

Managerial Competencies of Lower Apayao Secondary School Heads

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ABSTRACT

School heads play a crucial role in ensuring the efficient and effective management of educational institutions. This study assessed the managerial competencies of secondary school heads in Lower Apayao, Philippines, focusing on three key areas: human, physical, and financial resource management. Utilizing a descriptive survey design, the study involved a complete enumeration of secondary school heads across the districts of Luna, Flora, Sta. Marcela, and Pudtol. A structured questionnaire, validated and adapted from established sources, was used to gather data, which were then analyzed using weighted mean. Findings revealed that school heads exhibited expert-level competencies in managing human and physical resources and a in financial resource management. Despite these strengths, moderate to high proficient level competency gaps were identified, particularly in areas such as professional development support, integration of ICT tools, flexibility in resource allocation, and adequacy of school budget. These gaps highlight the need for enhanced support mechanisms and targeted capacity-building initiatives. Based on the findings, the study recommends strengthening professional development programs, increasing ICT investments, providing financial management training, and granting school heads greater autonomy in decision-making and resource utilization. The results aim to guide policy enhancements and leadership development programs that will ultimately improve educational outcomes across the Schools Division of Apayao.

Keywords: managerial competencies, school leadership, human resources, physical resources, financial management, secondary education, Apayao

INTRODUCTION

The role of school heads as educational leaders is universally recognized across various educational systems worldwide. They are considered as the pillars of the educational institutions [1], responsible for the management and growth of schools [2]. They serve as the guiding force behind the implementation of the school's vision and mission, ensuring the overall effectiveness of educational programs and projects [1]. Whether in developed countries with well-established education systems or in developing nations striving for educational advancement, the significance of competent school leadership remains paramount. In countries such as the United Kingdom, Finland, and Australia, effective school leadership has been linked to high-performing educational systems [3]. International organizations like UNESCO and the OECD emphasize that school leaders must demonstrate competencies in management, pedagogy, and innovation to meet the challenges of 21st-century learning [4,5].

In the Philippines, under the Republic Act No. 9155, school heads are entrusted with the authority, responsibility, and accountability for overseeing all aspects of school operations [6]. This includes

ensuring the academic progress of students, supporting the personal and professional growth of teachers, creating an environment conducive to learning, and fostering connections with both internal and external stakeholders. Additionally, school heads are accountable for the overall performance of the school [6]. Hence, the success and failure of the school depends on the kind of school head it has.

Moreover, DepED Order No. 42, s. 2007, stated that school principal or head is “a person responsible for the administrative and instructional supervision of the school or cluster of schools” [7]. As such, Principals must possess a high level of competence to assume their duties and responsibilities and achieve the collectively determined objectives [8]. They are expected to possess several key abilities, including the ability to craft and pursue a shared school vision and mission, develop and implement curriculum policies, programs, and projects, work and develop effective relationships with stakeholders, exert a positive influence upon people, explore complex issues from a global perspective, manage an educational enterprise, and maximize the use of resources [7].

One of the competencies a school principal must possess is managerial competence. These are the skills, habits, motives, attitudes, and knowledge necessary for managers to have or inculcate for successful management [8]. And for a successful school leadership, school principals need to improve their management competencies in personnel management and financial or material resources management [9]. Effective resource management is one of the most important responsibilities of school administrators [10]. It plays an important and critical role in managing a school and it involves strategic plan for organizing and using school resources [11]. Resource management includes both the human resource and material resource management. Human Resource management is a set of practices and methods of integrating and maintaining schools’ teaching and non-teaching staffs to perform their duties and responsibilities in effective and efficient manner in order to meet organizational goals [8], while material resource management in school is a planning tool for modernization of the existing facilities; developing the helpful measures for continuous maintenance, reconstruction and rejuvenation [11].

Numerous studies have underscored the significance of managerial competencies in educational leadership. Effective school leaders are expected to possess a diverse range of competencies, including financial management skills, to navigate the complexities of educational administration successfully. Financial management in educational institutions involves budgeting, resource allocation, financial reporting, and adherence to regulatory frameworks [11]. However, studies have also highlighted the challenges faced by school leaders in effectively managing finances, such as inadequate training and limited resources.

Moreover, the importance of accountability and transparency in financial matters within educational institutions cannot be overstated. The Philippine Professional Standards For School Heads (PPSSH) highlights the importance of accountability and transparency of school heads, therefore the decisions and actions of school heads are open to public scrutiny, and the public has a right to access information [12]. School heads acknowledge and assume responsibility and have the obligation to report, explain, and be answerable for their actions, products, decisions, and policies which is based on Republic Act 9155, Chapter 1, Section 5 also known as the “Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001.” [6].

The local and national governments have provided the fundamental financial necessities for all schools in the Philippines. The Department of Education under DepEd Order No. 008, s. 2019 is allocating Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) funds for basic necessities such as electricity, water, internet, training expenses, office/school supplies, graduation rites, janitorial, minor facility repairs, and other operational expenses [13]. Other sources of school funds include the Special Education Fund (SEF),

School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) funds, PTA-authorized contributions, canteen funds, and other monetary donations or contributions from various external stakeholders such as Local Government Units (LGUs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Alumni Associations [13].

The findings of this research hold significance to the Schools Division of Apayao. Understanding the managerial competencies of secondary school heads can provide policy formulation and capacity-building initiatives aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of educational leadership within the division. Moreover, it can contribute to improving resource management practices, ultimately benefiting students, teachers, and the entire educational community.

This research is motivated by the recognition of the critical role played by secondary school heads in educational management. By examining the managerial competencies of school heads within the Division of Apayao, this study aims to generate insights that can inform policy and practice for improving educational leadership. Ultimately, the findings of this research have the potential to contribute to the enhancement of educational outcomes and the promotion of sustainable development in the field of education.

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to assess the Managerial Competencies of Lower Apayao Secondary School Heads at the Schools Division of Apayao.

More specifically, this study aims to answer the following sub-problems:

What is the level of managerial competence of the secondary school heads in terms of the following:

- Human Resources
- Physical Resources; and
- Financial Resources

What are the gaps in managerial competencies in terms of:

- Human Resources
- Physical Resources; and
- Financial Resources

What are the recommendations to address the gaps in terms of:

- Human Resources
- Physical Resources; and
- Financial Resources

Theoretical Framework

The conceptual framework of this study was anchored in various management theories and frameworks which includes the following:

A. Human Relations Theory

The human relations approach, pioneered by Elton Mayo, focuses on the social and psychological aspects of management. Human Relations management theory suggests that employee productivity and motivation can be increased through positive social bonds in the workplace and acknowledgement of the worker as a unique individual. It holds that improved working conditions lead to increased productivity [14].

Furthermore, it is highlighted that “communication, conflict resolution, multitasking, negotiation and organization are all vital to human relations. Leaders who develop these skills are on their way to

successfully implementing human relations management practices” [15]. In this study, this theory highlights the importance of understanding and addressing the needs, motivations, and concerns of teachers, staff, and students. It convey that effective management should consider the human element, fostering a supportive and collaborative environment where stakeholders feel valued and engaged.

B. Scientific Management Theory

This theory, proposed by Frederick Taylor, emphasizes the scientific study of work processes to improve efficiency and productivity. The objective of scientific theory is to increase production within an organization by increasing the productivity of the individual [16]. In the context of this study, scientific management theory can be applied to understand how the managerial competencies of secondary school heads impact financial management and liquidation practices. It conveys that by applying systematic approaches to managing resources and processes, such as human resource management and financial planning, school heads can enhance their effectiveness in financial management and liquidation practices.

C. System Theory

This theory views organizations as complex systems composed of interconnected parts that work together to achieve common goals. It is characterized as an entity that has all the elements necessary to carry out its functions [17]. In the context of this study, system theory highlights the interrelatedness of managerial competencies, financial management practices, and liquidation practices within the secondary school setting. It conveys that changes or improvements in one aspect, such as enhancing managerial competencies, can have ripple effects on financial management and liquidation practices throughout the school system.

Research Paradigm

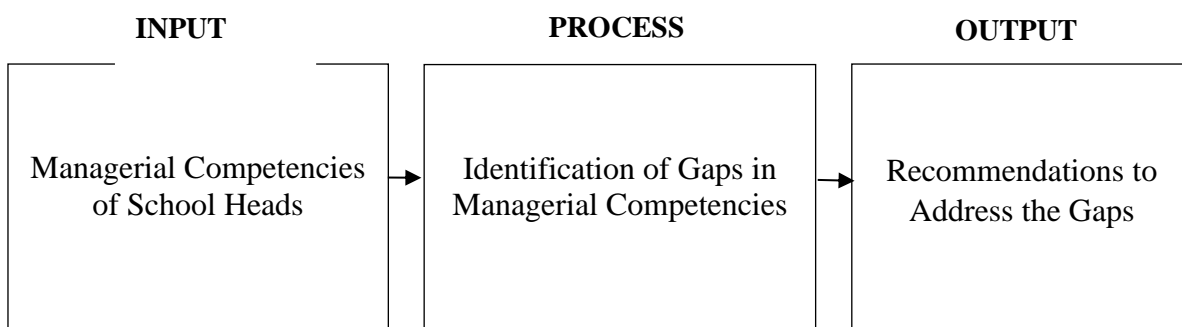


Figure 1. The Paradigm of the Study

The study employed the Input-Process-Output (IPO) paradigm to evaluate the managerial competencies of school heads. The Input component focused on identifying the existing managerial competencies of school heads. The Process involved analyzing and determining the gaps within these competencies. Finally, the Output consisted of recommendations aimed at addressing the identified gaps and enhancing overall managerial effectiveness.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research design, participants of the study, instrumentation, data gathering procedure, and data analysis.

Research Design

This research study employed a descriptive survey to describe the level of managerial competencies of

secondary school heads in Lower Apayao.

Locale of the study

This study was conducted across various public secondary schools within the Lower District of the Division of Apayao which include the district of Luna, Flora, Sta. Marcela and Pudtol.

Respondents of the study

The study included all the 17 secondary school heads within the Lower District of the Division of Apayao. Therefore, a complete enumeration sampling method was utilized.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents based on the Population

Respondents	Male	Female	Total
Flora District	0	3	3
Luna District	1	4	5
Pudtol District	2	3	5
Sta. Marcela District	3	1	4

Research Instrument

The main instrument used in the study is a questionnaire adopted on the study of Operario [18], Department of Education [19], Philippine School Leadership Competency Framework [20], Philippine Institute for Development Studies [21], SEAMEO-INNOTECH [22] and World Bank [23]. Scale used in the questionnaire is presented on Table 2.

Table 2. Scale composition of the questionnaire.

Scale	Descriptive Rating
1	Strongly Disagree
2	Disagree
3	Agree
4	Strongly Agree

Data Gathering Procedure

The study begun with securing the required permissions. Initial approval was requested from the Schools Division Superintendent. After obtaining the relevant approvals, a professionally constructed set of questionnaires were personally distributed to all identified respondents taking part in the study.

Subsequently, the obtained data were rigorously tallied, submitted to rigorous statistical analysis, and thoroughly handled in order to yield relevant insights and understanding about the findings of this investigation.

Statistical Treatment of data

The following statistical treatment was used in the study:

1. The Weighted mean was employed to determine the level of managerial competence and gaps of Secondary School Heads in Lower Apayao.

Table 3. The 4-point Likert Scale for the School Heads' Level of Managerial Competencies

Likert Scale	Numerical Scale	Descriptive Rating	
		<i>School heads' level of managerial competencies</i>	<i>Gaps on managerial competencies</i>
4	3.25-4.00	Expert	Minimal gap
3	2.50-3.24	Proficient	Moderate gap
2	1.75-2.49	Competent	High gap
1	1.00-1.74	Developing	Critical gap

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data and findings in this study are presented, analyzed, and interpreted in this section.

1. Managerial Competencies

Table 1. Managerial Competencies of School Heads

Human Resource Management Competencies	Mean	Description
Skilled in recruiting and selecting qualified teachers to <u>fill</u> the school's staffing needs.	3.53	Expert
Effectively provide orientation and onboarding for new staff members.	3.53	Expert
Regularly conduct performance evaluations for teachers and staff.	3.76	Expert
Able to resolve conflicts among school personnel efficiently and fairly.	3.71	Expert
Prioritize and promote the professional development of my teaching and non-teaching staff.	3.53	Expert
Category Mean	3.61	Expert
Physical Resource Management Competencies	Mean	Description
Effectively manage and maintain school facilities to ensure a safe and conducive learning environment.	4.0	Expert
Able to allocate resources for repairs and improvements based on priority needs.	4.0	Expert
Assess and report physical <u>resource</u> needs to ensure timely procurement and maintenance.	4.0	Expert
Incorporate technology and ICT resources into the school's operations to enhance teaching and learning.	3.24	Proficient
Establish partnerships with external stakeholders to supplement physical resources when necessary.	3.65	Expert
Category Mean	3.78	Expert
Financial Resource Management Competencies	Mean	Description
Effectively plan and allocate the school's budget according to the needs of various programs and resources.	3.65	Expert
Ensure that financial transactions are transparent and align with DepEd guidelines.	3.65	Expert
Skilled in managing and overseeing the school's funds to avoid overspending.	3.53	Expert
Have adequate knowledge and skills to prepare and manage the school's budget effectively.	3.59	Expert
Explore alternative funding sources, such as grants and donations, to support school programs and projects.	2.94	Proficient
Category Mean	3.39	Expert

Table 1 shows that school heads in Lower Apayao exhibit expert-level competencies across three key areas: human, physical, and financial resource management.

In Human Resource Management ($M = 3.61$), school heads are particularly skilled in performance evaluations ($M = 3.76$) and conflict resolution ($M = 3.71$), suggesting strong leadership in managing staff performance and relationships. Competencies in recruitment, onboarding, and staff development (each $M = 3.53$) also reflect their ability to build and sustain an effective workforce. These align with Operario's findings [18] that highlight the importance of HR management in ensuring staff accountability and school efficiency.

For Physical Resource Management ($M = 3.78$), the highest-rated competencies—facility management, resource allocation, and procurement assessment—each received a perfect 4.0 rating. This indicates strong capabilities in maintaining a safe and functional school environment. However, the lower rating in technology integration ($M = 3.24$, Proficient) points to a need for improved digital competency, consistent with Operario's emphasis on embracing educational technology [18].

In Financial Resource Management ($M = 3.39$), school heads show strength in budget planning and financial transparency (both $M = 3.65$). Yet, exploring alternative funding sources was rated lowest ($M = 2.94$, Proficient), suggesting a need for skill-building in fundraising and grant writing. This supports both Operario's and the PPSSH's recommendations [12][18] for school heads to seek innovative funding strategies. As Lapuz and Pecajas [1] note, partnerships with LGUs, NGOs, and private sponsors can help improve school resources and programs.

Gaps in Managerial Competencies

Table 2. Gaps in Managerial Competencies

A. Human Resources	Mean	Description
Sufficient strategies for recruiting qualified teachers to fill vacant positions in my school.	3.76	Minimal Gap
Professional development opportunities for teachers in my school are adequate.	3.82	Minimal Gap
Provide consistent teacher evaluations and feedback to enhance teaching performance.	3.88	Minimal Gap
Has the necessary resources to support effective teacher development and retention.	3.00	Moderate
Face significant challenges in managing human resources due to the lack of administrative support.	2.41	Minimal
Category Mean	3.40	Minimal Gap
B. Physical Resources	Mean	Description
Adequate physical facilities (e.g., classrooms, libraries, sanitation) to support student learning.	3.41	Minimal Gap
Manage and maintain the school's physical resources with the budget provided.	3.71	Minimal Gap
The school's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) resources are sufficient to meet modern educational needs.	3.12	Moderate Gap
Authority and flexibility to make decisions about the allocation of physical resources in my school.	2.48	Moderate Gap
Experience frequent delays in the delivery of needed physical resources, which affects school operations.	2.88	Moderate Gap
Category Mean	3.24	Moderate Gap
C. Financial Resources	Mean	Description
The school's budget is adequate to cover necessary operational and educational expenses.	2.24	High Gap
Consistently receive school funds on time, allowing effective budget management.	3.06	Moderate Gap

Received sufficient training to manage and allocate the school's financial resources effectively.	3.06	Moderate Gap
School has the capability to secure additional funding through partnerships, donations, or grants.	3.06	Moderate Gap
Financial resource management is a significant challenge due to budget constraints and limited financial autonomy.	3.41	Minimal Gap
Category Mean	2.96	Moderate Gap

The findings from Table 2 reveals that school heads in Lower Apayao demonstrate varying degrees of competency gaps across human, physical, and financial resource management. In human resource management ($M = 3.40$), the gaps are generally minimal, particularly in teacher evaluation (3.88), professional development (3.82), and recruitment strategies (3.76), reflecting robust personnel systems. However, a moderate gap was identified in the availability of resources for sustaining teacher development programs (3.00), suggesting funding or logistical constraints. These findings are consistent with research emphasizing the critical role of recruitment, professional development, and adequate resource allocation in strengthening teacher performance and school effectiveness [24][25][26].

In terms of physical resource management ($M = 3.24$), while minimal gaps are seen in facility upkeep (3.41) and budget use (3.71), moderate gaps in ICT availability (3.12), decision-making authority (2.48), and delayed resource delivery (2.88) highlight systemic limitations. These issues reflect broader challenges related to bureaucracy and underfunding, which have been widely noted as barriers to efficient school leadership [27][28][29].

Finally, financial resource management presents the greatest challenge, with a moderate overall gap ($M = 2.96$) and a high gap in budget adequacy (2.24). Other concerns include insufficient financial training, limited ICT investment, and restricted autonomy in budget decisions (all at 3.06). These are supported by studies showing that inadequate financial skills and restricted funding hinder school heads from effectively managing resources, which can negatively impact educational quality and staff morale [30][31][32]. Collectively, the findings underscore the need for targeted interventions—particularly in financial training, resource mobilization, and systemic reforms—to empower school leaders and support sustainable school development.

Recommendations to Address the Gaps

Table 3: Identified Gaps and Corresponding Recommendations in Managerial Competencies of School Heads

Area	Gaps	Recommendations
Human Resources	No sufficient strategies are in place for recruiting qualified teachers to fill vacant positions.	Streamline the recruitment process to attract and retain qualified teachers.
	Professional development opportunities for teachers are inadequate.	Provide regular training programs for school heads and teachers to improve teaching quality and management skills.
	Consistent teacher evaluations and feedback to enhance teaching performance are not provided.	Implement a structured performance evaluation system for teachers and staff to enhance accountability and performance.

	The school lacks necessary resources to support effective teacher development and retention.	Increase DepEd support for teacher incentives and retention strategies; allocate more funds for development programs.
	Significant challenges are encountered in managing human resources due to lack of administrative support.	Hire additional support staff to handle administrative tasks so school heads can focus on instructional leadership.
Physical Resources	Adequate physical facilities (e.g., classrooms, libraries, sanitation) to support student learning are lacking.	Increase budget allocations for school maintenance and repair to improve learning environments.
	Physical resources are not effectively managed and maintained within the provided budget.	Implement regular resource needs assessments to ensure that schools receive timely and necessary support.
	Information and Communication Technology (ICT) resources are insufficient to meet modern educational needs.	Improve ICT availability through better provision of computers, internet, and digital learning tools.
	Authority and flexibility in decisions about physical resource allocation are lacking.	Empower school heads with greater decision-making authority over resource allocation.
	Frequent delays in the delivery of needed physical resources negatively affect school operations.	Establish more efficient coordination mechanisms for procurement and delivery of school supplies.
	External support for infrastructure is limited.	Establish partnerships with LGUs, NGOs, and private entities to help supplement physical resources.
Financial Resources	The school budget is inadequate to cover necessary operational and educational expenses.	Advocate for increased budget allocations from the national and local governments.
	School funds are not consistently received on time, hindering effective budget management.	Improve timeliness and consistency of fund disbursement to schools to support effective management.
	Training on managing and allocating financial resources is insufficient.	Conduct regular financial management and budgeting training for school heads.

	Capacity to secure additional funding through partnerships, donations, or grants is lacking.	Develop external fundraising and grant-writing skills among school leaders.
	Financial resource management is a significant challenge due to budget constraints and limited financial autonomy.	Increase budgetary autonomy for school heads to enable more effective and responsive use of resources.
	Community involvement in financial support is minimal.	Collaborate with local stakeholders, including private sectors and alumni associations, to support school projects financially.

The table reveals critical managerial gaps among school heads in Lower Apayao across human, physical, and financial resource areas. In human resource management, weaknesses in recruitment strategies, limited professional development, and inadequate administrative support echo findings in recent studies [33], which emphasize that comprehensive HR systems and administrative backing are vital for teacher retention and school performance. In the area of physical resource management, insufficient ICT infrastructure, limited authority in resource allocation, and delays in resource delivery reflect systemic issues, aligning with research [34], which found that decentralized decision-making and strong external partnerships significantly improve resource responsiveness. Financially, gaps such as inadequate and delayed funding, limited training in financial management, and poor fundraising capacities are consistent with studies [35][36], which highlight the need for enhanced financial autonomy and training to improve fund utilization and sustainability in schools. These findings underscore the importance of empowering school heads through targeted professional development, policy reforms, and strengthened collaborations with stakeholders to ensure effective and sustainable school management.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendation of the study.

Summary of Findings

The study found that secondary school heads in Lower Apayao demonstrate an *expert* level of managerial competence across the three assessed areas: **Human Resources**, **Physical Resources**, and **Financial Resources**. They are particularly strong in conducting staff evaluations, maintaining school facilities, and planning budgets, although they are less proficient in technology integration and exploring alternative funding sources.

The study identified **minimal gaps** in human resource management, with a moderate gap in supporting teacher development. **Physical resource management** showed a **moderate gap** overall, especially in ICT availability, decision-making authority, and timely delivery of resources. The most significant issues were found in **financial resource management**, which revealed moderate overall gaps and a high gap in the adequacy of the school budget, along with limited financial training and fundraising capabilities.

To address these gaps, the study recommends several strategies. For **Human Resources**, improving recruitment processes, enhancing professional development, and providing administrative support are suggested. For **Physical Resources**, increasing ICT provisions, empowering school heads in decision-making, and improving procurement systems are necessary. For **Financial Resources**, the study

recommends increasing budget allocations, ensuring timely fund release, enhancing financial management training, and strengthening external partnerships to secure additional funding. These findings highlight the need for capacity-building and policy support to empower school leaders and improve school management.

Conclusions

The study assessed the managerial competencies of secondary school heads in Lower Apayao and found that, overall, they possess an expert level of competence in managing human, physical, and financial resources. School heads demonstrated strong capabilities in areas such as teacher evaluation, school facility management, and budget planning, reflecting effective leadership and commitment to school improvement.

However, the study also revealed gaps that need to be addressed. In human resource management, although the gaps were minimal, there were concerns regarding the availability of resources for sustained teacher development. In terms of physical resource management, moderate gaps were observed, particularly in the availability of ICT resources, limited authority in resource allocation, and frequent delays in resource delivery. Financial resource management posed the most significant challenge, with high gaps in budget adequacy and moderate gaps in training, autonomy, and external funding initiatives.

To address these issues, the study recommends strengthening recruitment and retention strategies, enhancing professional development, and hiring administrative support staff. Additionally, improving access to technology, empowering school heads in decision-making, and streamlining procurement systems are necessary steps. Financially, increasing budget allocations, ensuring timely fund release, providing financial training, and building partnerships for additional funding are critical. These findings underscore the need for continuous support, policy reforms, and capacity-building efforts to fully empower school heads in Lower Apayao to effectively lead their schools toward sustainable and high-quality education.

Recommendations

The Department of Education (DepEd) and the Schools Division Office should take the lead in addressing the recommendations related to human resources, such as improving recruitment processes, providing professional development programs, and increasing administrative support for school heads. They should also advocate for the allocation of more funding for schools and provide training in financial management. Local Government Units (LGUs) should support the recommendations related to physical resources by helping secure funding for school infrastructure improvements, including ICT resources, and ensuring timely procurement and delivery of resources. Additionally, LGUs can empower school heads with greater authority in resource allocation and assist in streamlining administrative processes.

School heads themselves are key players in implementing changes within their schools, including improving recruitment and retention strategies, advocating for resources from DepEd and LGUs, and managing finances effectively by participating in relevant training and exploring partnerships to secure additional funding.

Teachers and staff should be actively involved in the process, supporting professional development initiatives and contributing to the efficient use of school resources. Lastly, community stakeholders, including NGOs, alumni associations, and the private sector, should collaborate with schools to help secure additional funding, resources, and expertise, ensuring the sustainability of educational

improvements. By working together, these stakeholders can address the gaps identified in the study and contribute to the overall improvement of education in Lower Apayao.

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