Hearing the Voices of School Heads on Fostering Learning Environment in Schools: A Phenomenology

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to investigate how school heads create a conducive learning environment through student empowerment and collaborative practices. The research problem focused on the importance of incorporating student voices into educational decision-making to improve learning outcomes and school climate. Utilizing a phenomenological approach and a qualitative research design, the researcher conducted an in-depth interview (IDIs) with school heads to understand their perspectives and practices in promoting student agency and participation. After conducting the study, the researcher discovered different experiences of school heads as they strive to cultivate a supportive learning environment. It was found that managing resources posed significant challenges due to limited funding and misalignment with goals. Despite these constraints, school heads prioritized professional development for teachers, often utilizing alternative funding sources and dedicating time to support growth. In addition, integrating technology into classrooms was a complex task, hindered by a digital divide and various skill levels of teachers. Curriculum adjustments were frequently required in response to new regulations. In connection, a positive attitude was crucial for overcoming challenges through with maintaining optimism to inspire and motivate their communities. They also focused on fostering inclusivity by promoting social-emotional learning and encouraging innovative teaching methods. Building strong relationships with stakeholders, including parents and staff were also essential for creating a collaborative and effective educational environment.

Keywords: educational management, fostering a conducive learning environment, school heads, qualitative-phenomenological inquiry, purposive sampling, thematic analysis, Maco Davao de Oro

INTRODUCTION

Creating a conducive learning environment within the Department of Education is crucial for the holistic development of students and the success of educational initiatives. This positive atmosphere enhances academic achievements and plays a pivotal role in shaping individuals into engaged and well-rounded citizens. Despite the efforts by school heads to create and maintain this environment, persistent issues and challenges arise. These challenges stem from teachers' inability to adapt to modern teaching methods and address diverse learning needs, often due to a lack of training and professional development opportunities for emerging educational innovations.

In Pakistan, fostering an inclusive learning environment for transgender individuals presents significant challenges for school heads. Entrenched cultural and institutional barriers impede progress. Pervasive cultural stigmatization, rooted in societal norms and religious interpretations, marginalizes transgender individuals, leading to educational environments marked by discrimination and harassment (Qureshi et al., 2023).

Moreover, in Cambodia, school heads also struggle with the quality of teacher education. Outdated training methodologies, insufficient resources, and a disconnect between training programs and the evolving educational landscape create significant obstacles (Heng, 2023). Similarly, in Nepal, school heads face challenges in effective leadership due to the absence of adequately resourced Continuing Professional Development opportunities. Centralized policies have limited their position, including issues like resource scarcity, lack of support in training, and inactive collaboration. These factors significantly compromise their ability to initiate and sustain meaningful management, particularly in disadvantaged communities (Khanal et al., 2021).

In the Philippines, the essence of a learning environment that is conducive is highlighted, particularly at Saint Mary's University Nueva Vizcaya. This is evident in their ongoing assessment of the Clean, Healthy, Safe, and Friendly (CHSF) school environment program, showcasing their commitment to an environment that fosters positive educational experiences (Maslang et al., 2022). However, at Mindanao State University-Sulu, different challenges emerge. School heads face difficulties in fostering effective communication between teachers and parents, ensuring consistent and meaningful parental engagement, and addressing any barriers to collaboration. These issues can hinder students' overall performance (Abdukadil, 2022).

In Davao de Oro, I have observed several schools gaps between school leadership approaches and teacher needs, particularly regarding professional development opportunities. This gap manifests in limited access to relevant training programs, lack of communication about available resources, and unequal distribution of training opportunities. Such discrepancies could hinder school head motivation and skill development, potentially impacting the learning environment and overall performance in school. This research aims to discover the nature and extent of this leadership in Davao de Oro schools and its specific effects on school heads, leadership practices, and student achievement.

While numerous studies have investigated learning environments, few have directly probed the synergistic effect of school leadership approaches that fulfill teacher needs on student outcomes. Existing research often explores individual aspects like teacher development (Chang et al., 2020), parent engagement (Kelty & Wakabayashi, 2020), or technology integration (Brindley et al., 2023), yet the interplay between leadership and teacher needs in areas like professional development opportunities, resource allocation, and communication styles remains largely unexplored. This study aims to delve into this crucial gap, investigating how leadership approaches that address these specific needs can positively impact classroom practices, student engagement, and ultimately, student achievement. By filling this research gap, this research hopes to offer an understanding and practical guideline for fostering more effective learning environments through strengthened leader-teacher partnerships.

The result of this study offered an understanding of the role of school heads in fostering a learning environment that contributed to the quality of school performance. This research revealed that the learning environment significantly influenced the educational experiences of learners. The insights gained were essential for shaping practical strategies for school leaders, policymakers, and teachers. The result of this

study would be presented at educational conferences, and I also plan to publish this study in peer-reviewed academic journals to reach a broader audience of educators and researchers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and discover the voices of the school heads in the Davao de Oro Division, focusing on how they promoted a fostering learning environment in their schools.

At this stage in the study, fostering a learning environment was generally defined as the experiences of the public-school heads and their strategies in fostering healthy learning environment. This also included the responsibility of the school head to cater to the needs of the school and promote quality education.

Research Questions

1. What are the lived experiences of the school heads in fostering a conducive learning environment?
2. How do the school heads cope with the challenges encountered in fostering a conducive learning environment?
3. What are the insights of school heads in fostering a conducive learning environment that can be shared with others?

Theoretical Lens

This research is seen through the Transformational Leadership Theory 1973 pioneered by James V. Downtown. It focuses on the leadership style of principals, particularly their ability to inspire and motivate followers toward a common vision. Transformational leadership emphasizes the importance of leaders fostering a positive and inclusive organizational culture. This is so that transformational leaders can effectively deliver their vision to the institution and collaborate with their teams to implement it into action (Campbell, 2018).

In the context of this study, leaders, particularly school heads, assume a pivotal role in articulating their vision effectively and collaboratively translating this vision into tangible and actionable initiatives. Transformational leadership places a significant emphasis on fostering a positive and inclusive organizational culture, emphasizing the transformative impact that leaders can have on their teams. Similarly, within educational settings, school heads stand as catalysts for change, guiding the strategic direction and actively engaging with their teams to bring about meaningful transformations. The essence of transformational leadership lies in its capacity to inspire and motivate individuals toward a shared vision of positive change. School heads, as transformational leaders, are expected not only to communicate their vision effectively but also to involve their teams collaboratively in the process of implementation.

Moreover, this study is seen through the Organizational Culture Theory of Hofstede (1980), which focuses on the values, beliefs, norms, and traditions in an institution within the context of a school setting. This theory posits that organizations, including schools, develop a unique culture that shapes the behavior, attitudes, and interactions of its members. Consequently, organizational culture encompasses the unwritten and often implicit rules that guide how individuals within the organization perceive and respond to various situations. It influences decision-making processes, communication styles, and overall organizational dynamics.

In this research, organizational culture plays an important role in shaping the behaviors, attitudes, and interactions of key stakeholders, including school heads, teachers, and students. Drawing from the

Organizational Culture Theory, this study engages in a comprehensive analysis of the diverse layers of culture within the school environment. By scrutinizing visible elements like rituals, symbols, and structures, the research gains insights into the organization's upheld values and practices, including observable behaviors that contribute to the overall cultural identity. The exploration extends to unraveling the espoused values communicated by school heads and leaders, uncovering the ideals expected of the school community.

In addition, this study is based on Albert Bandura's Environmental Learning Theory 1986. At its core, the theory asserts that behavior is not solely shaped by internal factors but is intricately linked to external influences. Bandura contends that individuals gain understanding not only through personal experiences but also by observation and imitation of behaviors from others within their environment. This reciprocal interaction between behavior, personal factors, and the environment creates a continuous cycle where each element influences and is influenced by the others. In essence, the theory emphasizes the bidirectional relationship between an individual's actions, their characteristics, and the surrounding environment.

In the context of this study, Albert Bandura's Environmental Learning Theory is instrumental in elucidating how the behaviors of school heads, particularly in the cultivation of a conducive learning environment, are shaped not only by their characteristics but also by the observations and imitations of others within the school setting. Through a comprehensive exploration of the reciprocal interaction between the actions of school heads, their distinctive traits, and the educational environment.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study focused on 10 school heads within the Department of Education, Maco, Davao de Oro Division. The researcher selected 10 participants for in-depth interviews conducted from February to April, SY 2023-2024.

The study was limited to school heads from large public schools within the Davao de Oro division, focusing on gaining detailed knowledge of the challenges, strategies, and innovative practices employed by school leaders in managing educational institutions.

Importance of the Study

In understanding the perspective of the school heads in fostering a learning environment, this study provided insights among school heads in fostering a healthy environment. It benefited several stakeholders:

To **school heads**, the study empowered them to gain knowledge and understanding of both the issues and successes within their institutions. By delving into the details of the school environment, school heads were equipped with invaluable insights that facilitated their informed decision-making and strategic planning.

To **teachers**, the study provided profound insights in revolutionizing their approach to education. By comprehensively examining the learning environment, teachers gained an understanding of the factors affecting student engagement and achievement, enabling them to tailor their instructional methods and approaches to the unique needs and preferences of their students.

Moreover, **to students**, the study directly benefited them by improving the learning atmosphere, positively influencing their academic performance. A conducive environment enhanced student engagement, making the learning experience more enjoyable and impactful. Understanding and addressing students' needs contributed to their overall well-being and development.

Furthermore, the study benefited **stakeholders** of the school, especially parents, as stakeholders benefited from a transparent and responsive school system that prioritized the voices of educators and administrators, ensuring their children received the best possible education.

Additionally, the study provided valuable insights to **Department of Education (DepEd)** officials by highlighting recurring issues across various schools. DepEd could allocate its resources more strategically by pinpointing these systemic challenges, implementing targeted interventions that addressed these issues, and ultimately enhancing the quality of education. The DepEd gained insights into the effectiveness of existing policies and could adapt them for better outcomes.

For **future researchers**, this research served as a valuable resource for planning future studies. It assisted them in pinpointing significant variables connected to the learning environment, off e   m direction and focus for their research efforts in this area.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Role of School Heads in Fostering Learning Environment

The effect of an effective principal on student achievement is almost equal to that of an effective teacher. It is essential to have a competent school principal in the institution to ensure that children have excellent educational opportunities, build strong and inclusive settings, enable staff members to assume leadership roles and make solid decisions based on evidence (Superville, 2019). In addition, to foster a learning environment where high-quality principals will support new principals, we must comprehend the experiences of new principals and their difficulties in handling a school. It will shape their function as principals (Levin et al., 2020).

A study by Aguilar (2023) highlights the critical role of school heads in effectively managing resources to meet institutional goals and enhance student learning outcomes. This includes organizing well-structured and conducive classroom environments, employing engaging instructional strategies like scaffolding and inquiry-based teaching, and developing coherent assessment methods. Similarly, Mendoza and Callo (2022) found that school heads must strategically distribute resources to maximize efficiency and effectiveness, considering factors such as department curricula, teacher workloads, student enrollment patterns, and the unique strengths and weaknesses of individual teachers.

Furthermore, to better support new principals and reduce new principal turnover, people must comprehend the experiences that new principals go through and the experiences that have shaped their function as principals. It is impossible to exaggerate the significance of having a capable principal overseeing our schools (Tsai et al., 2020). On the contrary, another study says that the stress level of newly appointed principals who feel unprepared for the post rises in tandem with the number of tasks and obligations that principals bear (Huh & Lee, 2020). Moreover, to help the new principal, programs such as Professional development, coaching and mentorship, social networks, school teams, and district and state-level assistance are some of these support systems. Isolation, pressure about high-stakes accountability, raising student achievement targets, and being strong are some significant obstacles new principals face (Kruger et al., 2022).

Similarly, an obligation of school head is to enhance the environment and achieve school objectives is pivotal, as they bear the responsibility of orchestrating the collaborative efforts of faculty, students, and support personnel (Barret, 2023). Subsequently, teachers depend on principals to guide and motivate them, trusting that principals possess comprehensive knowledge of the educational system. This proactive approach enhances teacher performance and fosters a positive school environment that prevents inapprop-

riate behavior, including bullying (Kocak et al., 2023).

However, research indicates that professional development is essential for teachers in the 21st century, enabling them to advance in their careers by keeping abreast of new teaching methods and technologies, which in turn benefits their students. The modern educational landscape provides numerous technologies and opportunities that support educational leaders in achieving their professional development objectives, thereby contributing to the long-term success of teachers (Alkaabi, 2023). Professional development programs are crafted to enhance teachers' skills and knowledge, meeting contemporary educational demands and societal needs. These programs involve systematic and structured monitoring of teachers' competencies to ensure they can effectively address current educational challenges (Gajić et al., 2023).

Moreover, a leader's skills to understand and acknowledge teachers' mindsets, stress, emotions, and work attitudes, particularly those of school principals, are paramount. This understanding fosters a positive climate, creates a favorable working environment, and enhances organizational satisfaction (Zhang, 2023). Additionally, principals play a pivotal role in shaping students' behavior and academic performance. They function as policy enforcers, mentors, educational leaders, and administrators, carrying the responsibility of upholding the principles and practices of the school. Compliance with child protection rules is imperative for the school community, with particular significance for the principal (Purwanto et al., 2023). Furthermore, Jones and Palikara (2023) emphasize the critical role of school heads in defining and implementing parental engagement within schools, which significantly affects student outcomes. Their research indicates that school leaders frequently overestimate the influence of school-based activities on student achievement, potentially leading to a misalignment between their efforts and the real needs of students and parents. Yang et al. (2023) recommend that school heads prioritize building a shared agency with parents, involving them in decision-making processes, and valuing their input on various aspects of school life to foster a collaborative environment.

Implementing effective feedback mechanisms is vital for educational institutions to improve learning environments and teaching practices. Feedback is a powerful tool for enhancing student performance, refining instructional methods, and bridging knowledge gaps (Ajjawi et al., 2023). Nevertheless, the complexity of feedback implementation requires a transition from traditional methods to modern practices that emphasize relational processes, trust, and safety, allowing students to freely discuss their challenges and uncertainties (Elsayed & Cakir, 2023). Feedback literacy, which encompasses the ability to actively engage with and benefit from feedback, is crucial for fostering student growth and development. However, challenges such as delayed grading, student motivation issues, and limited parental involvement can hinder the effectiveness of feedback in educational settings (Carless, 2023).

In connection, a study of the experience of the school heads in supporting the professional development of the teachers through participating in district or university preparation programs, coaching, working with adults in a variety of contexts, assuming leadership responsibilities in the classroom, and gaining experience as an assistant principal are examples of professional experiences (Larsen & Mathé, 2023). Similarly, school heads' first and most important responsibility is to develop people, particularly teachers. Principals can enhance educational quality by fostering teacher retention or facilitating transitions that attract higher-quality educators, thereby elevating the teaching staff and improving student outcomes. School heads should prioritize teaching and learning in everything they do. Principals must have a plan to enhance their instructors' ability to educate (Susanti et al., 2023).

However, there is a limited funding for instructional materials and equipment, along with the need for improved teacher training to elevate educational quality (Katshuna, 2023). It was found that financial

limitations often restrict the ability to fund teacher attendance at workshops and training sessions because of insufficient budget allocation and the need for realignment of funds (Arciaga & Astillero, 2023). Additionally, the lack of funding was also noted as a significant barrier in addressing teacher misconduct. While scheduling conflicts further complicate the allocation of time for professional development activities (Mhando, 2023).

In connection, school heads are often burdened with extensive workloads and administrative duties, which limit their capacity to organize and participate in such initiatives (Caingcoy, 2023). Similarly, school heads face challenges in managing educational settings, which include heavy workloads, evolving curricula, and frequent policy changes imposed by educational authorities (Devanadera & Ching, 2023). These pressures are compounded by issues such as teacher motivation and retention, which are critical for maintaining a stable and effective teaching staff. One significant challenge is the overloaded curriculum that places immense pressure on students and teachers alike, leaving little room for the development of individual interests and talents (Baloyi & Khumalo, 2024).

Additionally, the dominance of technology in modern education can reduce social interaction and hinder critical thinking, further complicating the educational landscape. In connection, they also face significant challenges in adapting to frequent changes and new rules, which necessitate constant adjustments in their strategies and resource management to align with evolving educational standards (Wadasen, 2024). One of the primary difficulties is the frequent changing of policies, which complicates financial management and requires school heads to continuously update their practices to remain compliant (Turda, 2023).

School heads often experience significant stress and burnout due to a combination of excessive administrative duties, high expectations, and intense accountability. The multifaceted nature of their roles, which includes managing school operations, resources, and addressing teacher misconduct, contributes to their overwhelming workload (Karaevli, 2024). For instance, school heads are responsible for ensuring efficient administrative services, which are crucial for the smooth functioning of educational institutions, and this responsibility can be quite demanding (Lolo & Cabigas, 2023).

Additionally, the need to navigate the challenges introduced by the "new normal" in education has further complicated their roles, requiring them to find innovative solutions to maintain effective learning delivery and support their educators (Santos, 2023). In connection, the lack of sufficient emotional and mental support worsens their stress levels, as they often face situations arising from interactions with parents, teachers, and students, along with non-education-related workloads and insufficient financial income (Yildiz et al., 2023).

Moreover, walkthroughs and classroom inspections are excellent methods for monitoring teacher practice, gathering data on areas needing professional development, and providing teachers with feedback to enhance their instruction. Principals are responsible for observing teachers, but their role extends beyond observation alone. They should also provide teachers with feedback and coaching to support their professional development (Alam & Mohanty, 2023). Meanwhile, school leaders who set the budget and manage the physical upkeep of the school also play a crucial role in shaping the work environment for teachers and other school staff. They act as a bridge between educators, parents, school policies, teachers, and other individuals invested in the school's success (Prasetiyo et al., 2023).

In addition, Jiang (2023) supports the view that integrating technology into educational settings presents challenges, such as initial resistance and frustration from educators and students who are unfamiliar with digital platforms and educational apps. This resistance typically arises from a lack of necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies, highlighting the need for comprehensive professional development for teachers.

Afzal et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of addressing the digital divide to ensure equitable access to technology-driven learning experiences, considering disparities in internet access and device ownership across different demographics like age, gender, and socioeconomic status. Furthermore, Alkhatib (2023) notes that the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the importance of technology in education, necessitating adaptations to meet new educational demands and student expectations in a rapidly evolving environment.

Furthermore, school principals are crucial in supporting teachers in implementing updated teaching methods. Their perspectives on professional development, such as their opinions, directly impact teacher attitudes. This support is essential for teachers to effectively engage students in diverse activities while utilizing new teaching approaches they have learned (Rohmawati & Pahlevi, 2023). Otherwise, if school heads are open to innovation, teachers can explore new teaching methods known during professional development. They can support teachers by approving curriculum designs and providing resources. They can also emphasize professional growth and encourage teachers to prioritize it in their teaching practices (Alenezi, 2023).

Similarly, research highlights the crucial role of instructional leadership in fostering teacher enthusiasm and dedication, which significantly enhances student engagement and learning outcomes. Integrating literacy programs and collaborative learning strategies, such as group projects, further boosts students' academic performance and interpersonal skills (Magboo et al., 2023). Additionally, studies demonstrate that transformational and instructional leadership styles adopted by school heads are instrumental in enhancing teacher effectiveness and overall school performance, thereby playing a vital role in student success (Silva & Andal, 2023). Moreover, education departments promote action research, encouraging evidence-based decision-making to directly address school issues and improve educational quality. Effective governance in school operations and resource management is essential to provide the necessary support for these initiatives (Taghap & Boyonas, 2023).

In addition, teachers have opportunities to participate in seminars and training courses. School administrators will monitor and record these events, ensuring that educators are informed about and have access to them. They will also receive help from other teachers and the administration in carrying out these activities (Leithwood et al., 2021). Teachers can also plan to continue their professional development by mentoring additional students to enhance their teaching abilities. Creating reports, compiling papers, and reading from various sources help researchers learn what other researchers think in their field process of development (Mahoney et al., 2021).

Furthermore, school administrators can also guide teachers in investigating resources. Undoubtedly, engaging in activities like checking scholarly publications, encouraging educators to contribute to articles and teacher-only competitions, and directing them to new research resources could help them gain more. School heads play a vital role in fostering the growth of their teachers. School heads can effectively nurture their teachers' professional development by understanding their needs, skills, and characteristics and acknowledging their strengths and areas for improvement (Yulianti et al., 2023). When teachers have limited social connections within the school, assigning them to participate in social and cultural activities can enhance their relationships with students and improve their overall interactions. It is equally important to provide guidance and support to experienced educators to foster growth. Doing so creates opportunities for increased collaboration among teachers, allowing them to share new experiences while fostering stronger connections (Gimbert et al., 2023).

Consequently, school principals bear a heavy workload during their work. Teachers may also consider th-

eir chances for advancement, offer short-term training assistance, and promote task sharing within their teams (Velarde et al., 2022). Another study talks about the experience of the school heads about the parents and community engagement. When students are in school, their families' involvement improves the classroom. Parents and community engagement play an essential role in having a conducive learning environment by supporting the children's education (Kelty & Wakabayashi, 2020).

Family involvement has a strong influence on children's development. It helps them build critical thinking and social skills, like staying motivated, paying attention, controlling their impulses, and feeling self-assured (Ferreira et al., 2020). Family involvement is crucial throughout a child's life and evolves as they mature into adulthood. How families interact with their children plays a significant role in shaping their learning and development in all aspects of their lives, including schools, extracurricular activities, and community involvement (Evans & Vaandering, 2022).

Fostering a Learning Environment

The benefits and drawbacks of implementing educational technology in resource-constrained inclusive settings in Cyprus can help the school heads cope with the schools' problems and challenges in fostering a learning environment. Computer-mediated collaborative learning sessions were conducted between a primary school teacher and her students in the classroom. In the school's computer lab, students collaborated in groups to use a restricted number of computers to tackle various mathematical tasks (Liu & Ji, 2023). Additionally, working in small groups, gaining more acceptance, maintaining group balance, and improving engagement were other advantages of group collaboration with computer use. These were problems with technology and difficulties working in groups when using computers (Altmeyer et al., 2020).

Similarly, Torrance et al. (2023) highlighted that modern school heads face challenges, including heavy workloads, evolving curricula, and frequent policy changes mandated by educational authorities. These pressures are further intensified by concerns related to teacher motivation and retention. Effective leadership practices are essential in navigating these challenges, significantly impacting teachers' decisions to remain in or leave an organization. Shebli (2023) emphasized that strategies such as enhancing job satisfaction, improving working conditions, providing mentorship, and offering competitive compensation are critical in reducing teacher turnover. Additionally, Arthur and Bradley (2023) affirmed that cultivating a supportive environment that values teachers' contributions, acknowledges their efforts, and fosters collegial relationships is crucial, especially in high-need schools where demands are on the rise.

Furthermore, school heads have recognized the critical role of technology in transforming educational practices and have taken proactive steps to support its integration into classrooms. These equip teachers with the necessary skills to effectively utilize new technological tools in their instruction, thereby enhancing teaching techniques and student engagement (Al-Sindi et al., 2023). Similarly, these initiatives are crucial as they help teachers transition from traditional methods to more innovative approaches (Badawy et al., 2024).

In addition, school heads are not only focused on the implementation but also on the continuous assessment of these technologies to ensure they positively impact student learning outcomes (Hutasuhut & Harahap, 2024). This involves using learning management systems and other analytical tools to monitor student progress and identify areas needing additional support, thus enabling a more personalized and effective learning experience (Da Silva, 2023). Similarly, school heads also fostered a collaborative and

supportive educational environment by building strong relationships with stakeholders, which is essential for the successful implementation of innovative educational initiatives (Perez & Banayo, 2023).

Subsequently, Küçükakın and Gökmenoğlu (2023) found that leadership plays a crucial role in promoting diversity and social justice, especially for immigrant students in Northern Cyprus. School principals' leadership is instrumental in addressing inequalities and fostering an inclusive learning environment. Similarly, Boutwell and Smith (2023) underscored the importance of inclusive leadership models in creating safe and supportive environments essential for individual learning and organizational effectiveness. Wolfenden et al. (2022) highlighted that supportive leadership behaviors enhance student knowledge, strengthen community dedication and confidence, and foster a positive school culture through ongoing engagement and proactive interventions.

In connection, managing educational infrastructure effectively, including procurement, maintenance, utilization, and development, is crucial for optimizing resources and fostering a conducive learning environment (Kholizah et al., 2023). Ensuring regular safety drills and emergency preparedness training for teachers and students is also essential for prompt responses to potential crises, promoting a secure school environment that supports student well-being and academic success (Arizqi et al., 2023). Furthermore, the development of a decision-making framework prioritizing school infrastructure investments, even with limited budgets, through clustering procedures, multi-criteria utility functions, and optimization strategies, underscores the importance of strategic planning in enhancing safety and functionality of school facilities (Fernández et al., 2023).

Moreover, innovation, viewed from this perspective, transcends the mere adoption of new technologies. It involves cultivating novel concepts to propel progress and the willingness to confront unprecedented challenges. On the contrary, a new product or process may be characterized by substantial deviations from existing methods and structures. It introduces distinct details and units and becomes accessible to potential users, thereby being implemented within the organizational framework (Nørgård, 2021). In addition, comprehensive school health frameworks that incorporate prevention, promotion, and support for mental health within the school community. Successful implementation of these frameworks relies on genuine execution, strong leadership, and active engagement from all stakeholders, including students, parents, educators, and community leaders (Wignall et al., 2023).

Similarly, Cherkashchenko and Nikolaeva (2023) found that school principals who prioritize risk-taking, effectiveness, autonomy, collegiality, and integrity in their leadership style significantly enhance educational leadership capacity among teachers, fostering a collaborative school culture. This engagement is pivotal in creating a supportive environment that motivates teachers, ultimately benefiting students. Additionally, effective school leadership in Southern Punjab has been linked to a positive organizational culture, with principals' management skills predicting and improving educational quality (Qaisar et al., 2023).

Moreover, effective leadership practices, including mentorship, fostering cooperation, and providing real-time feedback, significantly enhance teachers' service quality and performance (Albino, 2023). Headmasters' motivation and support are crucial in developing teachers' capacity and leadership qualities. Instructional leadership behaviors are also vital, as they strongly correlate with teachers' work engagement, dedication, and enthusiasm (Soroño & Quirap, 2023), creating an environment where teachers work with energy and commitment. In addition, school heads' leadership styles, particularly transformational and visionary approaches, significantly impact teacher effectiveness and school performance, emphasizing traits like flexibility, interpersonal skills, and empowerment (Rodulfa, 2023).

Implementing these best practices fosters a culture of continuous improvement in educational institutions, equipping teachers with essential tools and knowledge (Nasim et al., 2023).

However, programs like Emotionally Friendly Settings (EFS) demonstrate that the impact varies based on the authenticity of implementation and the level of leadership support (Appel et al., 2023). Collaborative efforts involving diverse stakeholders have shown effectiveness, especially in addressing mental health challenges intensified by events such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Kuyken et al., 2023). While programs like Targeted Mental Health in Schools (TaMHS) show promise, there is a need for more rigorous trials to ensure these programs are diverse (Margaretha et al., 2023). In essence, innovation encapsulates both the ideation of fresh concepts and the tangible implementation of groundbreaking solutions (Mulang, 2021). It is the operationalization of personalized learning environments and experiences using technology and self-regulated learning (Richardson et al., 2021).

In addition, Perez and Banayo (2023) emphasize the importance of ongoing professional development for improving instructional quality and fostering a positive school climate, thereby enhancing educational outcomes. Such programs boost teacher motivation, engagement, and retention, contributing to a resilient educational system. Hale (2023) suggests that school leaders' efforts to address biases through diversity and inclusion training, promote mindfulness, and teach conflict resolution are crucial for creating supportive learning environments. In connection, strong leadership practices, including mentorship and timely feedback, significantly impact teacher performance and service quality (Ciocon, 2023).

Consequently, Rosales and Banayo (2023) highlighted that school principals' instructional leadership significantly enhances teachers' work engagement, boosting their energy, commitment, and absorption in fostering a positive school environment. Similarly, Abugho and Quirap (2023) found that effective resource and time management by school leaders directly supports teachers' welfare and professional development through benefits, ongoing education, coaching, training, and motivation. Furthermore, Santos (2023) emphasized that transformational leadership qualities such as vision, trustworthiness, flexibility, and strong interpersonal skills are pivotal in nurturing positive relationships between principals and teachers, ultimately influencing student achievement and school performance.

Furthermore, there is evidence linking principals' sense of efficacy to school improvement and effectiveness; instructors' and students' positive self-efficacy beliefs also contribute to higher student success and school performance. Supporting school principals' self-efficacy beliefs can favor schools' future performance and the responsible use of technology in the classroom (Torres & Chrispeels, 2022). Moreover, the approaches and strategies employed in conventional education have been replaced with those appropriate for modern education and backed by technical tools and equipment. Student- and practice-centered approaches have supplanted teacher- and subject-centered approaches. To give the subjects greater significance for students, student-centered methodologies and procedures were integrated with the tools and resources created using instructional technologies (AlAhmad, 2021).

In addition, school leaders who exhibit visionary, trustworthy, and adaptable qualities significantly enhance teacher effectiveness and school performance, ultimately benefiting student outcomes (Ngoho & Pañares, 2023). Additionally, adopting democratic leadership styles that prioritize empathy, social skills, and shared decision-making fosters a more effective school environment and positively impacts school outcomes (Mendoza, 2023). Involving students in these processes allows schools to address instructional, facility-related, and behavioral concerns more effectively (Anjum et al., 2021). In connection, research indicates that when students actively participate in these processes, their perceptions and needs are better understood and integrated, leading to more effective learning environments (Tomlin, 2023).

Moreover, research underscores that leadership styles of school heads, particularly transformational and instructional leadership, significantly influence the effectiveness of teachers and school performance. Transformational leaders, known for their openness to new ideas, risk-taking, and feedback-seeking, foster a collaborative and innovative environment (Maini, 2022). Effective instructional leadership, which involves providing resources, instructional support, and clear communication, correlates positively with high teacher performance (Andal & Jovellano, 2023). Administrative support plays a crucial role in facilitating this collaborative approach by ensuring teachers have the necessary resources and support for activities like action research and professional development, directly improving student outcomes (Virador, 2023).

Consequently, the century we live in has seen rapid changes in the accuracy of information. Instead of training people with template thinking, we must develop creative thinkers to stay up with this shift. Individual disparities exist in education as well. Each student may pick up musical information and abilities in a different method.It is advised that music teachers in primary and secondary schools use technology well (Kibici, 2022). In addition, technology, when integrated, offers transformative potential. It facilitates seamless learning across various settings and timeframes. These learner-centric environments foster collaboration, personal accountability, and self-directed learning (Sucuoglu et al., 2022).

Consequently, effective communication among parents, teachers, and school governing bodies promotes unified problem-solving and decision-making, which is vital for fostering independent learning and supporting students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development (Jones & Palikara, 2023). Collaborations with external organizations and businesses enrich students' learning experiences and enhance the educational environment (Rosales, 2023). These efforts promote innovation, interdisciplinary learning, and sustainable school improvement. Distributed leadership models that encourage collaborative innovation among principals and teachers exemplify the success of this approach (Ramasimu, 2023).

Subsequently, integrating technology into teaching involves several factors, including a) hardware and network equipment, b) technical assistance, c) teacher training and expertise, and d) attitudes and beliefs towards technology. To successfully integrate technology, teachers must actively engage in the classroom. This can enhance students' understanding of the learning process (Liang et al., 2023). Meanwhile, Music teachers are responsible for teaching using technology. Studying the skills and experiences of music teachers at different school levels in Turkey is vital to understanding music education's changing needs. It has been shown that teacher competence is crucial in defining the identity of music educators and teachers in training (Hebebci et al., 2020).

In connection, a person's belief in their ability to succeed, known as self-efficacy, influences how much effort and time they dedicate to a task. This applies to teachers as well. Their beliefs about their capabilities to fulfil classroom and extracurricular responsibilities impact their effectiveness as educators (Prilop et al., 2021). Besides, educational technology companies strive to develop innovative solutions to make education accessible to those lacking proper facilities. Social media platforms have become valuable tools for learning. Not only do they allow for real-time information sharing, but they also provide ample networking opportunities, potentially leading to new connections and job prospects (Sidek et al., 2022).

School leaders play a crucial role in shaping organizational culture and performance by fostering a positive attitude in educational leadership. Leaders who demonstrate optimism and resilience boost staff morale and motivation, creating an environment that supports learning and professional growth (Laurel, 2023). Effective leadership includes ensuring job satisfaction, improving working conditions, and providing mentorship to reduce teacher turnover and maintain a stable, motivated teaching workforce (Dedering &

Pietsch, 2023). Cultivating trust and encouraging teacher innovation are also essential for driving school improvement and adapting to dynamic environments. These leadership qualities promote collaboration and commitment among stakeholders, enhancing overall teaching and learning quality (Simbre et al., 2023).

Despite traditional classroom teaching limitations, digital learning solutions address these gaps effectively. Traditional methods lack immediacy in learning, prompt evaluations, and student engagement. On the other hand, digital tools and technologies excel in these areas. They offer unmatched advantages over conventional learning approaches regarding efficiency and effectiveness (Thai et al., 2020). Indeed, the flexibility and convenience of modern technology make learning more engaging for students. However, an online classroom calendar would simplify student organization by displaying schedules for classes, tasks, outings, guest lectures, tests, and breaks throughout the semester (Lee & Hwang, 2022).

Significantly, digital learning is a great way to reduce costs, use resources more efficiently, promote sustainability, and increase the growth and impact of teachers and students. It also affects environmentally friendly resources because less paper is used to produce books and papers, saving time and more accessible analysis (Fructuoso et al., 2022). Today's world relies heavily on technology in all aspects. This digital advancement is now impacting education. Technology is expected to enhance education by making it more accessible and affordable, transforming how students learn (Quereshi et al., 2021).

Moreover, another study discusses diversity and inclusion, which can relate to school heads' challenges in fostering a learning environment. We tackle the subject of inclusion from a social developmental standpoint in this first piece for the special issue on social inclusion. This means having friends and receiving peer approval are developmental needs rather than extravagances that improve kids' academic performance (Aarkrog, 2022).

While social inclusion may not directly lead to academic excellence, students who experience exclusion face significant obstacles to their engagement and performance. Understanding the reasons behind social exclusion is crucial. In this context, we emphasize factors that arise from student environments. Specifically, we suggest that environmental factors, such as stigmatizing characteristics among students, contribute (Gichobi et al., 2022). In addition, social inclusion involves acceptance and support among peers. It's a social and emotional process that fosters a sense of belonging. On the other hand, inclusive climate describes environments where peer relationships are positive and promote harmony between different groups (Galloway et al., 2021).

In addition, diversity encompasses differences among students, allowing us to understand their experiences better. We include various characteristics, such as gender, race, socioeconomic status, immigration background, sexual orientation, and abilities, to recognize shared aspects of their school experiences (Roche et al., 2020). Furthermore, a change in societal perspectives on disabilities and the adoption of a rights-focused approach to education have spurred the worldwide movement towards promoting inclusive education (Chiu, 2023).

However, the Salamanca Statement, issued by UNESCO, establishes guidelines for governments to create and support inclusive education systems that welcome all children, regardless of their needs. It emphasizes children's inherent right to education and participation, as reinforced by Article 24 of the UNCRPD (United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities). This article guarantees that individuals with disabilities have equal access to high-quality, free primary and secondary education in their local communities (Espasa et al., 2022).

Furthermore, for children with impairments, raising "good citizens" and facilitating participation becomes

even more crucial, particularly when their skills are perceived and influenced by stereotyped social attitudes (Stepaniuk, 2021). In other words, kids need to be allowed to learn and acquire the vital cognitive, socioemotional, and educational abilities they will need to live independently and contribute to their local community and society. Studies have demonstrated that in inclusive environments, children with disabilities do better in terms of social and behavioral outcomes and terms of developmental outcomes compared to their counterparts without disabilities (Johnson et al., 2020)

The Role of Stakeholders, Parents, and Department of Education Authorities

Active parental involvement in school activities and decision-making processes has been consistently shown to positively influence student achievement and motivation. Research indicates that when parents engage in their children's education, it leads to better academic performance, improved behavior, and higher levels of student engagement. Parental involvement, whether behavioral, cognitive, or affective, plays a crucial role in shaping a child's academic success (Quimada-Alberastine, 2024). In connection, studies highlighted the critical role of external stakeholders, including community organizations and local businesses, in improving school support systems, thereby enriching the learning experiences of students and academic outcomes (Sompron, 2024). For instance, the involvement of stakeholders in the Alternative Learning System (ALS) program in Bontoc District demonstrates how financial assistance, learning spaces, and skills training from local government units, alumni, and organizations like TESDA significantly enhance program implementation and effectiveness (Cayabas et al., 2023).

One of the insights of the school heads that can be shared with the DepEd, and other stakeholders is that they concentrate on what data indicates about their Opportunity Culture progress and continuously adjust plans as needed if they have a shared vision in place, hold regular senior team meetings, and communicate with all local superintendents. Principal turnover can also be maintained in Opportunity Culture schools with a strong district vision (Gamede, 2023). Similarly, the local superintendents can mentor newly hired principals through Opportunity Culture models. The present educational leadership team can quickly acclimate a new principal to the role since they have grown accustomed to it. There are still excellent leaders in that school who can move that work and keep it steady within the school, even if the principal leaves (Yang & Kuo, 2023).

Conversely, another study says that communication and transparency are important in achieving excellence in education relies on establishing strong connections with stakeholders, and the linchpin to developing these relationships lies in effective communication (Covarrubia-Gonzalez et al., 2021). Successful communication fosters positive school cultures, enabling staff to adjust and welcome change readily. Enhanced proficiency in effective communication reduces the apprehension linked to complex discussions. Similarly, trust is essential for building strong relationships between stakeholders. It allows for open communication, constructive criticism, challenging discussions, and family collaboration. (Coote, 2023).

Moreover, clear intentions heighten transparency, and attentive listening assists individuals in comprehending feedback and making changes for personal and collective improvement. Open communication fosters enduring stakeholder bonds vital for schools committed to continuous improvement. It helps maintain relationships, facilitate honest evaluations, encourage healthy challenges, enable tough conversations, and forge partnerships with families (Ali et al., 2023). Also, communication involves conveying information from a sender to a receiver. For effective communication, the receiver must accurately understand the message and how it was meant to be interpreted. (Rahayu et al., 2023).

Humans convey information through both subtle and direct methods. Indirect communication employs non-verbal cues like body language, speech tones, and facial expressions. In contrast, direct communication is consciously intended and involves the explicit expression of words (Orchowski et al., 2023). During in-person conversations, paying attention to non-verbal cues and listening attentively is essential. To communicate effectively, we must actively listen, engage in challenging discussions, and be mindful of what we say and how we say it. (Payong et al., 2023). As a result, by understanding the strengths and skills of staff members, school principals can strategically allocate tasks that maximize their abilities. This balanced approach ensures that the workload is distributed fairly, allowing the school to pursue its objectives effectively (Anwar et al., 2021).

On the other hand, a program's organization must make the relationships between its many components and who manages them obvious, as it typically comprises multiple elements that various individuals may do (Kartini et al., 2023). One of their principal duties is getting everyone in the school organizations to work as efficiently as possible (Agustina et al., 2021). Similarly, using the principle of motivation, which states that the principal encourages staff members to complete tasks, is one strategy for motivating teachers and other personnel. People are naturally motivated to work when they feel they can accomplish the task and think they will benefit from it and succeed (Ramzan et al., 2023).

Additionally, one of the duties of a leader is to motivate his subordinates to work according to the directions given (Awawdeh & Lian, 2020). A subordinate who has carried out the tasks assigned/given to him properly is what a work organization wants (Lodewijk et al., 2023). However, if the assigned task cannot be carried out properly, we need to know why. The person in question may lack the skills necessary, the willingness to do the task, or the will to perform successfully (Hamdani et al., 2018). That is the significance of motivation, an essential component of management operations to steer things toward potential and human resources by creating, igniting, and expanding a strong sense of desire and unity in completing both individual and group tasks inside the company (Jaya et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the teachers' ability to perform better in carrying out their tasks and obligations is crucial since, as educators, they are the ones who determine how healthy education is taught in schools. This is because teachers are essential to the future of education. After all, they must be skilled and professional. Since boosting teachers' performance is the primary goal of raising the standard of education overall, doing so requires significant attention from various stakeholders and initiatives, including principal motivation (Eshemogie & Owie, 2023). Collaboration among principals, school management teams (SMTs), and teachers is essential in managing inclusive curriculum to overcome challenges like inadequate teacher preparation and rigid curriculum structures. Teachers adapt their approaches to meet diverse student needs, employing strategies from content modifications to holistic instructional adjustments and fostering stakeholder collaboration (Shabalala et al., 2023).

Effective educational leadership cultivates awareness and acceptance, emphasizing continuous professional development for both educators and leaders to promote educational equity (Maphalala & Ngubane, 2023). Embracing inclusive leadership models that recognize intersectionality and cultural diversity enriches school culture by valuing the contributions of all students and families (Smith-Woofter et al., 2022). Moreover, delivering messages, emotions, or sentiments from one person to another is called communication. A leader's success, particularly that of the principal, is greatly influenced by their communication skills (Ayu & Dewi, 2023). Managing employees and other relevant parties to ensure optimal performance or active participation in school development initiatives is one of the principal's primary responsibilities (Liu et al., 2021).

Furthermore, effective communication is a critical component of staff management, as is persuading different stakeholders of the program's value and necessity to win their support. If the principal or school leader can successfully explain the concept or program, others will be motivated to assist (Bafadal et al., 2021). If there is a behavior change, communication effectively achieves the aim. Support for staff and teacher regulation will help schools accomplish their goals more successfully. Conversely, the school can accomplish its objectives by making the most of its resources, including its buildings, infrastructure, and the community's potential (Ruslan et al., 2020).

Within an organization, communication can occur horizontally—between individuals and vertically from top to bottom and between individuals. The likelihood of cooperation will increase with improved communication. As a result, it reveals that internal communication adds 9.5% to the construction of instructors' performance, which lends weight to this assertion. The study demonstrates that teachers perform better when internal communication has more impact (Hwang & Fu, 2020). Significantly, there are several ways to communicate, including over the phone, the internet, chat, a microphone, memos, letters, meetings, seminars, and more. This allows for effective communication between the principal and other teachers. To support teachers' success, there must be communication between teachers, teachers, and the administrator, and between teachers themselves (Amoako et al., 2023).

Badiu and Țică (2023) emphasize that cultivating resilience in educational leadership is essential for effectively navigating challenges and progressing toward educational goals. Resilient leaders demonstrate determination and adaptability, crucial for overcoming setbacks in an interactive educational environment. Raptis (2023) supports this view, highlighting the importance of social relationships and effective communication in fostering resilience. These factors not only enhance mental health but also reduce loneliness and improve relationship satisfaction among educational leaders facing stress and burnout. Hamid et al. (2023) emphasized the critical role of resilience in helping Malaysian primary school leaders manage crises and make compassionate decisions that support their school communities.

The review of related literature revealed various aspects which are crucial to understanding the challenges and dynamics within educational leadership, particularly the role of school heads in fostering a conducive learning environment. It encompasses the significance of effective communication and transparency in educational leadership, emphasizing their impact on stakeholder relationships and school culture. The literature addresses the pivotal role of school principals in supporting teachers and promoting professional development, acknowledging their multifaceted responsibilities. Technology integration in education is explored, emphasizing its potential to enhance learning environments and the need for educators, including school principals, to adapt to 21st-century learning demands. This information provides a comprehensive understanding of the complexities and responsibilities associated with school heads and the critical need for effective strategies to foster a positive and inclusive learning environment.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A qualitative study is a research method that focuses on exploring and understanding the depth and nuances of a particular phenomenon, often through a detailed examination of individual experiences, perspectives, and contexts. Qualitative research aims to uncover the meanings, motivations, and social processes underlying human behavior, beliefs, and interactions (Fischer & Guzel, 2022).

In the context of this study, a qualitative research approach was adopted, characterized by generating findings that were not reliant on statistical procedures or quantification methods. This research method

primarily emphasized the analysis of non-quantified data, which could be gathered through various techniques such as in-depth interviews, participant observation in real-world settings, and involvement in online contexts.

Furthermore, this study also used the phenomenological approach, which offered a unique lens through which to explore the reality of the everyday world from an individual's viewpoint. Emphasizing the construction of the lifeworld, this approach delved into how individuals comprehended and navigated life and experiences. As a practice, phenomenology was dedicated to understanding, describing, and interpreting human behavior, focusing on the meaning individuals attributed to their experiences (Ayton, 2023).

In the context of this study, the phenomenological approach helped me understand the subjective experiences of school heads as they navigated their roles. Through methods like in-depth interviews and reflective journaling, I aimed to capture the various experiences of school heads' perceptions, beliefs, and emotions regarding fostering a healthy learning environment. Drawing on the phenomenological approach, my study prioritized understanding, describing, and interpreting the lived experiences of school heads in relation to fostering a learning environment, shedding light on the motivations, values, and perceptions that shaped their leadership practices and decision-making processes. This ultimately contributed to a deeper understanding of their roles and challenges within the school.

In summary, this study employed a qualitative design using a phenomenological approach to delve into the subjective experiences of school heads in fostering a healthy learning environment. By utilizing techniques like in-depth interviews and reflective journaling, the study aimed to capture the diverse perceptions, beliefs, and emotions of school leaders. The researcher also adhered to ethical considerations, ensuring voluntary participation, obtaining informed consent, maintaining confidentiality, and minimizing harm among participants. Additionally, ethical approval from relevant institutional review boards or ethics committees was obtained to ensure the study's adherence to ethical standards.

Research Participants

In this study, the purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure that the selection of participants aligned closely with the research objectives. By purposefully selecting 10 school heads from different schools within the Division of Davao De Oro, the aim was to capture a diverse range of perspectives on empowerment dynamics in educational leadership. This approach allowed for gathering rich and contextualized data by representing various contexts within the division. Additionally, the recommendation of Francis et al. (2010) was adhered to by selecting a sample size of 10 participants and implementing a stopping criterion for saturation, ensuring that data collection continued until no new insights emerged from the interviews.

In connection, the participants were selected from big public schools within the division of Davao de Oro. The research aimed to tap into diverse experiences, insights, and perspectives related to the study's objectives by choosing participants from big schools with a larger pool of potential respondents. This selection process was grounded in the belief that these educational institutions could offer a rich source of information, ensuring that the research made the most efficient and relevant use of available resources while capturing a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Furthermore, the inclusion criteria in identifying the participants of this study were: a) school heads who had spent more than two years in service and had experience fostering a learning environment; b) school heads employed in the Department of Education, Davao De Oro Division; and c) school heads

administering small and big schools in the Davao De Oro Division. However, the exclusion criteria for identifying participants in this study were as follows: a) school heads who had less than two years of experience in service and had limited experience in fostering a learning environment; b) school heads who were not employed in the Department of Education, Davao De Oro Division; and c) school heads who were not administering schools within the Davao De Oro Division.

Role of the Researcher

In the realm of qualitative research, the researcher played a pivotal role not only as an investigator but also as a communicator, ensuring the ethical conduct of the study and providing the reader with a lucid and comprehensive view of the research process. The researcher's responsibilities extended beyond mere documentation; they involved several key roles, such as ensuring the ethical conduct of the study and being the interviewer, recorder, transcriber, and primary data analyst (McCaslin & Kilrea, 2019).

First, as someone who ensured the study's ethical conduct, my responsibility was to uphold ethical standards throughout the research process, especially in conducting the study online. This involved obtaining informed consent from participants before their involvement in the study, ensuring they fully understood the nature of the research and their rights as participants. I also ensured that all data collected was used solely for research purposes and was stored securely to prevent unauthorized access or disclosure, adhering to data protection protocols and guidelines.

Secondly, my role as the interviewer included adaptability and technological proficiency. Beyond the traditional responsibilities of facilitating dialogue and establishing rapport, I navigated effective virtual communication to ensure that participants felt equally comfortable and engaged in the online setting. This entailed leveraging digital tools effectively to foster a sense of connection and trust while also being attentive to potential limitations and challenges of online interactions, such as technological disruptions or distractions. Additionally, my role in utilizing online recording devices was paramount in capturing both verbal and non-verbal cues accurately, thus preserving the richness of participants' experiences for analysis.

Third, as someone who ensured the entire interview was properly recorded using online tools, audio or video recording devices were utilized to capture spoken responses, non-verbal cues, and contextual details. Simultaneously, field notes were taken to document non-verbal expressions and environmental factors that influenced the conversation. This proactive approach enabled a comprehensive recording of both verbal and non-verbal dimensions, providing a holistic dataset for analysis.

Subsequently, as someone who translated the participants' responses into standard English format, I meticulously converted recorded interviews into written transcripts. This involved conducting a thorough review and systematically organizing materials to ensure accuracy in transcribing spoken words, along with annotating non-verbal cues and emotions observed during the interviews. I captured the essence of the conversations by skillfully translating verbal and non-verbal elements into written form. Through this process, I contributed to preserving the richness of participants' experiences, as these transcripts served as valuable online records that accurately reflected participants' responses.

Moreover, as the primary data analyst, a deeper understanding of the transcriptions and immersion in participants' responses was necessary. In open coding techniques, initial labels were strategically assigned to data segments, fostering the organic emergence of themes. Subsequently, patterns and similarities were recognized to guide the grouping of codes into broader categories, establishing a preliminary coding framework. Additionally, member checking was followed to enhance the coding reliability and validity of

the identified themes.

Data Sources

In the comprehensive design of this research, data sources encompassed both primary and secondary sources, each taking diverse forms such as time series, cross-sectional, pooled cross-sectional, and panel datasets. The decision to opt for either primary or secondary data depended on the research goals. Primary data, collected firsthand, was tailored to address specific research objectives, while secondary data was sourced from existing materials, literature, or records. Secondary sources included data from libraries, databases, published literature, or governmental records, providing valuable insights into previously researched topics or broader contextual information for the study (Iyer et al., 2023).

In the context of this study, primary data was meticulously gathered through online in-depth interviews with 10 participants within the Davao de Oro division. This method was crafted to initiate meaningful engagement, fostering exploration into participants' experiences, perspectives, and insights. Through these interviews, participants delved into their narratives in detail, transcending mere quantitative data. The dynamic platform of in-depth interviews encouraged open-ended discussions, empowering participants to share rich, detailed accounts of their experiences. This approach enabled a personal connection despite the online format, ensuring the depth and authenticity of the data collected.

On the other hand, incorporating secondary data involved thoroughly examining existing surveys, official reports, and scholarly literature aligned with my research objectives. These secondary data were gathered from various reputable sources, including academic libraries, government publications, statistical surveys conducted by relevant authorities, official reports from educational institutions, and peer-reviewed scholarly articles. By including library resources as secondary sources, I aimed to enrich the diversity of the data collected, thereby providing valuable insights to foster a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

Data Collection Procedure

This study was firmly grounded in ethical principles, meticulously upholding standards such as informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity. It was emphasized that any personal identifying information was handled in strict confidence and safeguarded against disclosure to anyone outside the research team (Tubagus et al., 2023). This ethical conduct of the study was categorized as follows:

Firstly, approval letters were sought from the school's Research Ethics Committee (REC) and the Dean of the Graduate School, requesting permission to conduct the study. Secondly, a letter was secured to the Superintendent of DepEd Davao de Oro, and participants were identified through online orientation.

During the face-to-face interviews, participants were presented with Informed Consent Forms (ICF) to affirm their willingness to participate, emphasizing their right to decline any questions they found uncomfortable. Before the commencement of the interviews, explicit permission was sought to record the responses. The scheduling of individual interviews was arranged at participants' preferred times, ensuring a considerate and respectful approach throughout the process.

Furthermore, a comprehensive interview guide aligned with the research objectives was prepared to facilitate the In-Depth Interviews (IDI). The interview guide maintains focus during data collection, ensuring relevant and insightful information was gathered. Prioritizing engaging participants in thoughtful conversations, the interview guide fostered rapport, promoted active listening, and created a comfortable environment for participants to share their insights openly.

Finally, to maintain the ethical foundation of the study, a comprehensive literature review on qualitative research methodologies was undertaken. This review explored scholarly articles, books, and pertinent publications to gain insights into ethical considerations, consent procedures, and the significance of thoughtful preparation in qualitative studies. As a guiding framework, this literature aligned the study with established ethical standards, thereby enriching the research process.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was a crucial method for problem-solving that aided decision-making and culminated in conclusions within research (Ashirwadam, 2014). According to Akinyode and Khan (2018), this process involved six essential steps that were followed in this study. These processes included logging, creating anecdotes, providing vignettes for data interpretation, coding, and thematic analysis.

In the context of my study, the initial step of logging was a foundational process involving meticulous documentation and verification of the collected data. This step required creating a detailed and organized record of the raw data, ensuring that each piece of information was accurately represented and reliable. The process included carefully noting the source, date, and context of each data point, establishing a solid foundation for subsequent analysis. This also involved a thorough verification process to cross-reference and confirm the accuracy of the recorded information, addressing any discrepancies, and enhancing the overall integrity of the dataset.

Subsequently, the data analysis process entailed crafting a coherent narrative that effectively captured the temporal aspects of the gathered information, even in the online environment. Each data point was contextualized within a timeline, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the unfolding events or patterns over time. This chronological summarization was pivotal for identifying trends, patterns, or shifts in the data that contributed to the research's success. It also served as a foundation for subsequent analysis stages, ensuring that the temporal context was preserved and enriched the overall understanding of the study.

Moreover, detailed descriptions and interpretations of the data were provided to offer deeper insights into the contextual understanding of the study despite the remote interview setting. This step transcended mere summarization, aiming to construct narratives illuminating specific aspects or instances within the dataset. Each description and interpretation described the richness of individual data points, incorporating understanding and contextual details that contributed to a comprehensive interpretation.

Furthermore, the coding process was initiated, involving the fragmentation, classification, and labeling of the data into meaningful categories. This systematic information organization broke down complex datasets into manageable components, ensuring the process adapted effectively. Each fragment was carefully examined, classified based on common attributes, and assigned appropriate labels to capture the essence of its content. Through this process, a structured framework emerged, facilitating a more streamlined and comprehensive analysis of the study.

Finally, thematic analysis was conducted by connecting codes to uncover overarching themes and patterns within the dataset, leveraging the capabilities of online platforms. This comprehensive approach involved synthesizing the coded fragments to identify broader trends and relationships, transcending the limitations of remote interactions. Thematic networks were formed, revealing the relationships of various elements and providing a holistic understanding of the data. Through this process, the richness and complexity of the dataset were distilled into key themes, allowing for a better exploration of the research questions. Thematic analysis acted as the culminating step, transforming coded data into meaningful insights and

contributing to the study's success.

Trustworthiness of the Study

Establishing trustworthiness was a technique researchers used to persuade the reader. This referred to the deliberate desire for trustworthiness, which included credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These standards in research protected the research integrity, establishing trust among readers and decision-makers in the results of the study (Shenton, 2004). The following requirements were investigated to ensure the trustworthiness of this study:

Credibility was achieved through persistent observation and strategic triangulation of the study. This included dedicating substantial time to the field, fostering a deep understanding of participants, and closely observing their activities. This immersive approach allowed researchers to gain comprehensive insights into understanding the studied phenomenon (Adler, 2022).

In the context of this study, addressing the need for data credibility involved a meticulous approach during the virtual In-Depth Interviews (IDI). Probing questions were strategically employed to gather detailed information and assess the consistency of participants' responses to the research questions. When participants expressed a desire to elaborate further, an iterative questioning technique was applied to ensure comprehensive exploration.

Moreover, to enhance the trustworthiness of the results, the member-checking technique was implemented, allowing participants to validate the findings. In this context, member checking involved revisiting participants' responses and allowing them to cross-verify their answers directly from the recorded interviews. A virtual member-checking session was organized, where participants were presented with electronic copies of the transcribed data from their respective interviews. This personalized approach ensured active participant engagement, allowing sufficient time for a comprehensive assessment and the opportunity to provide corrections, clarifications, or additional insights.

Consequently, participants were invited to sign a certification or validation form affirming their evaluation of the transcribed data during the face-to-face meeting and indicating approval of the results. This member-checking process also actively involved participants in validating the study's findings, contributing significantly to its credibility and authenticity.

Furthermore, triangulation was employed throughout the study, particularly during in-depth interviews. Drawing participants from different public elementary schools in the Division of Davao de Oro ensured a diverse and comprehensive perspective. Additional probing questions during interviews further enriched the data, contributing to a thorough understanding of the research issues.

Transferability referred to how well research concepts and theories could be applied in different settings. This allowed researchers to gain rich and detailed information about a specific context. They could then compare their results with findings from studies in other areas or populations and analyze them using different theoretical approaches (Daniel et al., 2023).

In the context of this study, all transcripts and data analyses were meticulously compiled and incorporated into the appendix for future reference. This comprehensive inclusion served a dual purpose: guarding against bias and allowing readers to correlate the study's results with their own experiences. The security and confidentiality of gathered data were paramount, with the use of pseudonyms to identify participants ensuring their anonymity.

Additionally, a rigorous evaluation was undertaken to determine the reliability of the study's results and conclusions. This assessment equipped future researchers with the confidence to integrate this study into

their research endeavors. The accuracy and consistency of gathered data were a focal point, adding significant value to the study as a reliable reference for future research.

Moreover, data was diligently gathered and recorded, ensuring clear and thorough documentation to affirm the study's credibility. Participants' information was meticulously documented, and the entire research procedure was recorded. This proactive approach enabled tracking of participant information and monitoring of the research progress, facilitating transparency and bolstering the study's overall reliability for future use as a scholarly reference.

Reliability was ensured by repeating the research phases in all studied areas to maintain consistency over time and within the research parameters. This approach helped prevent premature conclusions and minimized the influence of biases (Brito et al., 2023).

This study employed dependability through meticulous and in-depth methodological descriptions. These detailed explanations comprehensively outlined the processes involved, offering transparent communication directly with research participants. This approach empowered future researchers, giving them the necessary insights to replicate the study.

Subsequently, clarity and coherence were prioritized in data collection and presentation. The information gathered was clearly articulated, facilitating the understanding of the current study and serving as a valuable resource for future research endeavors. The emphasis on consistency in data collection contributed to the overall reliability of the study, providing a robust foundation for potential replication.

Furthermore, the comprehensive explanation of data, methodologies, and procedures was designed to guide and enable future researchers to conduct the same study. By offering a clear roadmap, I contributed to the ongoing discourse in a manner that promoted transparency and ensured the longevity and relevance of the research in subsequent scholarly output.

Confirmability ensured that the research results accurately reflected the data gathered. Researchers maintained an audit trail by using methodological memos and other records. This audit trail provided that the research findings were solely based on the experiences and responses of the participants (Löfgren et al., 2023).

In the context of this study, an audit trail was implemented as a proactive measure to mitigate biases and ensure the integrity of the research process. This audit trail served as transparent documentation of decisions, enabling readers to comprehend the study's credibility. Through meticulous record-keeping, participants' information maintain coherence, and any potential misconceptions during the study's conduct were minimized.

Moreover, all data, including observations, interview responses, and documents, were diligently preserved. The confidentiality of participants' information was of utmost importance, with stringent measures in place to safeguard their privacy. Access to this personal information was restricted to individuals involved in the research process, and steps were taken to anonymize and secure data. By adhering to these practices and maintaining a comprehensive audit trail, this study not only upheld the principles of research integrity but also established a foundation for credibility and trustworthiness. These measures assured participants that their data and personal information were handled with the utmost care and confidentiality, fostering a sense of trust in the research process.

Another concrete measure used was the in-depth methodological description. Providing a detailed account of the research methods, along with acknowledging any limitations in those methods and their potential impact on the study's findings, enhanced the credibility and reliability of the research.

Furthermore, I ensured that the study's results accurately reflected the participants' experiences rather than

being influenced by my perspectives. To prevent biases, data were meticulously transcribed and translated, with strict adherence to proper procedures for consistency in the results. Following transcription, the transcribed data were provided to the participants, allowing them to review and verify the accuracy of the information. This step not only validated the precision of the data but also fostered a collaborative approach, incorporating participants' insights to enhance the overall accuracy and authenticity of the study's findings.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical consideration reflected the values and morals upheld while communicating with others throughout data collection and dissemination. This meant that the researcher took responsibility for ensuring that guidelines, regulations, and ethical standards were followed (McGregor, 2023). To follow the ethical standards in research, the study was presented to the SMCTI - Research Ethics Committee (REC). This independent committee reviewed and evaluated the study's ethical elements, providing direction and guidance throughout the research process. In this research study, ethical consideration included the 10 dimensions of research, including social value, informed consent, vulnerability of research participants, risk, benefits, and safety, privacy and confidentiality, justice, transparency, qualification of the researcher, adequacy of facilities, and community involvement.

Social Value. This referred to the overall positive impact and meaningful contributions that the generated knowledge could offer society. It involved carefully considering how individuals perceived the risks and benefits associated with the research findings. Maximizing social value necessitated selecting an appropriate trade-off considering adverse events' varying severity, frequency, and life impact across different subpopulations. In essence, achieving social value meant advancing scientific knowledge and ensuring that the outcomes positively contributed to the well-being and experiences of diverse individuals in society (Herington et al., 2023).

In the context of this study, the emphasis was on investigating school heads' experiences and challenges in fostering a healthy learning environment. By delving into their experiences, the study offered effective practices and approaches used by school heads to foster a learning environment. The anticipated findings provided useful information and served as the foundation for policy recommendations. The study also guided the development of tailored leadership programs within the Department of Education's (DepEd) Davao de Oro Division. Aside from its immediate impact, the results of this research study also served as a valuable reference for future endeavors, paving the way for ongoing exploration and development in this area.

Informed Consent. This refers to the crucial document affirming that study participants are recruited only after receiving comprehensive information about the research process, potential risks, benefits, and other essential details such as the study duration. This document is meticulously designed to be clear and accessible, ensuring that participants fully understand the nature of their involvement. It is crafted in a language familiar to the participants, promoting transparency and facilitating their ability to make informed decisions (Vadakedath & Kandi, 2023).

This referred to the crucial document that affirmed that study participants were recruited only after receiving comprehensive information about the research process, potential risks, benefits, and other essential details such as the study duration. This document was meticulously designed to be clear and accessible, ensuring that participants fully understood the nature of their involvement. It was crafted in a language familiar to the participants, promoting transparency and facilitating their ability to make inform-

ed decisions (Vadakedath & Kandi, 2023).

Vulnerability of Research Participants. This referred to the condition where an individual lacked the full capacity to provide informed consent for participation in a study. It concerned the specific needs of the study's population, emphasizing a better understanding of their vulnerability. Researchers were advised to consider their participants' needs and be attuned to issues that might have impacted their ability to provide full and informed consent (Gelinas et al., 2023).

In the context of this study, participants with various experiences faced challenges in fully comprehending the study's implications, potentially heightening their vulnerability to stress during specific research procedures. Moreover, diverse educational backgrounds among participants might have led to varied interpretations of the study, impacting the depth of their understanding. To address these potential factors, my approach was tailored, encompassing additional support, clear communication, and allocating ample time for questions. By proactively recognizing and responding to these details within the research process, I ensured that vulnerable situations were thoughtfully handled and ethical research practices were steadfastly upheld throughout the study.

Risks, Benefits, and Safety. In research ethics, risks, benefits, and safety constituted pivotal considerations. Risks referred to potential harm or adverse effects that participants could have experienced due to their involvement in the study, encompassing physical and psychological aspects. Benefits, conversely, denoted the positive outcomes or advantages that participants could have gained from participating in the research. These could have included personal growth, increased knowledge, or potential societal contributions. Safety involved protecting participants from harm and ensuring their overall well-being throughout the research process. Ethical research practices demanded a careful balancing act, where researchers diligently assessed and minimized risks, maximized benefits, and prioritized the safety of participants, thereby upholding the moral principles guiding the study.

In the context of my study, risks within my research involved potential psychological stress that school heads might have encountered while sharing their experiences. To mitigate this, I ensured confidentiality and provided support mechanisms, such as debriefing sessions. The benefits extended to the broader educational community, as insights from the study could enhance learning environments in schools, fostering personal and professional growth for the participants. In this study, safety measures were implemented to protect the confidentiality of participants and ensure their emotional well-being throughout the study. This careful balance reflected the commitment to ethical research practices, prioritizing the well-being of school heads and upholding the moral standards guiding this phenomenological exploration.

Privacy and Confidentiality. This referred to the assertion of rights regarding what information was shared, when it was shared, and the extent to which it was disclosed. This also represented the commitment and obligation to protect sensitive information transmitted within a specific context. Privacy and confidentiality constituted a foundational ethical framework that prioritized and respected individuals' rights and control over their personal information, ensuring a secure and respectful exchange within the designated context (Maldonado-Castellanos & Barrios, 2023).

In the context of my study, privacy was attributed with participants' control over information about their experiences. It assured participants that any private information they shared during the research process was kept confidential, fostering a trusting professional relationship. I aimed to uphold these principles throughout the study through rigorous ethical considerations. This included setting up strong measures to protect the participants' personal information. By emphasizing these ethical considerations, I created a safe

and respectful environment for the school heads, assuring them that their voices and personal experiences were treated with care and respect throughout the research process.

Justice. This referred to fair and unbiased treatment of all participants, ensuring that the benefits and burdens of research were distributed in a manner that respected the rights and well-being of each individual involved. This encompassed a commitment to avoiding discrimination, ensuring inclusivity, and upholding ethical standards to foster an environment where research benefits were accessible to and shared equitably among diverse populations.

In the context of this study, I maintained that the benefits and burdens of the research were distributed in a manner that deeply respected the rights and well-being of each individual involved. Within this research context, justice was dynamic, promising to avoid discrimination, champion inclusivity, and uphold careful ethical standards. By prioritizing justice in this way, the study fostered an environment where the benefits derived from the research were not only accessible to but also shared equitably among the diverse populations of school heads, contributing their voices to the exploration of learning environments in schools.

Transparency. This can be defined as the practice of openly sharing information and making research processes, methods, and outcomes easily understandable and accessible. It provides clarity and visibility into the various facets of research guidelines. Transparency is a commitment to openness and clarity in research practices, enabling researchers and the broader academic community to assess, understand, and scrutinize research endeavors more effectively (Reischauer, G., & Ringel, 2023).

In the context of this study, transparency was diligently fostered through transparent and open communication channels that spanned the entire research process, from articulating research goals to explicitly detailing methodologies and presenting findings. This commitment to transparency transcended the academic realm, encompassing participants, stakeholders, and the broader public. By prioritizing transparency, participants received comprehensive orientation, an understanding of the study's primary purpose, and explored their experiences in promoting adaptive leadership through alternative delivery modalities during calamities.

Furthermore, participants were fully informed about their active role in the data-gathering process, mainly through their participation in Individual Depth Interviews (IDI), where they candidly responded to interview guide questions. Additionally, participants were assured that all expenses related to their involvement in the research endeavor were covered.

Consequently, to maintain transparency, proactive communication preceded the study, involving obtaining written permissions from the Division Office and the ten (10) public schools within Davao de Oro. This approach ensured that all stakeholders, especially school heads, were well-informed and engaged in the research process, aligning with the principles of transparency.

Qualification of the Researcher. This part encompassed a wide range of characteristics that were critical for the seamless design, execution, and analysis of research, with a primary focus on enhancing the credibility and reliability of results. This comprehensive set of characteristics went beyond academic credentials and included a mix of personal and professional traits. This meant that the researcher's qualification was essential for maintaining ethical standards and ensuring the integrity of the research process (Thorne, 2020).

In the context of this study, my abilities extended beyond academic qualifications and encompassed personal qualities and professional training. These included strong moral values, scientific proficiency, an understanding of societal issues, cultural sensitivity, a humble approach to learning, alertness, and a

commitment to safety. These traits were intrinsic to my character and had been further enhanced through relevant educational experiences, particularly in school and human resource management.

The decision to continue this study was based on a careful understanding of my research skills, detailed study design, and ability to produce meaningful results. Importantly, I recognized the limitations of my expertise and sought advice from my research adviser, who had extensive experience in the field. This approach ensured a comprehensive and well-informed research process, emphasizing the compatibility of my qualifications with the investigation requirements.

Adequacy of Facilities. This refers to the foundational principle of conducting comprehensive literature reviews and ensuring access to diverse informational resources. Books, online journals, and unpublished dissertations enrich the researcher's knowledge base, underscoring the importance of an extensive literature review in the research process (Wu & Divigalpitiya, 2023).

In the context of this study, meticulous attention was dedicated to ensuring the availability and accessibility of essential resources. A curated collection of books, online journals, and unpublished dissertations was readily accessible, offering a wealth of information for in-depth exploration, referencing, and contextualizing the variables under investigation. Moreover, I ensured the availability of tools required for the study, including audio recorders and cameras.

Furthermore, seeking approval from relevant institutions and offices underscored the commitment to ethical and procedural standards. The assurance of successful study conduct and completion was reinforced by the accessibility of necessary facilities and materials, coupled with effective communication. Integrating online data collection methods using video communication services such as Zoom and Google Meet ensured a technologically equipped approach that aligned with contemporary research practices.

Community Involvement. This referred to promoting collaboration, shared decision-making, and mutual respect among researchers and the community. It moved beyond the idea of community members as passive subjects and instead positioned them as active participants in shaping every aspect of the research process, from question formulation to findings interpretation. This collaborative approach acknowledged community members' unique expertise and insights, ensuring that the study aligned with their needs, values, and priorities (Rijal, 2023).

In this study, community involvement was an active and dynamic procedure that began with obtaining permission and endorsement from the Division of Davao de Oro. Approval was sought through an official letter, followed by letters of endorsement from public schools in the division. A critical step was obtaining endorsement from the school division superintendent, which formalized the research's recognition and support within the educational community.

This proactive engagement strategy was designed to ensure that potential participants were informed about the research and actively engaged and supportive of its objectives and outcomes. The study established a collaborative relationship with the educational community by securing formal approval and endorsement, fostering transparency, and promoting a shared commitment to the research endeavor.

Furthermore, disseminating study findings became integral to community involvement. The results were communicated to internal and external stakeholders through strategic channels. This included formal communication to the DepEd Davao de Oro Office, dissemination through school district offices, integration into school learning action cells (LAC) sessions, and incorporation into various training, seminar programs, and other professional development initiatives. This approach was associated with the research process and played a crucial role in disseminating and utilizing research findings.

RESULTS/DISCUSSIONS

Lived Experiences of School Heads in Fostering a Conducive Learning Environment

School heads shared their lived experiences and the obstacles they faced in fostering a conducive learning environment, from which five themes emerged: (a.) having problems in resources management, (b.) having difficulty in providing professional development, (c.) facing challenges in technology integration; (d.) curriculum adjustment, and (e.) having stress and burnout.

Having Problems in Resources Management

School heads described their major difficulties in managing resources, which impacted their capacity to create an effective learning environment. They frequently encountered issues with insufficient funding and resource allocation for educational needs, resulting in a lack of crucial school supplies. Additionally, they struggled to align these constrained resources with their strategic goals, which in turn affected their ability to achieve educational objectives.

School heads have critical role in managing resources to meet institutional objectives and enhance student learning outcomes. Effective resource management includes maintaining well-organized classrooms, applying engaging instructional strategies like scaffolding and inquiry-based teaching, and designing coherent assessments (Muliati et al., 2022). However, the study points out the challenge of limited funding for instructional materials and equipment, along with the need for improved teacher training to elevate educational quality (Katshuna, 2023).

Similarly, school heads face difficulties in strategically allocating resources to maximize efficiency and effectiveness. They must consider various factors such as departmental curricula, teacher workloads, student enrollment trends, and individual teacher strengths and weaknesses. This strategic alignment is crucial for overcoming the challenges posed by limited resource allocation, which often impairs the ability to foster an effective learning environment and achieve educational goals (Mendoza & Callo, 2022).

Having Difficulty in Providing Professional Development

School heads face obstacles in facilitating professional development for their teachers. Financial limitations often restrict the ability to fund the attendance of teachers at workshops, while scheduling conflicts make it challenging to allocate time for these activities. Additionally, resistance to new professional development initiatives, especially from veteran teachers which hinders the successful implementation of these programs.

Research highlighted that professional development is vital for teachers in the 21st century, as it ensures they stay current with new teaching methods and technologies, ultimately benefiting their students (Alkaabi, 2023). It was found that financial limitations often restrict the ability to fund teacher attendance at workshops and training sessions because of insufficient budget allocation and the need for realignment of funds (Arciaga & Astillero, 2023). Additionally, the lack of funding was also noted as a significant barrier in addressing teacher misconduct. While scheduling conflicts further complicate the allocation of time for professional development activities (Mhando, 2023).

Moreover, resistance from veteran teachers to new professional development initiatives can impede the effective implementation of these programs, making it difficult to achieve the long-term success and skill enhancement necessary for meeting modern educational demands (Gajić et al., 2023). In connection, school heads are often burdened with extensive workloads and administrative duties, which limit their capacity to organize and participate in such initiatives (Caingcoy, 2023).

Facing Challenges in Technology Integration

School heads encountered challenges in integrating technology into their classrooms. They dealt with the issue of the digital divide, which led to unequal access and varying levels of proficiency among students and teachers. Additionally, adapting to emerging curriculum trends involving technology proved difficult, complicating the effective implementation and use of digital tools in their educational programs.

In connection, integrating technology into educational settings poses challenges, such as initial resistance and frustration among educators and students unfamiliar with digital platforms and educational apps. This resistance often stems from a lack of necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies, underscoring the need for comprehensive professional development for teachers (Jiang, 2023). In addition, addressing the digital divide is needed to ensure equitable access to technology-driven learning experiences, considering disparities in internet access and device ownership across demographics like age, gender, and socioeconomic status (Afzal et al., 2023).

Furthermore, school heads face significant challenges in integrating technology in rural areas, where infrastructure barriers such as unreliable internet connectivity, insufficient digital devices, and inconsistent electricity supply hinder effective technology integration (Adhikari, 2024). It was found that technological limitations, including inadequate access to hardware and unreliable internet connectivity, further worsen these challenges (Pradana & Josiah, 2024).

Curriculum Adjustment

School heads talked about their major difficulties with adjusting the curriculum because of rising demands from the Department of Education. They faced tough times keeping up with frequent changes and new rules. These ongoing adjustments forced them to constantly change their strategies and resources to keep up with the ever-changing educational standards.

Similarly, school heads face challenges in managing educational settings, which include heavy workloads, evolving curricula, and frequent policy changes imposed by educational authorities (Devanadera & Ching, 2023). These pressures are compounded by issues such as teacher motivation and retention, which are critical for maintaining a stable and effective teaching staff. One significant challenge is the overloaded curriculum that places immense pressure on students and teachers alike, leaving little room for the development of individual interests and talents (Baloyi & Khumalo, 2024).

Additionally, the dominance of technology in modern education can reduce social interaction and hinder critical thinking, further complicating the educational landscape. In connection, they also face significant challenges in adapting to frequent changes and new rules, which necessitate constant adjustments in their strategies and resource management to align with evolving educational standards (Wadasen, 2024). One of the primary difficulties is the frequent changing of policies, which complicates financial management and requires school heads to continuously update their practices to remain compliant (Turda, 2023).

Having Stress and Burnout

School heads faced considerable stress and burnout because of excessive administrative duties and high expectations. The intense accountability they encountered added to their stress and made it challenging to handle their workload. Additionally, they reported a lack of sufficient emotional and mental support, which contributed to their burnout.

School heads often experience significant stress and burnout due to a combination of excessive administ-

rative duties, high expectations, and intense accountability. The multifaceted nature of their roles, which includes managing school operations, resources, and addressing teacher misconduct, contributes to their overwhelming workload (Karaevli, 2024). For instance, school heads are responsible for ensuring efficient administrative services, which are crucial for the smooth functioning of educational institutions, and this responsibility can be quite demanding (Lolo & Cabigas, 2023).

Additionally, the need to navigate the challenges introduced by the "new normal" in education has further complicated their roles, requiring them to find innovative solutions to maintain effective learning delivery and support their educators (Santos, 2023). In connection, the lack of sufficient emotional and mental support worsens their stress levels, as they often face situations arising from interactions with parents, teachers, and students, along with non-education-related workloads and insufficient financial income (Yildiz et al., 2023).

Coping Mechanisms with the Challenges Encountered in Fostering a Conducive Learning Environment

As participants shared their strategies for addressing challenges in creating a conducive learning environment, several recurring themes surfaced from the transcriptions. A detailed data analysis revealed five key themes, namely: (a.) infrastructure and safety enhancement; (b.) professional growth and development; (c.) seminar on technology integration in the classroom; (d.) curriculum enhancement and adaptation; and (e.) cultivation of positive attitude.

Infrastructure and Safety Enhancement

Enhancing infrastructure and ensuring safety are integral aspects of creating a conducive learning environment in schools. School administrators actively pursue funding opportunities to upgrade facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, and recreational areas, aiming to improve overall educational experiences. By implementing regular safety drills and emergency preparedness training for teachers and students, schools prioritize the safety and well-being of everyone on campus, fostering a secure environment conducive to learning and growth.

In connection, effective management of educational infrastructure, including procurement, maintenance, utilization, and development, is essential for optimal utilization and motivating students to learn diligently (Kholizah et al., 2023). Additionally, the implementation of regular safety drills and emergency preparedness training for teachers and students is crucial for ensuring quick and effective responses to potential crises, thereby promoting a secure and supportive school environment conducive to student well-being and academic success (Arizqi et al., 2023).

Moreover, the development of a novel decision-making framework that prioritizes school infrastructure investment with limited budgets, using clustering procedures, a multi-criteria utility function, and an optimization component, further illustrates the importance of strategic planning in enhancing both safety and functional conditions of school facilities (Fernández et al., 2023).

Professional Growth and Development

School heads have underscored the significance of continuous professional development through regular workshops, aiming to enhance teaching effectiveness and support teacher well-being. These initiatives encompass diverse areas such as new teaching strategies, technology integration, and mental health awareness, reflecting a holistic approach to improving educational practices. By addressing biases,

promoting mindfulness, and offering conflict resolution skills, schools strive to foster inclusive and supportive environments conducive to both student and staff success.

Furthermore, ongoing professional development in improving instructional quality and fostering a positive school climate, thereby enhancing overall educational outcomes. Effective professional development programs not only increase teacher motivation, engagement, and retention but also contribute to building a resilient and effective educational system (Perez & Banayo, 2023).

In addition, initiatives of school heads in addressing biases through diversity and inclusion training, promoting mindfulness practices, and imparting conflict resolution skills are crucial for creating inclusive and supportive learning environments beneficial to both students and staff (Hale, 2023). These efforts have significant impact of strong leadership practices, including mentorship and timely feedback, on teacher performance and service quality (Ciocon, 2023).

Seminar on Technology Integration in the Classroom

School heads highlighted the significance of incorporating technology into the classroom and have focused on supporting the use of new technologies to improve educational practices. They organized practical workshops and demonstrations to assist teachers in effectively using these technologies in their instruction. Furthermore, they assessed the effectiveness and impact of these technological tools to ensure they positively influence student learning outcomes.

Furthermore, school heads have recognized the critical role of technology in transforming educational practices and have taken proactive steps to support its integration into classrooms. These equip teachers with the necessary skills to effectively utilize new technological tools in their instruction, thereby enhancing teaching techniques and student engagement (Al-Sindi et al., 2023). Similarly, these initiatives are crucial as they help teachers transition from traditional methods to more innovative approaches (Badawy et al., 2024).

In addition, school heads are not only focused on the implementation but also on the continuous assessment of these technologies to ensure they positively impact student learning outcomes (Hutasuhut & Harahap, 2024). This involves using learning management systems and other analytical tools to monitor student progress and identify areas needing additional support, thus enabling a more personalized and effective learning experience (Da Silva, 2023).

School heads underscore the critical role of curriculum enhancement and adaptation in educational leadership, emphasizing the incorporation of diverse perspectives to enrich student learning experiences. By developing accessible lesson plans and establishing curriculum review committees involving teachers, administrators, and sometimes students, they ensure that the curriculum remains responsive to evolving educational needs and meets current standards. Training initiatives for teachers further equip them with practical strategies to create inclusive classroom environments and integrate diverse perspectives effectively into their teaching practices.

Managing curriculum for inclusion involves collaboration among principals, school management teams (SMTs), and teachers to overcome barriers like inadequate teacher preparation and curriculum rigidity, which are crucial for creating inclusive learning environments. Teachers' approaches to curriculum adaptation for students with diverse needs vary, from content modifications to holistic adjustments in instructional strategies and stakeholder collaboration (Shabalala et al., 2023).

Furthermore, effective educational leadership fosters a culture of awareness and acceptance, supporting continuous professional development for educators and leaders alike to promote equity in education

(Maphalala & Ngubane, 2023). Similarly, embracing inclusive leadership models that acknowledge intersectionality and cultural diversity enhances school culture by valuing the unique contributions of all students and families (Smith-Woofter et al., 2022).

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Cultivating Positive Attitude

School heads have recognized the pivotal role of a positive attitude in effective educational leadership, emphasizing its impact on boosting confidence, motivation, and overall morale within the school community. By cultivating optimism, patience, and empathy, they navigate challenges with composure and foster a calm environment conducive to learning and growth. Their commitment to shared visions and goals inspires stakeholders to collaborate toward creating a supportive and successful educational environment.

The research underscores the critical role of school leaders in fostering a positive attitude within educational leadership, significantly impacting organizational culture and performance. Leaders who exhibit optimism and resilience enhance staff morale and motivation, creating an environment conducive to learning and professional growth (Laurel, 2023). Effective leadership practices include ensuring job satisfaction, improving working conditions, and providing mentorship, reducing teacher turnover, and maintaining a stable, motivated teaching workforce (Dedering & Pietsch, 2023).

Additionally, cultivating trust and encouraging teachers' innovativeness are pivotal in driving school improvement and adapting to dynamic environments. These leadership qualities collectively foster collaboration and commitment among stakeholders, shaping a vision of academic success and enhancing teaching and learning quality (Simbre et al., 2023).

Insights of School Head in Fostering a Conducive Learning Environment

Participants in this study emphasized their insights and recommendations for future school heads on the importance of communication skills in cultivating a conducive learning environment. Through data analysis, four key themes emerged such as: (a.) nurturing an inclusive environment; (b.) build relationships with stakeholders; (c.) support from workmates; and (d.) empower student participation.

Nurturing an Inclusive Environment

School heads emphasized the pivotal role of nurturing and inclusive environments in fostering growth and development within educational settings. By promoting innovation, embracing diverse pedagogical approaches, and creating supportive learning spaces, educational leaders ensure that all students thrive. Insights from participants underscore the importance of prioritizing social-emotional learning, fostering creativity and critical thinking through adaptive teaching methods, and providing comprehensive support services to meet the diverse needs of students.

Leadership abilities are crucial in celebrating diversity and ensuring social justice, particularly for immigrant students in Northern Cyprus, where school principals' leadership has been vital in addressing inequalities and promoting an inclusive learning environment (Küçükakın & Gökmenoğlu, 2023). Similarly, Boutwell and Smith (2023) supported the idea that inclusive leadership models are essential for creating safe and valued environments, which are critical for individual learning and organizational effectiveness.

Furthermore, supportive leadership behaviors are recognized for advancing student knowledge and strengthening the dedication and confidence within the school community, thereby promoting a positive school culture and climate through continuous engagement and active intervention (Wolfenden et al.,2022).

Build Relationships with Stakeholders

School heads play a pivotal role in fostering a collaborative and supportive educational environment by building strong relationships with stakeholders. Through effective communication and collaboration with parents, staff, and the wider community, school leaders ensure that initiatives are aligned with community needs and enhance the overall learning experience. Strategies such as seeking feedback, fostering a collaborative culture among staff, and rallying stakeholders around a shared vision are crucial for implementing innovative educational initiatives that benefit all involved.

School heads fostered a collaborative and supportive educational environment by building strong relationships with stakeholders, which is essential for the successful implementation of innovative educational initiatives (Perez & Banayo, 2023). In connection, effective communication and collaboration with parents, staff, and the wider community ensure that school initiatives are aligned with community needs and enhance the overall learning experience (Cherkashchenko & Nikolaeva, 2023).

Moreover, school heads need to establish community partnerships and maintaining good communication with stakeholders to address challenges such as resource insufficiency and accessibility issues. Similarly, the role of school heads in remote areas includes designing healthy educational programs and motivating teachers to support positive learning environment that requires close cooperation with all stakeholders (Qaisar et al., 2023).

Support from Workmates

School heads emphasize the importance of fostering a collaborative work environment where seeking support from colleagues is encouraged. By actively engaging in sharing experiences, seeking advice, and fostering open communication among staff, they cultivate a culture of teamwork and mutual support. This collaborative approach not only enhances problem-solving capabilities but also empowers individuals to contribute effectively to overcoming challenges and implementing innovative educational strategies.

In connection, research revealed that the leadership styles of school heads, particularly transformational and instructional leadership, significantly impact the effectiveness of teachers and school performance. Transformational leaders who are open to new thinking, willing to take risks, and actively seek feedback will create an environment conducive to collaboration and innovation (Maini, 2022).

Furthermore, effective instructional leadership, characterized by being a resource provider, instructional resource, and communicator, has been shown to correlate positively with outstanding teacher performance (Andal & Jovellano, 2023). Administrative support is also needed to collaborative approach, as it ensures that teachers have the necessary resources in action research and other professional development activities (Virador, 2023).

Empower Student Participation

School heads recognize the transformative impact of empowering student participation in decision-making and policy development within educational settings. By actively involving students in these processes, schools foster a culture where student voices are valued and integrated into school policies and practices. School heads who demonstrate visionary, trustworthy, and flexible leadership qualities significantly impact teacher effectiveness and school performance, which in turn benefits student outcomes (Ngoho & Pañares, 2023). Moreover, the practice of democratic leadership styles, which emphasize empathy, social skills, and shared decision-making, has been shown to create a more effective school environment and positively influence school results (Mendoza, 2023).

By involving students in these processes, schools can address various concerns such as instruction, facilities, and student behavior more effectively, as a community of teacher-researchers and student participants collaboratively work towards common goals (Anjum et al., 2021). In the same way, research indicates that when students actively participate in these processes, their perceptions and needs are better understood and integrated, leading to more effective learning environments (Tomlin, 2023).

Implication for Conducive Learning Environment Practices

The lived experiences of school heads in fostering a conducive learning environment reveal significant challenges and strategic responses that offer valuable insights for educational leaders. They often face with problems of integrating technology, adjusting curricula to meet evolving educational standards, and managing limited resources,

To cope with these challenges, school heads need to prioritize professional development for teachers, organize hands-on workshops to enhance technological proficiency, and establish curriculum review committees that involve different stakeholders to ensure the relevance and responsiveness of curriculum. Their experiences highlighted the importance of fostering a culture of awareness and acceptance, promoting continuous professional development, and embracing inclusive leadership style that value diversity. By sharing these insights, school heads emphasize their need of adaptable leadership strategies, collaborative efforts, and ongoing training to effectively adapt the demands of modern education and cre-

ate an environment where all students could succeed.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings of this study, researchers may prioritize studying the impact of student empowerment on academic performance, engagement, and overall school culture. Understanding how different models of student involvement, such as student councils or participatory budgeting, influence student agency can provide valuable insights into enhancing educational outcomes.

Secondly, there is a need for additional research related to effective strategies to integrate student feedback into educational policies and practices. Investigating methods that capture and utilize student perspectives in curriculum development, school governance, and teacher-student interactions can help create more responsive and student-centered learning environments that cater to diverse student needs.

Furthermore, addressing the professional development needs of teachers may be necessary. Research focusing on effective training programs that equip educators with skills to nurture student voice, support diverse learning styles, and foster collaborative classrooms can significantly impact educational leadership practices and student outcomes.

Finally, potential research may include investigating barriers to student empowerment, exploring the role of technology in enhancing student voice, assessing the impact of student-led initiatives on school climate, and evaluating policy frameworks promoting student participation. These research endeavors not only contribute to advancing educational theory and practice but also offer practical insights for improving educational leadership.

Concluding Remarks

As I explored the school head's experiences in fostering a conducive learning environment through student empowerment and collaborative practices, I have found that integrating student voices into educational decision-making is needed for creating inclusive and effective learning environments. Throughout my research, I encountered challenges such as resistance to change. However, these difficulties have underscored the importance of persistence and strategic planning in overcoming barriers to change within educational settings.

One significant realization from this research is the transformative potential of empowering students. By actively involving them in decision-making processes, schools not only enhance student engagement and academic outcomes but also cultivate a culture of mutual respect and responsibility. As an educator and researcher, I have learned that fostering student engagement requires a balanced approach that values both student perspectives and educational goals.

Moving forward, I believe it is necessary to continue exploring innovative strategies for integrating student feedback, supporting teacher development, and conducting longitudinal studies to assess the lasting impacts of student empowerment initiatives. By addressing these areas, I will be able to contribute to enhancing educational practices to meet the evolving needs of students and promote equitable learning opportunities for all.

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