes and Core Ideas on Leadership Approaches of Principal's Test Non-passers

Major Themes	Core Ideas
Adaptive and Leadership Resourcefulness	• Resourcefulness • Community collaboration • Strategic problem-solving
Transformational and Shared Leadership	• Shared leadership • Empowering teachers • Team collaboration
Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusion in Leadership	• Cultural sensitivity • Culturally responsive leadership • Inclusion
Feedback Utilization and Responsive Leadership	• Feedback responsiveness • Adaptive leadership • Community consultation

Adaptive and Leadership Resourcefulness

Adaptive and resourceful leadership focuses on handling change and obstacles via flexibility, collaboration, and proactive problem resolution. It entails recognizing that obstacles are opportunities for growth and creativity, as well as organizing individuals to handle complicated issues together.

The theme delves into how leaders adapt their management strategies to overcome challenges in resource-limited or high-pressure environments. This includes collaboration, leveraging community resources, and implementing creative problem-solving. Participants' responses during the interview support this:

FGD_01 shared:

"Ang labing epektibo nga estratehiya para nako mao ang paghimo og lig-on nga pakig-alyansa sa komunidad. Pinaagi sa pag-apil sa mga ginikanan, opisyal sa barangay, ug bisan sa mga kanhing estudyante, natabangan mi sa pag-atubang sa kakulang sa tawo ug kahimanan."

(One innovative strategy I used was community-based collaboration. Since resources were very limited, I initiated partnerships with barangay officials, parents, and even local businesses to support school projects.)

IDI_03 uttered:

"Dili jud malikayan Ma'am nga ang MOOE sa school kay medyo makulang. Akong ginapangitaan jud nako nah ug pamaagi Ma'am nga maka-sustain gyud hangtod mahuman ang isa ka school year. Naay time nga muhangyo mi gamay sa collection PTA, especially kung naay mga contests nga apilan ang mga bata."

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 12| Issue: 1| January2026|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

("It is inevitable, Ma'am, that the MOOE at the school is a bit lacking. I am looking for a way, Ma'am, that will really sustain us until the end of the school year. There are times when we ask for a little amount from the PTA collection, especially when there are contests for the students to participate in.)

IDI_04 also added:

"Kasagaran sa mga stakeholders Ma'am is ang ilang ma-offer gyud kay ang ilang kusog labi nag naay mga kinahanglan ipang-repair ug mga limpyuhan sa school."

(Most of the stakeholders can only offer their strength when there are things that need to be repaired and cleaned in the school.)

Resourcefulness, community collaboration and strategic problem-solving are interwoven abilities that school leaders must possess to effectively address obstacles and achieve goals. Resourcefulness is creatively utilizing available resources to overcome obstacles, whereas community collaboration emphasizes working together to utilize collective knowledge and effort. Strategic problem-solving takes a thorough and analytical approach to defining problems, developing solutions, and implementing them successfully.

Transformational and Shared Leadership

Transformational leadership and shared leadership are two separate methods to leading teams. Transformational leadership relies on a formal leader to inspire and motivate their team, whereas shared leadership is a distributed model in which various team members share leadership responsibilities. Shared leadership can improve organizational and planning performance, whereas transformational leadership can boost team output.

This theme examines how principals reframe leadership styles, such as adopting a shared leadership model, focusing on empowerment, and fostering team-oriented collaboration. These are evident in their responses below:

FGD_02 said:

"Ako nasayod nga epektibo gyud ang paghatag og gahum sa mga magtutudlo pinaagi sa shared leadership. Gitugotan nako sila nga mamuno sa pipila ka mga programa sama sa reading remediation ug gardening project. Tungod niini, nabati nila nga sila bililhon ug na-motivate sila sa ilang trabaho. Kini nga pamaagi nakatukod og pagsalig, nakapalambo sa teamwork, ug nakatabang usab nga maminusan ang akong trabaho isip school head."

(I found that empowering my teachers through shared leadership was very effective. I allowed them to lead specific programs, like reading remediation or gardening projects, which made them feel more valued and motivated. This approach-built trust, improved teamwork, and helped lighten my workload as a school head.)

IDI_01 emphasized

"Mao to akong giingon Ma'am nga kinahanglan jud nato i-explain nga shared governance is the key to a harmonious leadership in the school kay kung dili man gud nato i-shared governance unya akuon lang nako tanan, kay kung nay mali ingnon raka nga ikaw sir kay ikaw may nagbuot ug imuha man nang gusto. Kung i-compare nato sa shared governance, kung naay lapses dili blame ang isa ra ka tao."

(That's what I'm saying, Ma'am, we need to explain that shared governance is the key to a harmonious leadership in the school because
if we don't have a shared governance, then I'll just be the one to do everything, if there's a mistake, they will just going to say it's
because you're the one who made the decision and took whatever you wanted.)

IDI_01 added to his first statement

"Naa pud mga teachers nga i-test akong abilities and capabilities. Akoa sila ginaingnan nga dili ko hawd. Akong ginabuhat is shared governance jud mi Ma'am sa among school. I give them instructions pero I am not bossy, I am a leader. Doer man gud ko Ma'am. Ako una muhimo sa trabaho tapos akoa sila ginapatan-aw unsay dapat himuon."

(There are also teachers who test my abilities and capabilities. I tell them that I am not good at it. What I do is shared governance, Ma'am, in our school. I give them instructions, but I am not bossy, I am a leader. I am a doer, Ma'am. I first do the work and then I show them what to do.)

IDI_04 said:

"Gina-prioritize gyud nako Ma'am ang pag-build ug trust, open communication ug mag-create ug supportive and collaborative environment."

(I prioritize building trust, open communication and creating a supportive and collaborative environment.)

In connection, IDI_04 added:

"Dili jud nato i-understimate ang power sa collaboration and communication. Basta open lang jud ang communication with each other sa school, every problem will be solved."

(We should not underestimate the power of collaboration and communication. If communication is open with each other in the school, every problem will be solved.)

Transformational leaders contribute to the team's long-term sustainability and resilience by building a shared vision and encouraging collaboration and shared leadership can increase involvement and information sharing, thereby strengthening team members' social capital.

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 12| Issue: 1| January2026|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusion in Leadership

Cultural awareness and inclusiveness in leadership are essential for creating a courteous, equitable, and productive workplace. Leaders with cultural sensitivity are more aware of and tolerant of various cultural backgrounds, values, and perspectives. They create inclusive environments in which people of different backgrounds feel respected and understood, resulting in higher team cohesion, better communication, and fewer disputes.

This theme highlights the need for leadership to align with local traditions, values, and community practices to foster trust and promote inclusive leadership. These statements are reflected in the participants' responses during the interview.

FGD_03 shared:

> *"Ang pag-usab sa among leksyon aron mapakita ang kultura ug kasinatian sa mga bata, usa ka kusog nga estratehiya. Among giapil ang kinaadman sa mga Lumad ug lokal nga mga sugilanon sa pagtudlo aron mas sayon alang sa mga estudyante ang pagsabot ug pag-apil."*

(Adapting our lessons to reflect the learners' culture and experiences proved to be a powerful strategy. We incorporated Indigenous knowledge and local stories into our teaching, making it easier for learners to understand and relate.)

In connection, FGD_03 also highlighted:

> *"Ang mga lider ug katigulangan sa among komunidad sa mga Lumad kasagaran maghatag og feedback bahin sa among mga kalihokan sa eskwelahan. Ang ilang mga ideya nakatabang kanako nga masabtan ang kahinungdanon sa pag-align sa among mga programa sa ilang tradisyon ug mga gituohan. Pananglitan, among giusab ang plano sa usa ka selebrasyon sa eskwelahan aron hatagan og pagtagad ang ilang kultura. Ang ilang feedback nakatultol kanako sa usa ka pamaagi sa pagpangulo nga mas inklusibo ug respetado."*

(The Indigenous leaders and elders in our community often share feedback about our school activities. Their insights helped me realize the importance of aligning our programs with their traditions and values. For instance, we revised a school celebration plan to better respect cultural practices. Their feedback has shaped my leadership to be more inclusive and respectful.)

IDI_04 also stressed:

> *"Sa school, naa jud nang diversity and inclusivity. Importate pud ni sila kaayong duha. In an environment, the people there came from diverse culture, so, importante kaayo sa akoa as school head to respect the culture of each other."*

(In an environment, the people there come from diverse cultures, so it's very important for me to respect each other's culture.)

Cultural sensitivity and inclusion are critical in leadership. They promote a courteous and inclusive workplace culture, enhance communication and collaboration, and increase innovation and productivity. Leaders that practice cultural sensitivity can better understand and interact with varied individuals, resulting in increased team cohesion and conflict resolution.

Feedback Utilization and Responsive Leadership

Effective leadership depends on the use of feedback and the capacity to respond to it. By actively seeking, receiving, and acting on feedback, leaders can develop a culture of continuous improvement, increase team performance, and promote overall organizational success.

This theme emphasizes the importance of utilizing feedback from stakeholders (teachers, parents, and community members) to improve leadership strategies and adapt to needs. These statements are backed by the following comments from our participants.

FGD_01 shared:

> *"Dako kaayo og bili ang feedback gikan sa akong mga magtutudlo ug mga ginikanan. Kini makatabang kanako nga masabtan kung unsa gyud ang kahimtang sa aktuwal. Kung moingon ang mga magtutudlo nga dili epektibo ang usa ka estratehiya, dali ko nga tan-awon kung unsaon kini pag-usab. Pananglitan, among giusab ang schedule sa remedial reading human nga miingon ang mga ginikanan nga ulahi na kaayo sa adlaw ang klase. Ang ilang tambag nakatabang sa pagpaayo sa programa ug pagdungag sa partisipasyon sa mga bata."*

(Feedback from my teachers and parents is very valuable. It helps me understand what's really happening on the ground. When teachers tell me that a certain strategy isn't working, I immediately look for ways to adjust it. For example, we once changed our remedial reading schedule after parents said it was too late in the day for the kids. Their input helped us improve the program and increase attendance.)

FGD_02 also stated:

> "Kanunay kong nagbukas og komunikasyon sa akong team. Ang ilang mga sugyot ug kabalaka mao ang giya sa daghang mga desisyon nga akong gihimo. Sa dihang ilang gi-share nga nabug-atan na sila sa ilang mga buluhaton, ako dayong naghimo og paagi nga patas ang pag-apod-apod sa trabaho ug nagtugot og mas flexible nga plano. Nakat-on ko nga ang adaptive leadership dili lang nagpasabot sa pagpamugos og polisiya, apan sa pagpaminaw ug pagresponde."

(I always keep an open line of communication with my team. Their suggestions and concerns guide many of my decisions. When the teachers shared that they were feeling overwhelmed, I adjusted our workload distribution and allowed more flexible planning. It showed me that adaptive leadership means listening and responding, not just imposing policies.)

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 12| Issue: 1| January2026|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

IDI_01 uttered

"Naa sad mi feedbacking after the school activities. Bago sad mahuman ang adlaw, magpasalamat jud ko sa ilaha. Muingon jud ko nga as a school head, dili ni nako mahimo kung wala mo. Nindot kayo atong program tungod sa inyuha. Lami kayo sa paminaw baya basta ma-recognize ang kahago."

(We also have feedback after the school activities. Before the day ends, I thank them. I would like to say that as a school head, I can't do it without them. Our program is great because of them. It's a pleasure to listen if the hard work is recognized.)

IDI_02 also agreed

"Ako ang school head Ma'am nga gusto ko makadungog ug feedback gikan sa akong mga nasasakupan. Dili problema sa akoa kung negative man ang ilang feedback. Gusto lang ko makadungog sa ilang honest reviews everytime naa mi mga school activities. The next day after sa among school activity, gina-gather nako ilang positive ug negative feedback sa activity nga nahitabo. Akong ginalahi-lahi ug lista ang positive ug negative feedback Ma'am. Dili jud mahimo nga wala mi feedbacking after an activity. Ginahimo nako ning feedbacking Ma'am because I believe nga daghan mi ug ma-learn especially makabalo ko unsa ang mga negative feedback. Atleast sa sunod nga activity, kabalo nami asa mi nga area mas dapat mu-improve."

(I am the school head Ma'am and I want to hear feedback from my constituents. It is not a problem for me if their feedback is negative. I just want to hear their honest reviews every time we have school activities. The next day after our school activity, I gather their positive and negative feedback on the activity that took place. I separate the positive and negative feedback and list them Ma'am. I gather their feedback Ma'am because I believe that we can learn a lot. At least for the next activity, we know which areas we need to improve on.)

IDI_03 highlighted

"Need gyud nako ang feedback sa akong mga teaching and non-teaching personnel after an activity. Akong ginahimo Ma'am is nagapatuyok ko ug drop box para didto nila ihulog ilang mga feedback after a school activity, either negative or positive. Dili nako ginabutangan ug pangalan para free sila makaingon sa naa sa ilang kasing-kasing. Ginabasa nako ilang feedback tanan after nila maka-drop sa box."

(I really need feedback from my teaching and non-teaching personnel after an activity. What I do, Ma'am, is I set up a drop box so they can drop their feedback after a school activity, either negative or positive. I don't let them put names so that they can say whatever they want. I read all their feedback after they drop it in the box.)

IDI_04 concluded:

"Importante kayo ang feedback from my staff and stakeholders Ma'am. Para sa akoa, feedback serves as my guide. I do not take it negative maski pag maayo or dili ilahang feedback. Kung ang uban masuko sila kung naay mga negative feedback, ako, mas malipay ko. Diha man gud ko makabalo sa feedback sa mga taong nakapalibot sa akoa if need pa ba ug improvement or they are satisfied sa akong leadership. Tungod sa feedbacking, ma-address dayon nako ang mga challenges effectively ug maka-create ug positive impact."

(Feedback from my staff and stakeholders is important to me, Ma'am. For me, feedback serves as my guide. I do not take it negative, whether their feedback is good or bad. If others get angry when they have negative feedback, I am happier. Through feedbacking I will know if I need to improve or if they are satisfied with my leadership. Because of feedback, I can address challenges effectively and create a positive impact.)

Feedback utilization and responsive leadership are critical to organizational success because they promote open communication, increase performance, and drive continual progress. Leaders who accept feedback foster a culture of transparency and trust, allowing employees to feel comfortable discussing ideas and concerns. This allows leaders to uncover blind spots, improve their strategy, and better fulfill the needs of their team and business.

Leadership Insights Gained by Test Non-Passers through Unique Experiences

The third research question focuses on the insights gained by the school heads from their unique experiences. After analyzing their responses, four major themes came out: (1) *Professional Development and Self-Improvement,* (2) *Relational and collaborative Leadership*, (3) *Adaptive and Reflective to Change; and* (4) *Awareness of Systemic Responsibilities*.

Table 3 shows the insights gained by the principal's test non-passers from their experiences.

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 12| Issue: 1| January2026|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

Table 3
Major Themes and Core Ideas on Leadership Insights Gained by Test Non-Passers through Unique Experiences

Major Themes	Core Ideas
Professional Development and Self-Improvement	● Professional development ● Self-reflection ● Continuous learning
Relational and Collaborative Leadership	● Inclusivity ● Open communication ● Humility and empathy
Adaptive and Reflective to Change	● Resilience ● Embracing feedback ● Humility ● Flexibility
Awareness of Systemic Responsibilities	● Accountability ● Preparedness ● Integrity ● Initiative

Professional Development and Self-Improvement
Professional development and self-improvement are critical for school leaders to increase their leadership abilities and effectiveness. This entails continuous learning, skill development, and personal growth to better support teachers and students, ultimately improving school performance. School leaders can accomplish this through a variety of activities, including training, networking, self-directed learning, and membership in professional organizations.

This theme reflects the leadership journey focused on continuous improvement, especially in areas such as leadership competency, teacher development, and decision-making. These remarks are visible in the participants' responses to the research question.

FGD_01 stated:
"Sa pagtan-aw balik, unta mas sayo pa nakong gisugdan ang pag-apil sa akong mga kauban sa paghimo og desisyon. Sauna, akong gihunahuna nga ako ra gyud ang responsable sa tanan. Apan nahibal-an nako nga kung apilon ang mga magtutudlo ug ginikanan sa plano ug desisyon, mas madasigon ug magkahiusa ang komunidad sa eskwelahan."

(Looking back, I wish I had embraced shared decision-making much earlier. I used to carry everything on my own shoulders, thinking it was my responsibility alone. But I realized that involving teachers and even parents in planning and decision-making creates a more united and motivated school community.)

FGD_02 pointed out
"Kung mabalik lang ko, unta mas sayo pa nakong gitutokan ang pagpauswag sa abilidad sa akong mga magtutudlo. Sauna, ang akong pokus kay puro ra sa mga reports ug deadlines. Karon, nasabtan nako nga kung tabangan ug suportahan gyud ang mga magtutudlo, mas moasenso ang mga bata ug ang tibuok eskwelahan."

(If I could go back, I would have invested more in building the professional growth of my teachers. I used to focus mainly on compliance with reports and deadlines. But now, I understand that a well-supported teacher is the key to learner success and school improvement.)

FGD_03 voiced out
"Usa sa akong gi-regret kay ang pagkaulahi nakong pagtukod og lig-on nga relasyon sa mga lider sa komunidad. Sauna, abi nako nga ang pagpangulo kay limitado lang sa mga magtutudlo ug estudyante. Apan pagkadugay, nasabtan nako nga kung makig-uban ka sa barangay ug mga ginikanan, mas sayon ang implementasyon sa mga programa ug mas molungtad kini."

(One thing I regret not doing earlier was establishing a strong relationship with the community leaders. In the beginning, I thought school leadership was limited to managing teachers and students. Later, I realized that working together with the barangay and parents makes implementation of programs smoother and more sustainable.)

As mentioned by IDI_01:
"Ahh, wala kayo koy mahinumduman nga unta nahibal-an pa unta nako nga mahimo kong school head, unta nagpatabang ko daan unsaon ang MOOE. Pero wala man gud pud nako na-anticipate nga mahimo kong school head."

(Ahh, I never expected that I would become a school head. I wished I had asked for help beforehand on how to do the MOOE. But I never anticipated that I would become a school head.)

Professional development and self-improvement are essential for school principals to strengthen their leadership skills, create positive change in their schools, and, ultimately, improve student results. By engaging in continuous learning, school leaders may better manage difficulties, adapt to changing educational

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 12| Issue: 1| January2026|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

landscapes, and create a more effective and supportive learning environment.

Relational and Collaborative Leadership

Relational and collaborative leadership in education places a major emphasis on establishing trusting bonds, encouraging candid communication, and enabling all parties involved to play a part in the school's success.

This theme centers on collaborative and relational leadership. Participants discovered that being a leader involves more than just taking personal initiative; it also entails interacting with others, including parents, instructors, and the larger school community. This includes inclusivity, open communication, humility and empathy. The participants' answers to the research question reveal these comments.

FGD_01 shared:

"Giuna nako ang pagtukod og lig-on nga mga relasyon sa akong mga teachers, pagsiguro nga ang tanan mobati nga nadungog ug gitahud."

I focus developing good relationships with my teachers, making sure everyone feels heard and valued.

FGD_02 also highlighted:

"Ako aktibo nga naminaw sa lain-laing mga panglantaw ug nag-awhag sa bukas nga komunikasyon sa pagpalambo sa usa ka collaborative palibot."

(I actively listen to different perspectives and encourage open communication to foster a collaborative environment.)

IDI_01 said

"Naghimo ako mga oportunidad alang sa tanan nga ipaambit ang ilang mga ideya ug makatampo sa proseso sa paghimog desisyon."

(I create opportunities for everyone to share their ideas and contribute to the decision-making process.)

Relational and collaborative leading is a leadership strategy that emphasizes human relationships and the value of learning in our work as librarians in leadership roles.

Adaptive and Reflective to Change

Adaptive leadership in education is about adopting a growth attitude to help all educators, particularly school and district leaders, acquire the capacity and resilience they need to face complex organizational difficulties.

This theme emphasizes the value of adaptable leadership. Test non-passers agreed that leadership necessitates a flexible and adaptable mindset, one that is open to feedback and capable of adapting to new problems. Reflecting on their experiences, they learned the value of learning from mistakes, adapting their approach as needed, and gaining from the feedback of others. This is evident in the responses of the participants as shown below:

As mentioned by FGD_02:

"Sauna, abi nako nga ang pagpangulo kay limitado ra sa mga magtutudlo ug estudyante. Apan pagkadugay, nasabtan nako nga kung makig-uban ka sa barangay ug mga ginikanan, mas sayon ang implementasyon sa mga programa ug mas molungtad kini."

(Before, I thought leadership was limited to teachers and students. But over time, I realized that working with the barangay and parents made program implementation smoother and more sustainable.)

FGD_03 said:

"Kung mabalik lang ko, unta mas sayo pa nakong gitutokan ang pagpauswag sa abilidad sa akong mga magtutudlo. Sauna, ang akong pokus kay puro ra sa mga reports ug deadlines. Karon, nasabtan nako nga kung tabangan ug suportahan gyud ang mga magtutudlo, mas moasenso ang mga bata ug ang tibuok eskwelahan."

(If I could go back, I would have invested more in building the professional growth of my teachers. I used to focus mainly on compliance with reports and deadlines. But now, I understand that a well-supported teacher is the key to learner success and school improvement.)

The key to adopting an adaptive philosophy is to recognize and commit to the realization that the evolution of the challenge in the organization is related to the actions and responses of the people in the organization, and that it will be solved by their collective commitment to changing their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.

Awareness of Systemic Responsibilities

A school leader's systemic responsibilities include recognizing how their actions and decisions affect the entire school community, including students, teachers, and the larger educational system**.**

This theme reveals the importance of being prepared and accountable for the responsibilities that come with being a school head. This includes accountability, preparedness, integrity and initiative. This statement is supported by the participants' comments.

FGD_02 stated:

"Ang proseso sa pagpalambo sa kurikulum sa among eskwelahan aktibong nakiglambigit sa mga inisyatibo sa tibuok distrito. Regular namong girepaso ang among kurikulum aron maseguro nga nahiuyon sa mga tumong sa among sistema sa edukasyon. Naglakip kini sa pag-ila sa labing maayo nga mga gawi gikan sa ubang mga eskwelahan sulod sa distrito ug pakigtambayayong sa ubang mga lider sa eskwelahan sa pagpatuman sa kurikulum."

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 12| Issue: 1| January2026|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

(Our school's curriculum development process actively engages with district-wide initiatives. We regularly review our curriculum to ensure alignment with the goals of our educational system. This includes identifying best practices from other schools within the district and collaborating with other school leaders on curriculum implementation.)

IDI_01 emphasized

> *"Ang mga plano sa pagpaayo sa among eskwelahan dili isolated. Kanunay namon nga girepaso ang among datos ug gitandi kini sa mga benchmark sa tibuuk nga distrito. Aktibo usab kami nga nangita mga higayon nga makaapil sa mga initiative sa lebel sa distrito nga nakapunting sa pagpaayo sa eskwelahan. Naglakip kini sa pagtinabangay sa ubang mga eskwelahan ug pagpaambit sa labing kaayo nga mga buluhaton."*

(Our school's improvement plans are not isolated. We regularly review our data and compare it to district-wide benchmarks. We also actively seek opportunities to participate in district initiatives focused on school improvement. This includes collaborating with other schools and sharing best practices.)

IDI_04 added

> *"Ang among eskwelahan aktibong miapil sa mga forum ug komite sa lebel sa sistema. Apil sa sistema ang pagtambong sa mga miting, pagpaambit sa datos ug mga praktis sa among eskwelahan, ug pakigtambayayong sa ubang mga lider sa eskwelahan sa mga inisyatibo sa tibuok sistema. Regular sab kaming nakigkomunikar sa mga ginikanan ug sa komunidad mahitungod sa pasundayag ug mga kalihokan sa among eskwelahan, ug kung giunsa nila pagtampo sa mas dako nga sistema sa edukasyon."*

(Our school actively participates in district-level forums and committees. This includes attending meetings, sharing our school's data and practices, and collaborating with other school leaders on district-wide initiatives. We also communicate regularly with parents and the community about our school's performance and activities, and how they contribute to the larger educational system.)

The understanding that leadership extends beyond the classroom was underlined by the participants. They grew more conscious of the systemic duties associated with leading a school.

DISCUSSION

This section discusses and draws conclusions from the study's findings, which are supported by various authors. This includes the implications for teaching practice, Recommendations for further research and concluding remarks.

Challenges Encountered by Principal's Test Non-passers

The first research question focuses on the challenges encountered by principal's test non-passers. After analyzing their responses, five major theme was generated, (1) *Leadership Challenges and Personal Struggles*, (2) *Psychosocial and Community Pressures*, (3) *Inadequate Resources*, (4) *Balancing Community Culture*; and (5) *Systemic and Structural Barriers*.

Leadership Challenges and Personal Struggles

An educational leader is continually confronted with complex and dynamic difficulties that require adaptability, innovation, and collaboration. A principal, teaching leader, curriculum coordinator, or department head must balance the demands and expectations of multiple stakeholders, including students, staff, parents, and policymakers. In addition, a good and inclusive culture must be fostered, as well as effective teaching and learning and risk management.

According to Armstrong (2024), great leaders generate devotion to a compelling vision before leading people to locations they have never visited before. Educational leaders must deal with high expectations and pressure all the time. They are frequently rated based on their students' academic performance and the general success of their institutions. High stakes testing and accountability procedures exacerbate this pressure. Furthermore, balancing the needs and expectations of several stakeholders, students, parents, teachers, and district administrators, can be difficult. These pressures can result in severe stress and burnout, making it difficult for leaders to maintain their effectiveness over time.

Psychosocial and Community Pressures

In the intricate realm of education, school administrators have a significant impact on the intellectual and emotional climate of their institutions. But in the midst of all the obligations and demands, their mental health is frequently disregarded. Burnout and emotional tiredness can result from the demands of managing employees, students, parents, and educational policies. We will examine the mental health of school administrators in this piece and look at doable strategies to help them lead with empathy.

As stated by the team of Varthana (2023), the expectations placed on school leaders to promote academic performance, student well-being, and a strong school culture can be overwhelming. It can be difficult to match these demands while also looking after their own health. A school leader's responsibilities are diverse, requiring them to balance instructional leadership, administrative obligations, and emotional support. School administrators have a wide range of responsibilities, including budget management and curriculum development, as well as dealing with disciplinary concerns and community relations. This burden can cause stress, burnout, and feeling overwhelmed.

The unrelenting demands of their roles can cause emotional weariness, resulting in lower job satisfaction and a diminished ability to lead effectively. The influence of mental health on school leaders is felt not only personally, but also throughout the school environment, affecting staff morale and student well-being. The hierarchical character of educational institutions might lead to sentiments of isolation among school administrators. They

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 12| Issue: 1| January2026|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

may be unable to freely communicate their problems with staff for fear of undermining their authority or efficacy.

Inadequate Resources

Limited resources can also limit students' abilities to learn. For example, a school with limited technology may lack the necessary equipment or software to offer students with the digital literacy abilities required in the twenty-first century. Furthermore, schools with insufficient libraries or textbooks may lack necessary learning resources to suit students' demands. As a result, learners may not obtain the comprehensive educational experiences and opportunities required for academic success.

Schools face numerous challenges that have a substantial impact on the quality of education provided. One of the most significant of these difficulties is a lack of educational materials. This constraint includes insufficient funding, remote geographic locations, big classes, and significant student turnover. Rural institutions may require greater financial support than urban schools, resulting in shortages of critical items such as textbooks, computers, and instructional tools. This scarcity prevents teachers from giving high-quality instruction. The remoteness of rural schools makes it difficult to attract and retain talented instructors, as well as to provide access to critical resources and services. These disparities are visible in the division of schools into urban and rural settings, as well as the distinction between well-equipped and insufficiently equipped facilities. This division has a considerable impact on student performance across the nation's schools (Mncube & Ajani, 2023).

Balancing Community Culture

Developing a deeper understanding of the elements that influence learning and teaching in increasingly culturally varied learning environments is critical for proactive support and pedagogical approaches that promote integration, intercultural understanding, and respect for cultural uniqueness. Walking into a community-based classroom or school, everyone can experience the inclusion, inventiveness, and sense of thankfulness right away. These settings feel like home. They have the feel of a safe learning environment. They usually feel as if everything came together naturally. Such cultures are driven by exceptional leaders, including teachers, students, and support workers. Vibrant learning communities do not emerge by chance; like all good things, they must be maintained with purpose and care.

According to Uy (2024), a balanced community culture celebrates diversity and ensures that all students have a sense of belonging. This begins with school leaders who are committed to creating a culture of respect and inclusivity. They can accomplish this by increasing cultural competence among employees, encouraging student-led diversity initiatives, and commemorating diverse cultural events. Furthermore, inclusive policies, such as zero tolerance for bullying and discrimination, are required. When kids understand that diversity is valued and respected, they are more likely to interact favorably with their peers, resulting in a more cohesive and supportive school environment.

Families and communities have an important role in fostering fairness and inclusion in education. School administrators must actively pursue solid ties with families and community organizations. These collaborations can provide additional resources and support for students, particularly those from underserved communities. Families can be engaged by maintaining frequent communication, inviting them to join in school activities, and giving them with resources to help their children's education at home. Collaboration with local groups to provide activities and services that meet the different needs of students is another example of community involvement. By cultivating these ties, schools may create a more inclusive and supportive atmosphere for all students.

Systemic and Structural Barriers

School leaders play an important role in the educational process because they oversee hiring teachers and administrators, managing staff, organizing functions and activities, and ensuring that students receive the high-quality education and emotional support they require to thrive academically and psychologically. To accomplish this, they must engage in ongoing educational leadership professional development that broadens their knowledge, sharpens their abilities, and keeps them current on the sector's latest trends and best practices.

As Shirshikov (2025) emphasized, school leaders encounter numerous and diverse responsibilities that include extensive administrative, management, and instructional abilities and competencies. School leaders must be visionary leaders who can inspire, motivate, and develop their team; specialists in the most recent teaching, learning, and evaluation approaches; and sensitive and skilled human resource managers who can provide feedback to employees that motivates them to progress. Countries prepare and develop their school leaders in various ways, including pre-service training before taking on the post, induction training for new school leaders, and/or in-service training for long-term school leaders and principals. Some countries operate all sorts of provision concurrently, while others only offer one or two types of training.

Leadership Approaches of Principal's Test Non-passers

The second research question focuses on the leadership approaches in overcoming challenges in leadership management. After analyzing their responses, four themes emerged: (1) *Adaptive and Leadership Resourcefulness*, (2) *Transformational and Shared Leadership*, (3) *Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusion in Leadership*; and (4) *Feedback Utilization and Responsive Leadership*.

Adaptive and Leadership Resourcefulness

The only constant is change, and this saying is particularly relevant in the field of education. Knowing that change is unavoidable and that, as school leaders, can do things differently in the future rather than returning to the status quo, and how to improve at proactively planning and leading through it. Effective educational leaders use an adaptive leadership strategy, which

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 12| Issue: 1| January2026|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

encourages critical thinking among all students and educates them to be adaptable problem solvers.

Leaders go through various types of adjustments. Adaptive change is more of a paradigm shift, in which leaders must adapt to a new environment and gain new skills. School principals are continually living in a world of adaptive change as they learn how to lead and handle new duties. A growth mindset is essential for the development of adaptable leadership qualities. Being prepared for anything. Nobody knows how the day will proceed. Having the necessary tools and resources on hand to help you improve. At the conclusion of the day, individuals look to the principal to determine which route to pursue in a couple of seconds (Murphy, 2021).

Transformational and Shared Leadership

Transformational school leaders contribute significantly to educational innovation and restructuring by establishing a vision for the future, fostering a collaborative culture, and encouraging others to become leaders themselves. Their leadership style inspires and motivates others to strive toward a common objective, resulting in positive change and growth in the educational system.

School principals and superintendents have the authority to make changes in their positions. However, transformative leaders consult with stakeholders before implementing changes. They hold change-related forums so educators, parents, and other family members can share their opinions and feedback. Participants appreciate having their concerns heard, and they are more inclined to contribute ideas and commit to the group choice. In essence, transformational leadership gives vision and motivation, whereas shared leadership distributes power and responsibility for making that vision a reality (Fontein, 2023).

Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusion in Leadership

In today's increasingly varied world, simply acknowledging cultural differences is insufficient. It is necessary to actively include them into all aspects of school life. Effective leadership is essential for fostering a learning atmosphere in which all students, regardless of background, feel valued, seen, and capable of achievement.

Great leaders maintain a laser-like focus on instructional quality in the schools they lead. They have an evidence-based understanding of what motivates students to succeed, and they prioritize responsive education. Maintaining a constant emphasis on teaching and learning entails ensuring that your school curriculum is both academically rigorous and culturally relevant, a pedagogy that employs students' customs, characteristics, experiences, and perspectives as instruments for improving classroom instruction.

According to Lavert (2024), leadership in education is more than just managing operations or meeting academic standards; it is also about shaping the emotional and intellectual environment in which students develop. This obligation requires school administrators to ensure that diversity and inclusivity are built into the fabric of the school culture. Leaders establish the tone for the school culture. This is why it is critical for leaders to go beyond superficial displays of diversity. It is not enough to commemorate multicultural events or devote a month to varied histories. True inclusion entails incorporating diversity into the curriculum, school rules, and the daily lives of all students.

Feedback Utilization and Responsive Leadership

Responsive leadership is about properly understanding and responding to teachers' needs and concerns. Leaders must be skilled at active listening, demonstrating empathy, and offering timely support. Leaders may foster trust by being available and approachable, ensuring that teachers feel appreciated and heard. This type of leadership develops a culture of collaboration and open communication in which problems are addressed quickly and constructively.

Access to high-quality materials, continual professional development, and collaboration time are all necessary yet insufficient for being a successful school leader. School administrators must listen to their workers and involve them in the process of serving them. School principals require feedback, and there are several ways to receive it. Schedule meetings with trusted colleagues and ask straightforward questions. Conduct surveys. Encourage teacher leaders to identify opportunities for development. Regardless of how feedback is gathered, it should be reflected on, shared, and implemented transparently. While feedback can be difficult to accept, leaders can use it to demonstrate their dedication to professional progress (Woodlock, 2021).

Leadership Insights Gained by Test Non-Passers through Unique Experiences

The third research question focuses on the insights of school heads from their leadership management experiences. After analyzing their responses, four major themes came out: (1) *Professional Development and Self-Improvement*, (2) *Relational and Collaborative Leadership*, (3) *Adaptive and Reflective to Change*; and (4) *Awareness of Systemic Responsibilities*.

Professional Development and Self-Improvement

Professional development and growth are the continuous learning and enhancement of information, skills, and attitudes that increase the performance and well-being of educational leaders and employees. Professional development and growth are necessary to stay up with educational changes and demands, but they can be difficult, especially when time, money, and motivation are limited.

Mariyanah and Jamil (2024) notes that school leaders play a crucial role in achieving educational goals through their leadership and insight. The principal manages school resources and collaborates with instructors to help students accomplish educational goals. The principal's professionalism facilitates

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 12| Issue: 1| January2026|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

professional development of education personnel. By understanding the needs of the school, the principal ensures that teacher competence grows and develops, leading to teacher professionalism.

Relational and Collaborative Leadership

When discussing school leadership, the principal's image as an effective leader came to mind. However, in the twenty-first century, the school principal's additional obligations make it more difficult to perform her or his responsibility as an effective leader. As a result, an approach emphasizing collaborative decision-making should shift away from 'single person' leadership. When school development efforts fail, a lack of leadership is a major contributing factor. In this situation, collaborative leadership can differentiate itself from traditional leadership concepts by emphasizing shared accountability. Collaborative leadership refers to measures made by leaders to improve classroom instruction, build strong connections with all stakeholders, and positively impact learning results.

A learner's mindset is required for relational collaborative leadership. It seeks a true knowledge of coworkers by listening and communicating effectively. Finally, it demands confidence and the sharing of the library's work. Collaborative leadership prioritizes the full individual and strives for a strong sense of inclusion. Collaborative leadership and practices in community schools can enhance the school climate, deepen relationships, and foster trust and a feeling of collective capacity. Trusting connections contribute to school transformation by fostering supportive and respectful cultures in which caring adults, community members, and students perceive each other as partners in achieving student achievement.

Collaborative approaches allow schools and communities to work together to develop and expand curriculum and activities, such as through community-led, project-based, experiential, and service-learning experiences both inside and outside the classroom. Partnerships between teachers, school staff, parents, and community members can also improve school conditions that directly affect student learning, such as creating a supportive and inclusive school climate or supporting more ambitious instruction.31 Collaboration between teachers, their unions, and management, including formal structures for shared decision making at the system level, is also required for school improvement efforts to be sustained and meaningful (Woods & Roberts, 2019).

Adaptive and Reflective to Change

Educational leadership is a difficult and challenging position that necessitates ongoing learning, innovation, and problem-solving. School administrators face numerous obstacles, including evolving curricular requirements, various student needs, limited resources, and unpredictable settings. Adaptability refers to the ability to change to new situations, deal with ambiguity, and learn from feedback. It is an essential talent for educational leaders, who must adapt to changing needs, expectations, and possibilities in their schools and communities. Adaptability enables school leaders to be flexible, inventive, and resilient in the face of adversities.

According to Aviles (2021), being an adaptive leader necessitates a particular mindset. It is about realizing that change and unpredictability are part of a school's daily life, and that these challenges may be used to foster growth, innovation, and equity. Adaptive leadership necessitates curiosity and the ability to face change in our educational system with resilience rather than surrender. Great school leaders make adaptive decisions because they see change as a chance to create ability to solve challenges, manage change, and thrive. Self-reflection is vital for leaders on their journey to ongoing growth and improvement. Reflection allows leaders to emphasize the school's vision and key values. Leaders receive insights into their practices, which can help them improve their leadership skills and competences, ultimately transforming the school.

Awareness of Systemic Responsibilities

School administrators are tasked with a wide range of tasks, some of which are constantly expanding. From marketing to musicals, staffing to compensation, the busyness of schooling necessitates that its leaders focus on a hitherto unimaginable range of activities. Furthermore, unlike previous headmasters, who were emperors of their own domain, school principals are now under constant pressure to provide an account of all school policies and practices to anyone and everyone: governments, boards, staff, current and prospective parents, student guilds, community groups, and so on. School principals are regarded as the pillars of the educational system since they hold positions of authority and administer the school. Along with their power, they are responsible for the outcomes of the school's operations, activities, and projects.

In the context of school leadership, integrity can be demonstrated by conducting all business transactions in an ethical and transparent manner, valuing doing the right thing over personal benefit. It entails holding oneself accountable and carrying out decisions even when no one is looking. Accountability is a vital component of integrity in public service. Accountability implies that school leaders must be held accountable for their actions, decisions, and the repercussions that result from them. It is the guarantee that persons in the position are accountable, not only to their superiors, but also to the students, instructors, and stakeholders they serve. When school leaders are accountable, they create a culture of transparency. This transparency brings the school and community into the decision-making process and allows them to see how resources are distributed. It fosters trust, which is the foundation of any authentic and trustworthy leadership. Consider accountability's impact on community trust. When teachers and stakeholders perceive their school leaders acting with integrity, they are more inclined to engage in governance, fully participate in activities and initiatives, and believe their opinions are heard (Lacson, 2024).

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 12| Issue: 1| January2026|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

Implication for Educational Practice

The findings of this study carry significant implications for educational research, especially when it comes to how school heads who failed the NQESH develop as leaders. This study shows that in addition to professional challenges like resource management and leadership responsibilities, they also face emotional challenges like imposter syndrome and a lack of confidence. According to these findings, leadership programs should be created to address the emotional and psychological difficulties that these school heads encounter in addition to the technical elements of school administration. Furthermore, this indicated that leadership evaluations and standards must be re-examined to accurately represent the diverse range of circumstances and realities that school administrators face, particularly in diverse educational settings. Additionally, the study highlights the need for additional research on the implementation and evaluation of these support networks by indicating that peer support and mentoring may be crucial for enhancing the emotional resilience and professional development of non-passing school heads.

Recommendation for Further Research

The study's findings point to several directions for future investigation. Understanding how school heads who have failed the NQUESH evolve over time and how their challenges and leadership skills have honed them would be greatly aided by a longitudinal study that documents their professional development. Comparative studies that contrast the experiences of these school leaders who passed the principal's test with those who did not could lead to a more comprehensive understanding of what makes for effective school leadership. These studies may shed light on significant differences in perceived authority, professional development requirements, and leadership effectiveness. Further research should examine the connection between an emotional support system and effective leadership, as well as the potential benefits of peer support networks or counselling for school heads who failed the NQUESH, considering the study's emphasis on emotional challenges. Last but not the least, analyzing the ways in which age and gender affected the growth of leadership in non-passing school heads may reveal difficulties and chances for these administrators, offering a novel perspective on the dynamics of school leadership.

REFERENCES

1. *Aviles, N. (2021, December 14). The art of reflection for school leaders. IDRA. https://www.idra.org/resource-center/the-art-of-reflection-for-school-leaders/#:~:text=Self%2Dreflection%20is%20essential%20for,that%20can%20transform%20the%20school*
2. *Armstrong, D. (2024, May 27). The challenges of leadership in education: Why leaders fail and the phenomenon of failing up. LinkedIn. https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/challenges-leadership-education-why-leaders-fail-up-dave-armstrong-0q5tc*
3. *Bass, B. M. (1999). Two decades of research and development in transformational leadership.European journal of work and organizational psychology, 8(1), 9-32.*
4. *Bautista, Susan C. (2022, May 5). The utilization, commitment, and productivity of school*
5. *Belmont Report. (1979). Module 1 Qualitative Research Methods Overview [pdf]. FAMILY HEALTH INTERNATIONAL*
6. *Blog, F. (2019,July23).7 data collection methods & tools for research.https://www.formpl.us/blog/data-collection-method*
7. *Clarke & Brauns. (2013). Rapid Evidence Review: Radio. Edtech hub. https://edtechhub.org/wp- content/uploads/2020/07/Rapid-Evidence-Review_-Radio-1.pdf*
8. *Clarke, S., & Wildy, H. (2004, October). Context counts: Viewing small school leadership from the inside out.https://www.researchgate.net/. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/243460207_Context_counts_Viewing_small_ school_leadership_from_the_inside_out*
9. *Creswell. (1998). Sample size and saturation in PhD studies using qualitative interviews |Mason| Forum Qualitative Sozialforchung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research.*
10. *Creswell. (2013, October 15). Phenomenological Study. www.kibogoji.com.https://kibogoji.com/2013/phenomenological-study-42/*
11. *Department of Education. (2007). DepEd Order No. 42. The revised guidelines on selection, promotion and designation of school heads. https://www.deped.gov.ph/2007/07/04/do-42-s-2007-The revised guidelines on selection, promotion and designation of school heads/*
12. *Department of Education (2025). PBBM responds: DepEd vows to deploy 15k principals this Year. Retrieved on April 19, 2025 from https://www.deped.gov.ph/2025/02/11/pbbm-responds-deped-vows-to-deploy-15k-principals-this-year/*
13. *De Silva, G. (2020, April 16). 5 step process to effectively analyze qualitative data. Happy Scribe Blog.https://www.happyscribe.com/blog/5-step-process-to-effectively-analyze- qualitative-data/*
14. *Fontein,D.(2023,April 25). Your guide to transformational leadership in education. ThoughtExchange. https://thoughtexchange.com/blog/transformational-leadership-in-education/*
15. *Geiger, T., & Pivovarova, M. (2018). The effects of working conditions on teacherretention. Teachers and Teaching, 24(6), 604–625. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2018.1457524*
16. *Goodness, T. & Yinusa, A.F. (2024). The Leadership Role of the School Principal in Developing and Improving Learner Performance in Eswatini Schools. Retrieved on April 18, 2025, from https://www.ej-edu.org/index.php/ejedu/article/view/875*
17. *Harris, A., & Jones, M. (2017, May). (PDF) middle leaders matter: Reflections, recognition, and Renaissance.https://www.researchgate.net/. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317297746_Middle_leaders_matter_reflections_recognition_and_renaissance*
18. *Kellerman, B. (2015). Hard Times: Leadership in America. Stanford University Press.*
19. *Lacson, M. C. (2024, October 22). Integrity in the context of school management and leadership. SunStar Publishing Inc. https://www.sunstar.com.ph/pampanga/integrity-in-the-context-of-school-management-and-leadership#:~:text=In%20the%20context%20of%20school%20leadership%2C%20integrity,no%20one%20is%20around%20to%20see%20it*

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 12| Issue: 1| January2026|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

20. *Lavert, G. (2024, October 11). Leadership in a diverse and inclusive classroom environment: The role of leadership. LinkedIn. https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/leadership-diverse-inclusive-classroom-environment-role-lavert-phd-rq98c*
21. *Mncube, & Ajani. (2023). Exploring the Problems of Limited School Resources in Rural Schools and Curriculum Management History: Exploring the Problems of Limited School Resources in Rural Schools and Curriculum Management. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/374849043_Title_Exploring_the_Problems_of_Limited_School_Resources_in_Rural_Schools_and_Curriculum_Management_History_Exploring_the_Problems_of_Limited_School_Resources_in_Rural_Schools_and_Curriculum_Management*
22. *Mariyanah, & Jamil. (2024). What kind of professional development best supports principals right now? New Leaders. https://www.newleaders.org/blog/what-kind-of-professional-development-best-supports-principals-right-now*
23. *McCarthy, M. (2010). Experiential learning theory: From theory to practice. Journal of Business & Economics Research (JBER), 8(5).*
24. *Moustakas. (1994). A phenomenological research design illustrated. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 3(1), 42-55. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690400300104*
25. *Msalganik. (2016, December 7). The Belmont Report: Three Principles for ethical research.*
26. *Murphy, I. P. (2021, April 30). "A" Is for Adaptive. https://www.naesp.org/resource/a-is-for-adaptive/*
27. *Najeeb, U.K. & Muhammad U.H. (2021) How and to What Extent Managerial Practices of School Heads are Influencing the Morale of Primary School Teachers? Bulletin of Education and Research August 2021, Vol. 43, No.2 pp. 85-99*
28. *Paglinawan. (2024, June 21). Navigating the national qualifying examination for school heads: Insights from a multiple case study analysis. Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies.*
29. *Republic Act No. 9155 (2011). An Act instituting a framework of governance for basic education, establishing authority and accountability, renaming the Department of Education, Culture and Sports as the Department of Education and for other purposes. https://www. lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra2001/ra_9155_2001.html*
30. *Reyes, S. S., & Lazaro, F. (2019). Lazaro Francisco - the making of a national artist. Archīum Ateneo. https://archium.ateneo.edu/is-faculty-pubs/12/*
31. *Shirshikov. (2025, April 29). Educational leadership professional development: Ultimate guide. Fullmind - Certified Virtual Teachers for Every School. https://www.fullmindlearning.com/blog/educational-leadership-professional-development*
32. *Uy, F. (2024). Navigating diversity: Culturally responsive leadership in diverse educational settings. International Multidisciplinary Journal of Research for Innovation, Sustainability, and Excellence (IMJRISE). https://risejournals.org/index.php/imjrise/article/view/200*
33. *Varthana. (2023, October 10). Understanding the Mental Health of School Leaders and Ways to Leading with Compassion. https://varthana.com/school/understanding-the-mental-health-of-school-leaders-and-ways-to-leading-with-compassion/*
34. *Vecchio, R. P. (1987). Situational Leadership Theory: An examination of a prescriptive theory.Journal of applied psychology, 72(3), 444.*
35. *Wellman, & Krugger. (1999). (PDF) Research methodology for Business and administrative sciences. ResearchGate.*
36. *Williams, T. (2017). Culturally proficient leadership may not be efficient. Journal of Curriculum, Teaching, Learning and Leadership in Education, 2(2), 43–52.*
37. *Woodlock, M. (2021, December 14). 5 ways feedback from staff can help school leaders grow. Edutopia. https://www.edutopia.org/article/5-ways-feedback-staff-can-help-school-leaders-grow*
38. *Woods, & Roberts. (2019). Developing collaborative school leadership:catalysts to support reflection and action. University of Hertfordshire. https://www.herts.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/277337/Booklet-catalyst-FINAL-upload.pdf*