

The Leadership Competencies of the School Heads in the Province of Albay During the Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the leadership competencies demonstrated by public secondary school heads in the Division of Albay during the COVID-19 pandemic and the new normal educational set-up. It examined their experiences in five domains - leading strategically, managing school operations and resources, focusing on teaching and learning, developing self and others, and building connections - and sought to identify strengths from those experiences and derive a leadership philosophy. A descriptive qualitative design was used. Twelve school heads were included, with three representatives each from small, medium, large, and mega-large public secondary schools. Data were gathered through a panel-validated open-ended interview guide in one-on-one virtual interviews. Recorded

responses were transcribed, coded, collated, and categorized through qualitative content and thematic analysis. Findings showed that the school heads encountered both shared and context-specific demands across the five domains. Their responses consistently reflected adaptation to DepEd and public-health policies, frequent communication through available face-to-face and digital channels, and collaboration with teachers, parents, local government units, barangay officials, learners, and other stakeholders. Internet instability, resource limitations, module production and distribution, health protocols, and the need to sustain teacher and learner support intensified leadership demands. Across the experiences, adaptation, communication, and collaboration emerged as the principal strengths, supported by positive personal attributes such as integrity, transparency, trust, motivation, and service orientation. From these findings, the study derived an Integrative Approach Leadership Philosophy that combines adaptability, communication, collaboration, and positive personal attributes in crisis leadership. The findings imply that leadership development, school planning, and crisis preparedness should deliberately strengthen these interconnected competencies.

Keywords: *school leadership competencies, COVID-19 pandemic, school heads, instructional leadership, crisis leadership, stakeholder collaboration*

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic abruptly changed how schools organized teaching, learning, communication, and day-to-day operations. Restrictions on face-to-face instruction increased dependence on information and communication technology, printed modules, alternative learning modalities, and stronger coordination among homes, schools, and communities. These changes placed school heads in a position where instructional leadership and crisis management had to operate simultaneously. Aziz et al. (2017) emphasized the continuing importance of instructional leadership in managing educational change, while Bitterová et al. (2014) identified school leaders' competencies as an important influence on the quality of teaching and learning. In this context, leadership was not

limited to administrative compliance; it involved creating conditions that allowed teachers and learners to continue functioning despite uncertainty.

School leadership had already been recognized as a central component of school improvement before the pandemic. Pont et al. (2008) described school leadership as a policy priority because leaders influence organizational conditions, staff development, and learning. Day and Sammons (2014) likewise highlighted setting direction, developing people, and creating supportive organizational conditions as recurring features of successful leadership. In the Philippines, the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001 assigns school heads responsibility and accountability for managing school affairs, while the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads provide a competency framework for leading strategically, managing school operations and resources, focusing on teaching and learning, developing self and others, and building connections (Department of Education, 2020b; Republic of the Philippines, 2001). These domains became especially consequential when schools had to translate national directives into workable local arrangements.

The Department of Education responded to the public-health emergency through the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan, which provided a framework for sustaining learning while protecting learners, teachers, and personnel (Department of Education, 2020a). The department also identified professional development priorities for teachers and school leaders and adopted the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads during the same period (Department of Education, 2020b, 2020c). These policy changes required school leaders to adapt learning delivery, deploy resources, manage alternative work arrangements, communicate new expectations, support teacher development, and engage parents and communities. Crisis leadership literature similarly underscored shared leadership, communication, empathy, and organized team responses during uncertainty (D'Auria & De Smet, 2020; Fernandez & Shaw, 2020).

The Division of Albay provided a relevant setting for examining these demands because its public secondary schools varied in size and geographical context, including schools located in mainland and island or coastal communities. The source study considered small, medium, large, and mega-large schools and documented how school heads managed the 2020-2021 school year under the new normal. Challenges included internet instability, limited resources for printing and health supplies, restrictions on movement, and the logistical difficulty of module distribution and retrieval. At the same time, the experiences also revealed innovations such as using social media and virtual platforms, organizing stakeholder teams, mobilizing barangay support, conducting home visits where feasible, and maximizing local resources.

At the time of the investigation, the thesis identified a gap in research that directly described school heads' leadership competencies in a setting where face-to-face instruction was prohibited and alternative learning modalities depended heavily on stakeholder involvement. It also noted limited work integrating strategic leadership, school operations, teaching and learning, professional development, and local-global connections into a leadership philosophy suited to the new normal. Therefore, the study investigated the experiences of secondary school heads across the five leadership domains, identified the strengths that could be gleaned from those experiences, and derived a leadership philosophy from the findings. The study was intended to inform school-based interventions, professional development, policy implementation, and future research on leadership under crisis conditions.

Literature Review

Leadership Competencies and Instructional Leadership

Leadership competency refers to the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and personal capacities that enable a leader to direct an organization and influence people toward common goals. In school settings, such competence is expressed in how leaders set direction, solve problems, manage people and resources, and sustain conditions for teaching and learning. Bitterová et al. (2014) grouped school leadership competencies around strategic development, administration of the teaching process, institutional development, and human-resource

development. Pont et al. (2008) similarly emphasized that school leaders work at the intersection of policy, organizational management, and instructional improvement. These perspectives support the view that effective school leadership is multidimensional rather than confined to a single managerial function.

Instructional leadership gives particular attention to curriculum, instruction, assessment, teacher support, and learner outcomes. Aziz et al. (2017) argued that principals remain important instructional leaders during educational change because teaching and learning must remain central while organizations adjust to new demands. Baldanza (2018) framed 21st-century instructional leadership through four theories of action: strong advocacy and leadership, adult professional culture, continuous improvement of teaching expertise, and results-oriented teams. The model links purposeful direction with teacher learning and team accountability, making it especially relevant to a crisis in which school heads had to protect learning continuity while redesigning operational routines.

The pandemic intensified the relationship between instructional and organizational leadership. Day and Sammons (2014) observed that successful leaders combine strategies for setting direction, supporting staff, and improving teaching conditions rather than relying on one leadership style. Bredeson (2000) further showed that principals influence teacher professional development by functioning as instructional leaders and learners, creating environments for professional learning, participating in professional-development design, and considering the outcomes of such development. In the source study, these ideas informed the examination of school heads' work not only in teaching and learning but also in developing self and others and coordinating the broader school community.

School Leadership in Crisis and the New Normal

Crisis conditions change the pace, information requirements, and emotional demands of leadership. D'Auria and De Smet (2020) identified five practices for leading in a crisis: organizing a network of teams, displaying deliberate calm and bounded optimism, making decisions amid uncertainty, demonstrating empathy, and communicating effectively. Fernandez and Shaw (2020) likewise highlighted agility, collaboration, distributed responsibility, and frequent communication as practices that help educational leaders respond to unpredictable disruption. These principles align with school settings where leaders must make decisions before all information is available and must coordinate multiple actors whose circumstances differ substantially.

Research and professional commentary during COVID-19 portrayed school leadership as both an operational and relational task. Nannyonjo et al. (2020) noted that school leaders had responsibility for staff and student well-being, learning continuity, relationships with communities, and guidance for families while schools were closed. Kaul et al. (2020) found that principals often prioritized the physical and psychological safety of students and staff before instructional concerns could be fully addressed. Stone-Johnson and Weiner (2020) also discussed how the pandemic complicated principal professionalism by increasing uncertainty and tensions around expertise, autonomy, expectations, and service. Together, these works suggest that crisis leadership requires leaders to protect people while preserving institutional purpose.

Philippine school leaders operated within a policy environment that demanded rapid local implementation of national standards. The Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan organized interventions for the 2020-2021 school year, while the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads established expectations across five leadership domains (Department of Education, 2020a, 2020b). Interim assessment and grading guidelines also required alternative approaches suited to distance and blended learning (Department of Education, 2020d). Francisco and Nuqui (2020) likewise described the emergence of situational new-normal leadership among Philippine school administrators during COVID-19. Earp (2020) observed that school leaders during COVID-19 often had to make unusually rapid decisions and communicate mandated changes under uncertainty. Thus, effective local leadership depended on the ability to interpret policy, adjust practice, and maintain confidence among stakeholders.

Professional Development, Communication, and Stakeholder Collaboration

Professional growth became a practical requirement rather than an optional activity during the new normal. Teachers and school heads had to learn digital communication platforms, revise instructional processes, develop or contextualize learning materials, and respond to emerging guidance. Bredeson (2000) positioned principals as influential actors in teacher professional development, and the Department of Education (2020c) explicitly prioritized continuous upskilling and reskilling of teachers and school leaders. Within this setting, mentoring, school-based learning sessions, virtual seminars, and collaborative problem solving could support both individual competence and organizational resilience.

Communication was equally central because policy changes, work arrangements, learning schedules, module distribution, assessment expectations, and health protocols had to reach stakeholders quickly. Tyler (2016) demonstrated the importance of communication behaviors in principals' transformative efforts, while Luthra and Dahiya (2015) described communication as a core mechanism through which leaders motivate teams and align action. During remote learning, communication channels expanded beyond formal meetings to include phone calls, text messages, group chats, email, social media, Google Meet, and Zoom. However, access to these channels was uneven, making connectivity itself a leadership challenge in communities with weak or absent internet service.

Stakeholder collaboration became particularly important when learning moved from school buildings into homes and communities. Montemayor (2020) reported the importance of local governments and partner organizations in preparations for the new normal, while Noonoo (2020) described the increased role of parents in remote learning. Nannyonjo et al. (2020) similarly emphasized the school leader's relationship with families and communities. In the Albay context, the thesis examined collaboration with teachers, parents, barangay officials, local government units, learners, community volunteers, and donors because the success of module preparation, distribution, retrieval, and learner support often depended on shared action.

Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations

The study was anchored primarily on Baldanza's Model of 21st Century Instructional Leadership. The four theories of action in the model connect leadership advocacy, an adult professional culture, continual improvement of teaching expertise, and results-oriented teams (Baldanza, 2018). Applied to the pandemic setting, these elements emphasize a leader who sustains a learner-centered mission, develops teachers, supports instructional improvement, and mobilizes stakeholders to achieve results. The model is compatible with the five leadership domains because strategic direction, operations, teaching and learning, professional growth, and connections all require coordinated leadership behaviors.

The framework was complemented by crisis-leadership behaviors described by D'Auria and De Smet (2020), particularly organizing teams, remaining calm while realistic, assessing uncertainty before acting, demonstrating empathy, and maintaining transparent communication. The conceptual framework therefore connected the Albay Division's new normal educational set-up with school heads' leadership competencies and their actual experiences. Those experiences were expected to reveal strengths and a derived philosophy that could contribute to enhanced leadership competencies. The framework retained the thesis's cyclical logic: the leadership context shapes experiences, experiences inform strengths and philosophy, and enhanced competence feeds back into the school's response to the new normal.

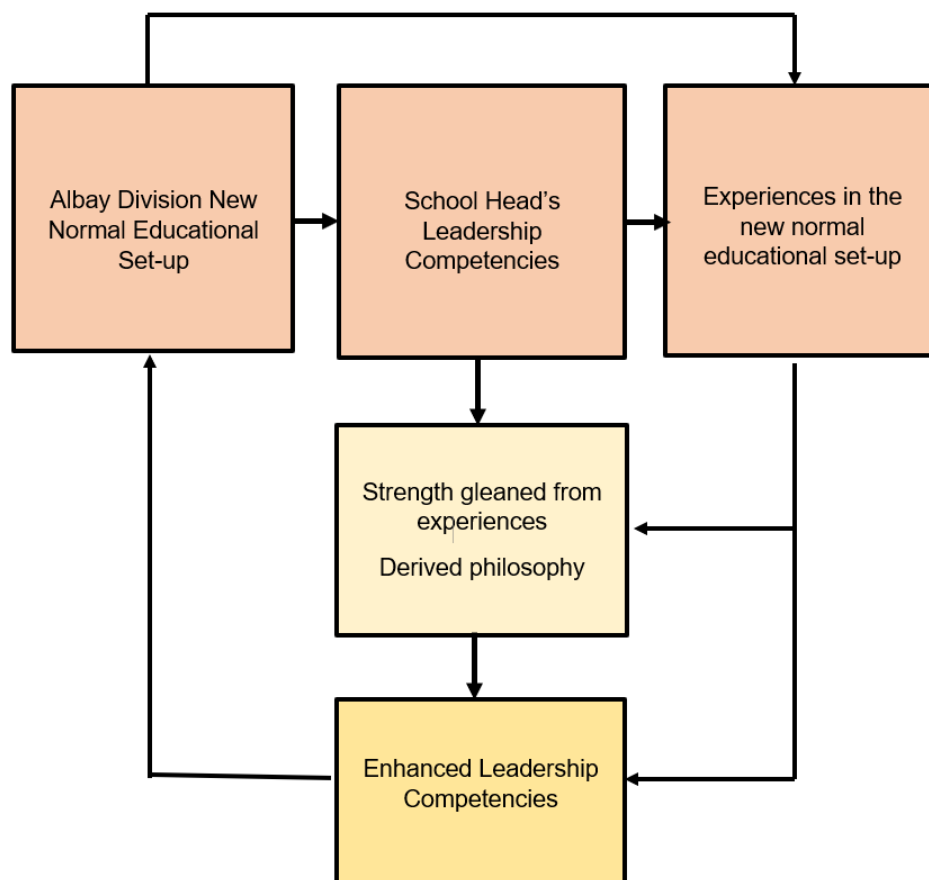


Figure 1. *Conceptual Framework of the Study*

METHODS

Research Design

The study used a descriptive qualitative research design to describe and interpret the leadership experiences of public secondary school heads during the new normal. The design was appropriate to the source study because the research questions focused on how school heads experienced leadership across five domains, what strengths emerged from those experiences, and what leadership philosophy could be derived from the collected narratives. Rather than using statistical measurement, the inquiry relied on open-ended responses that allowed participants to explain decisions, challenges, coping mechanisms, and leadership practices in their own contexts.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in selected public secondary schools in the Division of Albay during School Year 2020-2021. The participating schools represented different school sizes and geographical settings, including mainland, island, and coastal communities within the province and schools from the first, second, and third congressional districts. The diversity of settings was relevant because access to internet connectivity, transportation, community resources, and stakeholder support varied across locations and directly affected the implementation of learning continuity measures.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The participants were 12 public secondary school heads in the Division of Albay. The study included three school heads from each of four school-size categories: small, medium, large, and mega-large. Each participant was coded from A to L in the source analysis. This equal representation allowed the inquiry to capture leadership experiences from schools with differing organizational scale and operating conditions. The original methodology documented the selection structure but did not assign a formal named sampling technique; accordingly, this article reports the documented selection procedure without imposing an unsupported sampling label.

Table 1. Distribution of Participants by School Category

School category	Number of school heads
Small	3
Medium	3
Large	3
Mega-large	3
Total	12

Research Instrument

Data were gathered through an unstructured, open-ended interview guide designed around the five leadership domains investigated in the study: leading strategically, managing school operations and resources, focusing on teaching and learning, developing self and others, and building connections. Questions also elicited experiences involving learning modalities, stakeholders, challenges, coping mechanisms, strengths, and leadership philosophy. The interview guide was reviewed by the dissertation panel, revised in response to validators' comments and suggestions, and then used in the one-on-one virtual interviews.

Data Gathering Procedure

Administrative permission to conduct the study was sought from the Schools Division Superintendent of Albay. After schedules were agreed upon, the researcher personally conducted one-on-one online interviews with the 12 school heads, primarily through Google Meet. The virtual format was consistent with the restrictions and communication practices of the period. Interview recordings were transcribed, and the textual responses were collated for analysis. The source study focused on experiences during School Year 2020-2021, when the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan and public-health protocols shaped school operations.

Data Analysis

The study used qualitative content analysis, particularly thematic analysis. Interview responses were coded, collated, and categorized according to recurring patterns and deeper meanings. Analysis was organized first around the five predefined leadership domains and then around cross-domain themes that emerged from the participants' accounts. The same process was used to identify strengths that recurred across the domains and to synthesize the leadership philosophy derived from the study. No statistical treatment was applied because the evidence consisted of qualitative interview narratives.

Ethical Consideration

The source manuscript documented administrative permission from the Schools Division Superintendent and protected participants in the analysis by assigning codes A through L rather than using their names. Interviews were conducted individually in an online setting. The original thesis does not report a separate institutional research ethics review number or a detailed formal consent protocol; therefore, this journal conversion does not

add an ethics approval or consent claim that is absent from the source. Any ethics approval identifier required by the journal should be supplied from the researcher's original study records before final submission.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings were organized according to the five leadership domains and the two integrative questions concerning strengths and leadership philosophy. Across the participants, experiences were both similar and context-dependent. School size, geographical location, internet access, available resources, and the level of stakeholder participation affected how policies were implemented, but three competencies repeatedly cut across the domains: adaptation, communication, and collaboration. Table 2 synthesizes the central experiences reported in the thesis; the succeeding discussion explains each domain in relation to the study's literature and conceptual foundations.

Table 2. Synthesis of Leadership Experiences Across the Five Domains

Leadership domain	Central experiences	Cross-cutting demands/competencies
Leading strategically	Adapted BE-LCP and health guidance; used school planning teams, learner information, local innovations, monitoring, and stakeholder consultation.	Adaptation, communication, collaboration; internet limitations.
Managing school operations and resources	Managed personnel, records, MOOE, facilities, supplies, work arrangements, and health protocols; mobilized donations and local support.	Resource constraints, safety, communication, collaborative resource use.
Focusing on teaching and learning	Supported module/LAS preparation, printing, distribution and retrieval; monitored teacher outputs; used home visits and flexible assessment where feasible.	Instructional support, access limitations, flexible decision-making.
Developing self and others	Joined virtual training/postgraduate learning; supported mentoring, SLAC/INSET, psychological support, team empowerment, and professional relationships.	Continuous learning, open communication, shared responsibility.
Building connections	Used social media and virtual platforms; coordinated with parents, LGUs, barangays, volunteers, donors, and learners for local learning support.	Trust, transparency, positive attributes, collaboration, connectivity challenges.

Leading Strategically

Leading strategically involved translating national and local requirements into school-level actions that stakeholders could understand and implement. School heads reported adapting the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan, public-health guidelines, and related DepEd issuances to their local conditions. Strategic work included revisiting school plans, coordinating planning teams, communicating the school's vision and priorities, using learner information to decide appropriate learning modalities, monitoring implementation, and developing innovations when standard procedures were difficult to apply. Adaptation was especially visible where schools had to redirect learning delivery because of learner access, geography, or changing health restrictions.

Collaboration and communication were inseparable from strategic leadership. School heads consulted teachers, parents, barangay officials, local government units, and other partners; they formed teams to distribute work and relied on social media, virtual meetings, calls, and messages to communicate goals. In some communities, weak internet connectivity prevented consistent digital communication, requiring school personnel to use printed information or direct community coordination. These practices are consistent with Fernandez and

Shaw's (2020) emphasis on flexible, collaborative, and frequent communication during crisis and with D'Auria and De Smet's (2020) recommendation to organize distributed teams rather than centralize every response in one leader.

The findings also reflect the strategic orientation of the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads, which expects leaders to use policy, information, planning, and stakeholder participation to pursue institutional goals (Department of Education, 2020b). Rather than merely complying with orders, the school heads interpreted requirements in relation to local realities. This capacity to align formal standards with context became a core expression of adaptability in the study.

Managing School Operations and Resources

Managing school operations and resources required school heads to balance personnel management, finance, facilities, equipment, records, health and safety, and emerging operational problems. Participants described adapting work arrangements and health protocols, monitoring staff, providing masks and alcohol, establishing washing facilities, and organizing physical spaces to support distancing. They also redirected school resources toward printers, ink, paper, learning activity sheets, modules, cleaning supplies, and necessary repairs. Management decisions therefore connected resource allocation directly with learning continuity and staff safety.

Financial and logistical limitations were recurring difficulties. Module printing required sustained supplies, while connectivity problems affected communication, reporting, and coordination with staff working remotely. Some schools received donations of paper, ink, printers, or health supplies from stakeholders. In coastal or remote contexts, transportation costs and physical access complicated module distribution and retrieval. The school heads responded by working with finance teams, teachers, parents, barangay officials, and donors. The pattern supports crisis-leadership findings that organizational responses become more resilient when responsibility is distributed across teams and immediate needs are addressed collaboratively (Kaul et al., 2020).

These experiences show that managing resources during a crisis was not purely technical. Decisions about money, schedules, facilities, and staffing had to be communicated clearly and perceived as responsive to safety and instructional needs. Stone-Johnson and Weiner (2020) described the pandemic as a period that intensified principals' professional responsibilities and uncertainty. The Albay findings similarly show that operational competence depended on judgment, trust, and responsiveness in addition to administrative procedure.

Focusing on Teaching and Learning

The instructional domain remained central despite the absence of conventional face-to-face classes. School heads supported teachers in preparing and contextualizing learning activity sheets and modules aligned with essential competencies, organizing printing, supervising distribution and retrieval, and monitoring submitted outputs. Evidence of teacher performance included learning materials, reports, checklists, and documentation of participation in school activities. The leaders also gave feedback, coordinated teachers' instructional responsibilities, and monitored learner participation through the available reporting and communication mechanisms.

School heads and teachers used home visits, parent coordination, flexible outputs, quarterly recognition activities, and other locally feasible approaches to sustain learner participation. However, physical-distancing requirements sometimes limited home visitation, while some learners lacked devices or resources for video-based or technology-dependent outputs. Assessment therefore had to accommodate the realities of distance learning, which was consistent with the Department of Education's interim guidance encouraging alternative and context-sensitive approaches to assessment and grading (Department of Education, 2020d).

The experiences reinforce the argument that instructional leadership remains relevant during major educational change. Aziz et al. (2017) emphasized principals' responsibility to prioritize teaching and learning amid reform, while Baldanza (2018) linked instructional leadership with continuous improvement of teaching expertise and results-oriented teams. In Albay, the leaders' instructional role was expressed less through

conventional classroom supervision and more through material development, teacher support, access planning, monitoring, and coordinated problem solving.

Developing Self and Others

The new normal required school heads to develop their own competence while supporting the professional growth and well-being of teachers. Participants joined virtual seminars and trainings, and some pursued postgraduate studies. They also described reflection, decisive decision-making, open communication, and continued learning as part of their personal professional development. The rapid introduction of new platforms, policies, and learning arrangements made professional learning closely connected to immediate operational problems.

For teachers, school heads promoted training, mentoring, school learning action cells, in-service activities, demonstration or peer-support practices, and team-based responsibility. Leaders attempted to nurture professional relationships and provide psychological support while staff worked under uncertainty and alternative work arrangements. Teachers were empowered to take roles in module development, printing, distribution, monitoring, and other school processes, which allowed leadership responsibilities to be shared rather than concentrated at the top.

Bredeson (2000) argued that principals shape teacher professional development by creating learning environments and participating in professional learning processes. The Department of Education (2020c) similarly prioritized continuing professional development for teachers and school leaders. The study extends these ideas into a crisis context: professional development functioned not only as long-term capacity building but also as an immediate mechanism for coping with unfamiliar instructional and managerial demands.

Building Connections

Building connections encompassed internal relationships and broader partnerships with families, communities, government units, and other stakeholders. School heads worked with teams of teachers in the distribution of learning materials and coordinated with parents during retrieval. In coastal areas, local government and barangay officials assisted in module delivery and enrollment-related activities. Community volunteers and donors contributed materials or resources, and in one local arrangement academically capable learners helped slower learners living in the same community while health precautions were observed.

Digital tools became important for sustaining local and wider connections. Participants used social media, Messenger, Google Meet, Zoom, mobile phones, international news, and online articles to communicate and remain updated. Yet the findings consistently identified poor or absent internet connectivity as a constraint. Consequently, effective connection depended on combining digital channels with local networks and direct community coordination rather than assuming universal online access. This finding is compatible with Tyler's (2016) emphasis on principal communication and with the crisis need for clear, repeated communication through multiple channels (Fernandez & Shaw, 2020).

Positive personal attributes were also important to sustainable connections. The participants' accounts emphasized integrity, credibility, transparency, motivation, appreciation, service orientation, and trust. These qualities helped leaders obtain cooperation while the school depended more heavily on families and communities. Montemayor (2020) and Noonoo (2020) both documented the increased importance of external partners and parents during the shift to new learning arrangements, reinforcing the study's conclusion that stakeholder relationships were not peripheral but fundamental to learning continuity.

Strengths Gleaned from the Experiences

Across all five domains, three strengths consistently emerged: adaptation, communication, and collaboration. Adaptation referred to the school heads' ability to interpret and apply the BE-LCP, IATF health guidance, DepEd policies, work arrangements, and assessment requirements to changing local conditions. It included modifying plans, selecting feasible learning arrangements, responding to resource limitations, and

adjusting decisions as circumstances changed. This finding reflects the broader crisis-leadership principle that effective leaders must learn and act under uncertainty rather than wait for stable conditions (D'Auria & De Smet, 2020; Fernandez & Shaw, 2020).

Communication involved conveying school goals, health requirements, schedules, instructional directions, and emerging decisions through available means. Messenger, Google Meet, Zoom, calls, text messages, and face-to-face communication when permitted were all used, but internet limitations tested the leaders' capacity to maintain continuity. Collaboration involved empowering teachers, coordinating parents and barangays, working with local government and community partners, and sharing responsibility for modules, supplies, professional growth, and learner support. These competencies reinforced one another: adaptation produced workable responses, communication created shared understanding, and collaboration converted plans into collective action.

Integrative Approach Leadership Philosophy

The study derived an Integrative Approach Leadership Philosophy from the combined experiences of the school heads. The philosophy holds that leadership during a crisis is strengthened when adaptation, communication, and collaboration are integrated and sustained by positive personal attributes. The school heads did not rely on one isolated competency; they combined policy adaptation, instructional and managerial knowledge, stakeholder communication, and collaborative implementation. Personal qualities such as integrity, transparency, trust, motivation, appreciation, and service orientation supported these practices and influenced how stakeholders responded to leadership.

The participants' practices also displayed democratic or participative characteristics because consultation and empowerment were commonly used before or during implementation. Kılıçoğlu (2018) associated democratic leadership with participation, distributed involvement, and transparency. In the present study, however, the derived philosophy was broader than a single leadership style: it integrated crisis adaptation, communication, collaboration, and personal attributes across instructional, operational, and relational responsibilities. This synthesis is the study's principal conceptual contribution and reflects the cyclical conceptual framework in which experience informs strengthened leadership competence.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the leadership experiences of public secondary school heads in Albay during the pandemic were both shared and varied across the five domains of leading strategically, managing school operations and resources, focusing on teaching and learning, developing self and others, and building connections. The context of each school influenced the form and difficulty of implementation, particularly in relation to internet access, resources, health restrictions, module logistics, and community conditions. Nevertheless, the school heads consistently adapted policies and practices, communicated goals and decisions through multiple channels, and collaborated with teachers, parents, communities, and other stakeholders to sustain school operations and learning continuity.

Adaptation, communication, and collaboration were the primary strengths gleaned from these experiences. They were reinforced by positive personal attributes that supported trust, participation, and shared responsibility. From this pattern, the study derived an Integrative Approach Leadership Philosophy in which crisis leadership is understood as the coordinated use of adaptability, communication, collaboration, and constructive personal attributes. The contribution of the study lies in showing how these competencies operated together across instructional, managerial, professional-development, and stakeholder domains during a period of severe educational disruption.

Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed for leadership development, school planning, and future research:

1. The Department of Education and qualified training institutions should sustain leadership and management programs that strengthen competencies aligned with the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads, with particular attention to crisis adaptation, communication, stakeholder collaboration, instructional continuity, and resource management.
2. School Improvement Plans and Annual Implementation Plans should incorporate lessons from the five leadership domains so that crisis preparedness, learning continuity, staff development, stakeholder coordination, and communication systems are embedded in regular school planning rather than treated only as emergency responses.
3. Leadership development for school heads should give continuing attention to communication, interpersonal relationships, professionalism, integrity, transparency, trust building, and other positive personal attributes because these characteristics supported collaboration and stakeholder confidence during the pandemic.
4. School heads should be provided continuing opportunities for professional development in instructional, operational, managerial, digital, and crisis-leadership competencies to help sustain school performance and prepare for future disruptions.
5. Future studies should strengthen the validation of the findings through triangulation by involving school heads, teachers, parents, learners, and other stakeholders and by comparing experiences across additional divisions or provinces.
6. Researchers may examine the Integrative Approach Leadership Philosophy in other educational settings and crisis contexts to determine its transferability and to refine the relationships among adaptation, communication, collaboration, and positive personal attributes.

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