



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



The interplay of leadership styles, management practices and organizational productivity: A convergent parallel mixed-methods study

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between leadership styles, management practices, and organizational productivity in National High Schools within Area 4, Leyte Division. Using a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, the research integrated quantitative data gathered from school heads and teachers with qualitative insights from selected participants to provide a comprehensive understanding of leadership and productivity in the context of educational reforms. Findings revealed a high degree of administrative standardization across schools. Quantitative results showed that management practices, particularly team communication and decision-making, did not differ significantly by the school head's dominant leadership style. This indicates that established institutional policies, professional standards, and regulatory frameworks have created a consistent level of managerial competence that functions independently of individual leadership preferences. Despite this uniformity in administrative operations, a significant relationship emerged between leadership style and academic achievement. Transformational and instructional leadership behaviors were positively associated with higher student performance, suggesting that visionary and learning-centered leadership plays a crucial role in advancing educational outcomes beyond routine organizational functioning. The qualitative findings highlighted a tension between administrative efficiency and institutional innovation. While collaborative leadership, coaching, and shared governance contributed to school stability, teachers frequently viewed research and extension activities as compliance requirements linked to promotion rather than as opportunities for organizational improvement. Participants identified administrative workload, documentation demands, and compliance-oriented practices as factors that constrained innovation and limited opportunities for meaningful pedagogical development. The study concludes that sustained organizational productivity requires a shift from compliance-driven management toward innovation-oriented leadership. To address this need, the study proposes the Leadership-Management-Organizational Productivity (LMOP) Calibration Model, a framework intended to reduce administrative burdens, strengthen instructional support, and empower educators as knowledge creators. By prioritizing research engagement, instructional leadership, and professional collaboration, schools can move beyond maintaining operational standards and cultivate a culture of continuous improvement, innovation, and academic excellence.

Keywords: Academic Achievement; Educational Innovation; Instructional Leadership; Leadership Styles; Management Practices; Organizational Productivity; Transformational Leadership

1 Introduction

The pursuit of organizational excellence in education requires the strategic alignment of leadership and management practices to achieve sustainable institutional productivity. In the context of Education 4.0, schools are expected not only to improve academic outcomes but also to demonstrate digital readiness, organizational adaptability, and stakeholder

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engagement (UNESCO, 2024). Consequently, the role of school leaders has evolved from traditional administrative supervision to a more dynamic function that integrates vision-setting, organizational management, and innovation.

Contemporary educational leadership literature emphasizes that effective school leadership extends beyond individual authority and increasingly involves collaborative and distributed approaches that empower teachers and staff (Harris & Jones, 2023). Transformational, situational, instructional, distributive, and transactional leadership styles have been identified as critical mechanisms for enhancing school performance and fostering positive organizational cultures. However, translating these leadership approaches into effective day-to-day management remains a challenge, particularly in developing countries where schools often operate under resource constraints and centralized governance structures.

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) institutionalized the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH) to strengthen leadership and management competencies among school administrators. While these standards provide a comprehensive framework for school governance, their implementation varies according to local conditions. In rural settings such as the Leyte Division, school leaders frequently confront challenges related to limited financial resources, geographical isolation, and community-specific needs. As a result, school heads often rely on local partnerships and community participation, particularly the Filipino value of *bayanihan*, to supplement institutional resources and sustain school operations (Danzu, 2023).

Leadership styles constitute a critical variable in educational organizations because they influence how school heads motivate personnel, allocate resources, and respond to organizational challenges. Emerging studies suggest that effective leadership increasingly requires empathy, adaptability, and data-informed decision-making (James, 2024). Nevertheless, there remains limited empirical evidence on how school heads in the Leyte Division adapt their leadership styles to address local realities while responding to demands for educational reform and digital transformation.

Complementing leadership is the concept of management practices, which refer to the administrative mechanisms employed to organize people, resources, and processes toward institutional goals. Effective school management encompasses planning, organizing, directing, and controlling educational activities to ensure quality learning outcomes. Management practices also involve strategic decision-making, instructional supervision, fiscal accountability, personnel development, and innovation. While leadership provides organizational direction, management serves as the operational mechanism through which institutional objectives are achieved (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2021).

Organizational productivity represents the outcome of effective leadership and management. Within educational institutions, productivity is reflected through efficient school operations, improved academic performance, and enhanced teacher effectiveness. Productive schools effectively convert available resources into meaningful educational outcomes while maintaining positive organizational climates and stakeholder satisfaction (Danzu, 2023). Conversely, ineffective management systems may contribute to declining performance, low morale, and diminished institutional competitiveness (Harris & Jones, 2023).

Although prior studies have examined leadership, management, and productivity separately, few have investigated how these variables interact within a single framework. Much of the existing literature depends on quantitative methods that can miss the contextual experiences of school leaders and teachers. Therefore, there is a need for research that combines statistical analysis with qualitative insights to better understand how leadership shapes management practices and productivity in real school settings.

The present study fills this gap using a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, which collects and analyzes quantitative and qualitative data concurrently to yield measurable trends alongside contextual insights into leadership and organizational performance (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2021). This integration is appropriate because leadership effectiveness is mediated by management practices, organizational culture, and employee engagement (Siraj et al., 2022). Recent evidence also shows that organizational productivity declines when leaders fail to address workplace stress, administrative complexity, and resource limitations (Nasution et al., 2025).

The study is grounded in complementary theoretical perspectives. The Integrative Organizational Performance Framework proposes that productivity emerges from alignment among leadership behaviors, management systems, and institutional demands. Differentiation Theory highlights the need for leaders and managers to tailor responses to the varying needs and capacities of organizational members. Contingency Theory argues that leadership effectiveness depends on matching leadership behavior to situational demands rather than applying a single universal style. Recent research supports this view, showing that school leaders must adapt their approaches to organizational conditions, stakeholder needs, and environmental challenges to achieve desired outcomes (Nguyen et al., 2023; Uslu, 2022). In

educational settings, leadership flexibility is linked to greater organizational responsiveness and improved performance, especially during periods of rapid change and reform.

Modern Management Theory emphasizes translating leadership vision into practical administrative functions—planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling resources. Contemporary scholars contend that effective educational management requires integrating strategic planning with evidence-based decision making and resource optimization to enhance institutional performance (Bush, 2020; Hallinger, 2022). As schools confront increasingly complex operational demands, managerial competence is essential for achieving organizational goals and sustaining educational quality.

Similarly, Total Quality Management (TQM) highlights continuous improvement, stakeholder satisfaction, and process efficiency as key determinants of organizational excellence. Recent research indicates that educational institutions adopting quality management principles demonstrate enhanced organizational effectiveness, stronger stakeholder engagement, and improved academic outcomes (Sallis, 2021; Psomas & Antony, 2023). The emphasis on continuous assessment, collaborative problem-solving, and data-driven improvement aligns closely with current educational reforms aimed at strengthening school performance and accountability (Gibbs, 2025). Finally, pragmatism provides the philosophical foundation for integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches in examining complex organizational phenomena (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2021).

Guided by these theoretical foundations, this study investigated the leadership styles of school heads in Area 4, Leyte Division, and examined their influence on management practices and organizational productivity. Specifically, it explored the predominant leadership styles demonstrated by school heads, assessed management practices related to communication, decision-making, and innovation, and evaluated organizational productivity in terms of school operations, academic performance, and teacher effectiveness. Furthermore, the study examined whether management practices serve as a mechanism through which leadership affects productivity and whether demographic factors such as age, educational attainment, and length of service influence these relationships.

Ultimately, the study sought to generate evidence-based recommendations for improving educational leadership and management in public secondary schools. Through the development of the Leadership–Management–Organizational Productivity (LMOP) Calibration Model, the findings aim to support leadership development, enhance management competencies, and strengthen organizational productivity among school heads in the Leyte Division.

2 Methodology

This study utilized a convergent parallel mixed-methods design examining leadership styles, management practices, and organizational productivity across 31 national high schools in Area 4, Leyte Division (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The design collected quantitative (descriptive-correlational survey, OPCRf, MPS, IPCRF) and qualitative (descriptive thematic interviews) data concurrently and merged them via joint displays for triangulation (Fetters, Curry, & Creswell, 2013). Participants included 31 school heads (census) and 93 randomly selected teachers for the quantitative strand, with a nested purposive sample of 30 (12 heads, 18 teachers) for interviews; inclusion required permanent DepEd status and ≥ 1 year at station (Philippine Department of Education, 2019).

Instruments comprised a four-part validated questionnaire (leadership, management, productivity) and a semi-structured interview guide; reliability coefficients were high (α leadership = 0.943; management = 0.962; productivity = 0.862) (Cronbach, 1951; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Quantitative analyses used frequencies, weighted means, standard deviations, Chi-square tests, and Hayes' PROCESS macro for moderation ($\alpha = 0.05$) (Hayes, 2018). Furthermore, Qualitative data followed Braun and Clarke's six-step thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Data-gathering followed institutional clearances, informed consent, audio-recorded interviews, and secure collection of official performance records in line with local research governance. Integration compared statistical patterns with thematic explanations to enhance validity (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006). Ethical safeguards included RCW ethics clearance, compliance with the Philippine Data Privacy Act (Republic Act No. 10173), anonymized coding, encrypted storage, and timed data disposal to protect participants' confidentiality (National Privacy Commission, 2016).

3 Results and discussion

Results are presented in the order of the study objectives outlined in the introduction.

Table 1 Demographic Profile of School Head Participants

Profile Category	(f)	(%)
Age (in years)		
55 & above	14	45.2%
45-54	11	35.5%
35-44	6	19.4%
Educational Qualification		
Doctorate Degree	14	45.2%
Master's Degree	11	35.5%
Bachelor's Degree	6	19.4%
Length of Service as School Head		
> 6 years	21	67.7%
4-6 years	1	3.2%
1-3 years	9	29.0%

(N = 31)

School heads in Area 4, Leyte Division, are predominantly older, highly qualified, and long-serving. Nearly half (45.2%) are aged 55 and above, 35.5% are 45–54, and 19.4% are 35–44. Educational attainment is strong: 45.2% hold doctoral degrees, 35.5% have master's degrees, and 19.4% possess bachelor's degrees. Most respondents (67.7%) have served as school heads for six years or more, while 32.3% have served for five years or less. Together, these patterns depict a leadership corps grounded in substantial experience, academic preparation, and tenure, which likely contributes to institutional stability, effective instructional supervision, and informed decision-making. Prior studies support these links: higher educational attainment among leaders correlates with improved supervisory capacity and decision quality, and leadership maturity fosters stakeholder trust and consistent governance. At the same time, the concentration of older, long-tenured leaders highlights potential risks for succession planning and innovation. Without targeted leadership development and renewal strategies, the system may face limited adaptability and fewer opportunities for generational transition. Thus, while the current profile reinforces stability and administrative competence, it also indicates a need for strategic programs to cultivate emerging leaders, balance experience with innovation, and ensure sustainable leadership succession.

3.1 Predominant Leadership Style of School Heads

Awareness of common leadership styles among school heads is a useful consideration for addressing issues and defining measures to enhance the management process. This section presents the leadership styles demonstrated by school heads in Area 4, Leyte Division. The data come from a 360-degree evaluation combining school heads' self-assessments (40%) and teachers' assessments (60%), showing the relative prevalence of six leadership styles.

Table 2 Leadership Styles Demonstrated by School Heads

Leadership Style	f		Mean Ratings		Weighted		
	(n = 31)	%	School Head (40%)	Teacher (60%)	Mean	SD	Rank
Transformational	6	19.35	24.03	20.88	22.14	1.27	3
Transactional*	9	29.03	24.19	21.24	22.42	1.47	1
Situational	5	16.13	23.94	20.88	22.10	1.22	4
Instructional	1	3.23	22.45	21.03	21.60	1.56	6
Distributive	2	6.45	23.06	21.39	22.06	1.57	5
Authoritative	8	25.81	23.19	21.40	22.12	1.76	2

Table 2 reports weighted mean ratings (40% school heads, 60% teachers) for six leadership styles; transformational, transactional, situational, instructional, distributive, and authoritative and presents frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, and ranks. Transactional leadership is marginally most predominant ($M = 22.42$, $SD = 1.47$), followed closely by transformational ($M = 22.14$, $SD = 1.27$) and authoritative ($M = 22.12$, $SD = 1.76$), while instructional leadership ranks lowest ($M = 21.60$, $SD = 1.56$). The narrow range of weighted means and moderate standard deviations indicate minimal variation and reasonable agreement among respondents. Generally, leadership in Area 4, Leyte Division is multidimensional rather than dominated by a single style: transactional practices; emphasizing structure, compliance, and performance accountability; edge ahead, yet transformational and authoritative elements are nearly as prominent, reflecting a balance of directive control and motivational influence (Winget & Persky (2022); Hallinger & Wang, 2021). The relatively lower emphasis on instructional leadership suggests less focus on direct academic supervision and curriculum leadership, possibly because administrative demands constrain time for instructional oversight (Liu & Hallinger, 2023). These findings align with studies indicating that public school contexts favor structured, compliance-oriented leadership while still benefiting from transformational behaviors; they imply that Area 4 leaders combine managerial efficiency with motivational strategies to address complex governance demands.

3.2 Management Practices Demonstrated by School Heads

Demonstration in the management lingo refers to the process of turning strategic goals, visions, and intentions into tangible, observable reality through focused action, belief, and alignment. In this study, the approach to goal setting involves adapting the mindset and behaviors of the school community.

Table 3 Level of Management Practices

Management Practices	Mean Rating			Weighted Mean	SD	Interpretation
	School (40%)	Head	Teachers (60%)			
Team Management and Communication	4.70		4.31	4.47	0.26	Excellent
Performance and Decision-Making	4.76		4.35	4.51	0.27	Excellent
Training, Development, and Innovation	4.67		4.25	4.42	0.30	Excellent
Overall	4.70		4.30	4.46	0.25	Excellent

Legend: 4.21-5.00 (Excellent); 3.41-4.20 (Very Good); 2.61-3.40 (Good); 1.81-2.60 (Fair); 1.00-1.80 (Needs Improvement)

Table 3 reports weighted (40% school heads, 60% teachers) assessments of management practices across three dimensions: performance and decision-making, team management and communication, and training, development, and innovation. All dimensions received "excellent" ratings. Performance and decision-making ranked highest ($M = 4.51$, $SD = 0.27$), followed by team management and communication ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 0.26$), and training, development, and innovation ($M = 4.42$, $SD = 0.30$). The overall weighted mean is high ($M = 4.46$, $SD = 0.25$), indicating consistently strong perceived management effectiveness; low standard deviations show tight agreement between respondents (Hallinger & Kulophas, 2021). Findings suggest school heads in Area 4, Leyte Division are effective in operational management, timely decision-making, and fostering collaborative team processes (Yuliejantiningasih et al., 2023; Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2016). Although training and innovation scored slightly lower, it still reached an excellent level, signaling room for strengthening sustained professional development and innovation initiatives (Garcia & Weiss, 2019; OECD, 2023). The minor differences between administrators' and teachers' ratings may reflect positional perspectives but overall indicate organizational alignment (Hernandez et al., 2023). These results align with literature linking sound management systems to teacher engagement, trust, and school performance and support the view that robust management practices translate leadership aims into functional operations (Hallinger & Kulophas, 2021; Yuliejantiningasih et al., 2023). The profile implies readiness to sustain institutional goals, with a recommendation to enhance continuous professional learning to bolster instructional adaptability and innovation (Garcia & Weiss, 2019).

3.3 Organizational Productivity

In this study, organizational productivity equates with the measures and manifestations employed by the key officials concerned with how effectively and efficiently they transform inputs into intended outputs (school operation, academic performance, and teachers' proficiency). Table 4 presents the perceived level of organizational productivity in the national high schools of Area 4, Leyte Division, across three key dimensions.

Table 4 Level of Organizational Productivity

Level	Organizational Productivity			
	f	%	Mean	SD
School Operation				
Outstanding	18	58.1	4.73	0.13
Very Satisfactory	13	41.9	4.37	0.11
Overall	31	100%	4.58	0.22
Academic Performance				
Mastered	0	-	-	-
Closely Approximating Mastery	5	16.1	84.6	2.61
Moving Towards Mastery	16	51.6	81.1	1.02
Average	10	32.3	78.5	0.71
Overall	31	100%	81	2.43
Teachers' Efficiency & Effectiveness				
Outstanding	20	64.5	4.65	0.11
Very Satisfactory	11	35.5	4.31	0.07
Overall	31	100%	4.53	0.19

School operations in Area 4 are rated very high ($M = 4.58$, $SD = 0.22$), with low variability indicating standardized, efficient implementation of planning, resource management, and school-based governance (Lingatong, 2024; Sanjaya et al., 2023). Academic performance centers at the "Moving Towards Mastery" level (51.6%) with a mean MPS of 81 ($SD = 1.02$); no schools reached full mastery, indicating moderate and uneven student outcomes (Aris & Mansor, 2023; Veth & Bon, 2026). Teachers' efficiency and effectiveness are also rated highly ($M = 4.53$, $SD = 0.19$), with most classified as Outstanding or Very Satisfactory, suggesting strong instructional competence supported by HRM practices and knowledge management (Hoque & Atheef, 2024; Withhöft et al., 2025). The pattern shows strong operational and human-resource performance but only moderate instructional outcomes, consistent with IPO framing where leadership inputs and management processes are effective but instructional outputs lag (Hernandez et al., 2023; Nietes et al., 2025). Possible causes include administrative workload, varying school climates, and inconsistent instructional leadership application (Lyu & Yang, 2025; Samiano & Baluyos, 2024). Overall, robust management and committed teachers provide a solid foundation, but targeted strengthening of instructional leadership, professional development, and contextual supports is needed to raise student achievement (Nasution et al., 2025; Siraj et al., 2022).

3.4 Association Between Leadership Styles and Management Practices

Table 5 presents the Chi-square analysis determining the association between school heads' leadership styles and their level of management practices in terms of team management and communication.

Table 5 Association between Leadership Style and Management Practices (Team Management and Communication)

	Level of Management Practices						
	<i>(Team Management and Communication)</i>						
Leadership Style	Frequency (n = 31)				X ²	p	Remarks
	Excel- lent	Very Good	Good	Fair			
Transformational	1	2	0	0	6.26	0.281	Not significant since <i>p</i> - value > α , <i>Ho</i> cannot be rejected.
Transactional	8	1	0	0			
Situational	4	0	0	0			
Instructional	2	0	0	0			
Distributive	3	1	0	0			
Authoritative	7	2	0	0			
Total	25	6	0	0			

* Significant at $p < .05$

Table 5 shows the association between six leadership styles and team management practices. Most school heads are rated “Excellent” in team management regardless of style, with the largest concentrations among transactional (f = 8) and authoritative (f = 7) leaders. Chi-square analysis produced $\chi^2 = 6.26$, $p = .281$, exceeding $\alpha = .05$, indicating no statistically significant association between leadership style and team management and communication. Thus, variations in leadership approaches (transformational, transactional, situational, instructional, distributive, authoritative) do not correspond to different levels of team coordination or communication; excellence in these practices is broadly shared across styles. This suggests team management in Area 4 is shaped more by institutional or systemic factors—such as DepEd policies, School-Based Management frameworks, standardized reporting, and HRM protocols—than by individual leader orientation (Siraj et al., 2022; Lingatong, 2024; Hoque & Atheef, 2024). Organizational culture and climate likely also play a role in sustaining consistent communication effectiveness (Alonderiene & Majauskaitė, 2016). The finding aligns with Contingency Theory (Fiedler, 1967), implying situational context can neutralize style-based differences. Overall, team management and communication in Area 4 appear structurally standardized and system-driven, weakening the direct impact of leadership style on these operational outcomes (Siraj et al., 2022).

Table 6 Association between Leadership Style and Management Practices (Performance and Decision-Making)

	Level of Management Practices						
	<i>(Performance and Decision-Making)</i>						
Leadership Style	Frequency (n = 31)				X ²	p - value	Remarks
	Excel- lent	Very Good	Good	Fair			
Transformational	2	1	0	0	2.58	0.765	Not significant since <i>p</i> - value > α , <i>Ho</i> cannot be rejected. Hence performance and decision-making is not significantly associated with leadership style.
Transactional	8	1	0	0			
Situational	4	0	0	0			
Instructional	2	0	0	0			
Distributive	3	1	0	0			
Authoritative	8	1	0	0			
Total	27	4	0	0			

* Significant at $p < .05$

The Chi-square analysis yielded a computed value of ($\chi^2 = 2.58$) with a ($p = .765$), which is higher than the level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$). This indicates that there is no statistically significant association between leadership style and performance monitoring and decision-making practices.

The results show that school heads, regardless of leadership style classification (transformational, transactional, situational, instructional, distributive, or authoritative), consistently demonstrate high levels of performance monitoring and decision-making, as reflected in the concentration of responses under the “Excellent” category. This suggests a uniformity of management practice implementation across leadership styles, with minimal variability in how decisions are made and performance is monitored.

This finding implies that performance monitoring and decision-making practices in Area 4, Leyte Division are not dependent on leadership style differences, but are likely influenced by standardized institutional systems, administrative protocols, and DepEd-mandated accountability mechanisms. In other words, decision-making practices appear to be structurally guided rather than style-driven.

This result is consistent with Siraj et al. (2022), who found that leadership styles do not independently predict organizational outcomes unless supported by structured management systems and human resource processes. This reinforces the idea that decision-making effectiveness in schools is system-enabled rather than personality-dependent.

Similarly, Hoque and Atheef (2024) emphasized that Human Resource Management (HRM) systems and formal appraisal structures standardize performance monitoring practices across institutions, reducing variability caused by individual leadership differences. This aligns with the non-significant association observed in this study.

In addition, Lingatong (2024) established that School-Based Management (SBM) frameworks institutionalize decision-making processes, ensuring that school leaders operate within clearly defined governance structures. This may explain why leadership style does not significantly influence performance monitoring outcomes.

From a behavioral standpoint, Anderson (2024) noted that organizational commitment and structured evaluation systems strongly regulate performance behaviors, often overshadowing leadership style effects in institutional settings.

Theoretically, this finding also supports Contingency Theory (Fiedler, 1967), which suggests that leadership effectiveness is context-dependent. In this case, the DepEd system functions as a strong situational constraint that homogenizes decision-making practices across leadership styles.

These findings indicate that performance monitoring and decision-making practices are highly institutionalized and standardized across schools in Area 4. Leadership style does not significantly alter how decisions are made or how performance is monitored, suggesting strong policy-driven governance consistency.

Table 7 presents the Chi-square analysis determining the association between the predominant leadership styles of school heads and their manifested practices in training, development, and innovation.

Table 7 Association between Leadership Styles and Management Practices (Training, Development, and Innovation)

	Level of Management Practices				<i>X</i> ²	<i>p-value</i>	Remarks
	<i>(Training, Development, and Innovation)</i>						
	Frequency (<i>n</i> = 31)						
Leadership Style	Excel- lent	Very Good	Good	Fair			
Transformational	1	2	0	0	5.704	0.336	NS
Transactional	8	1	0	0			
Situational	2	2	0	0			
Instructional	2	0	0	0			
Distributive	3	1	0	0			

Authoritative	5	4	0	0			
Total	21	10	0	0			

* Significant at $p < .05$

The Chi-square test showed $\chi^2 = 5.704$, $p = .336$, which exceeds the significance threshold ($\alpha = 0.05$), indicating no statistically significant association between leadership style and training, development, and innovation practices among school heads in Area 4, Leyte Division. Respondents across transformational, transactional, situational, instructional, distributive, and authoritative categories reported uniformly high engagement in professional development and innovation, with most ratings falling in the Excellent and Very Good bands. This uniformity suggests implementation is driven more by institutional mandates, DepEd professional development policies, and standardized school improvement systems than by individual leadership differences. The result is consistent with Hoque and Atheef (2024), who found structured HRM systems standardize training practices, and with Witthöft et al. (2025), who linked Knowledge Management and professional learning communities to uniform innovation practices. Lingatong (2024), similarly noted that School-Based Management frameworks institutionalize teacher development, while Sanjaya et al. (2023) and Sariakin et al. (2025) argued educational innovation is often system-driven in regulated public settings. Theoretically, the finding aligns with Contingency Theory (Fiedler, 1967) and Siraj et al. (2022), implying organizational systems and policies mediate leadership effects and produce standardized professional development outcomes (Hoque & Atheef, 2024; Witthöft et al., 2025).

Table 8 Summary Table: Association between Leadership Style and Overall Management Practices

Leadership Style	Overall Management Practices					χ^2	<i>p-value</i>	Remarks
	Frequency ($n = 31$)							
	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair				
Transformational	1	2	0	0	7.386	0.193	Not Significant	
Transactional	8	1	0	0				
Situational	4	0	0	0				
Instructional	2	0	0	0				
Distributive	3	1	0	0				
Authoritative	8	1	0	0				
Total	26	5	0	0				

* Significant at $p < .05$

The Chi-square test produced $\chi^2 = 7.386$, $p = .193$, exceeding the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) and indicating no statistically significant association between leadership style and overall management practices among school heads in Area 4, Leyte Division. Across transformational, transactional, situational, instructional, distributive, and authoritative classifications, respondents reported consistently high overall management performance, with responses concentrated in the Excellent and Very Good categories. This uniformity suggests that management practices are largely system-driven—shaped by DepEd policies, School-Based Management (SBM) frameworks, and standardized performance systems (RPMS, OPCRF, IPCRF)—rather than by individual leadership orientations. The finding aligns with Siraj et al. (2022), who argued leadership effects on outcomes depend on mediation by structured management systems, and with Lingatong (2024) and Hoque and Atheef (2024), who found SBM maturity and HRM systems standardize administrative processes and performance practices. Broader institutional studies (Sanjaya et al., 2023; Sariakin et al., 2025) similarly report protocol-driven uniformity in regulated education contexts. Theoretically, the result supports Contingency Theory (Fiedler, 1967) by emphasizing situational and structural constraints that minimize the influence of leadership style on management behavior, indicating that institutional structures and culture primarily determine observed management practices (Siraj et al., 2022).

3.5 Association between Leadership Styles and Organizational Productivity

Table 9 presents the Chi-square analysis examining the association between the predominant leadership styles of school heads and organizational productivity in terms of school operation. The analysis aims to determine whether the

leadership approaches of school heads are related to the effectiveness of school operations and organizational productivity.

The Chi-square test revealed a computed value of ($\chi^2 = 4.648$ with a ($p = .460$), which is higher than the level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$). This indicates that there is no statistically significant association between leadership styles and school operation. This further implies that differences in leadership styles may not directly influence the overall conduct and operation of the school.

Table 9 Association between Leadership Styles and School Operation

Leadership Style	Organizational Productivity (School Operation)							
	Frequency (n = 31)							
	O	VS	S	US	P	χ^2	p - value	Remarks
Transformational	2	1	0	0	0	4.648	0.460	Not Significant
Transactional	3	6	0	0	0			
Situational	3	1	0	0	0			
Instructional	2	0	0	0	0			
Distributive	2	2	0	0	0			
Authoritative	6	3	0	0	0			
Total	18	13	0	0	0			

* Significant at $p < .05$

The findings indicate that school operations in Area 4, Leyte Division are consistently rated “Outstanding” and “Very Satisfactory” across all leadership styles (transformational, transactional, situational, instructional, distributive, authoritative), showing minimal variation by leader type. This pattern suggests that operational productivity is largely system-regulated—shaped by DepEd administrative procedures, School-Based Management (SBM) structures, and standardized resource and process controls—rather than driven by individual leadership orientation. The finding aligns with Lingatong (2024), who identified SBM maturity as a strong predictor of institutional efficiency regardless of leadership differences, and with Hoque and Atheef (2024), who argued that HRM systems and structured administrative protocols produce consistent operational outcomes. Broader studies (Sanjaya et al., 2023; Sariakin et al., 2025) similarly report that policy compliance, institutional procedures, and resource management in regulated education systems constrain variability introduced by leadership. Framed through the Input–Process–Output model (Hernandez et al., 2023; Nietes et al., 2025), robust institutional inputs and standardized processes yield uniformly high operational outputs. Theoretically, this supports Contingency Theory (Fiedler, 1967) and Siraj et al. (2022), emphasizing that situational and structural constraints mediate leadership effects; thus, administrative systems and policy enforcement—rather than leadership style—primarily determine observed operational productivity in Area 4 schools (Lingatong, 2024; Hoque & Atheef, 2024).

Table 10 Association between Leadership Styles and Academic Performance

Leadership Style	Level of Academic Performance				χ^2	p - value	Remarks
	Frequency (n = 31)						
	Mastered	Closely approx. to mastery	Moving towards mastery	Ave.			
Transformational	0	2	1	0	20.590	0.024	Significant, since p - value < α , and H_0 is rejected.
Transactional	0	0	7	2			
Situational	0	0	3	1			
Instructional	0	1	0	1			

Distributive	0	0	2	2			
Authoritative	0	0	5	4			

* Significant at $p < .05$

The Chi-square analysis produced $\chi^2 = 20.590$, $p = .024$, below $\alpha = 0.05$, indicating a statistically significant association between leadership style and academic performance in Area 4, Leyte Division. Response patterns show transformational and instructional leaders are linked with higher-performing schools (“Closely Approximating Mastery” and “Moving Towards Mastery”), whereas transactional and authoritative styles predominate in lower-performing clusters. This suggests leadership orientation materially affects Mean Percentage Scores: transformational leaders’ vision, teacher empowerment, and motivation—and instructional leaders’ curriculum supervision and pedagogical focus—correlate with improved student outcomes, while compliance-oriented transactional and directive authoritative approaches may limit instructional innovation and achievement. The finding supports Hallinger and Wang (2021), Liu and Hallinger (2023), Leithwood (2021), and Siraj et al. (2022) on the centrality of instructional and transformational leadership for learning gains, and aligns with High-Performance Work Systems theory (Hoque & Atheef, 2024) and Lingatong (2024) on leadership-driven improvement. Importantly, it shows that while administrative practices may be standardized across schools, academic performance remains sensitive to leadership behaviors that penetrate the instructional core; thus, strengthening transformational and instructional leadership is recommended to advance schools toward sustained mastery (Hallinger, 2011; Hernandez et al., 2023).

Table 11 Association between Leadership Styles and Teachers’ Efficiency and Effectiveness

	Level of Organizational Productivity (<i>Teachers’ Efficiency and Effectiveness</i>)						
Leadership Style	Frequency ($n = 31$)						
	0	VS	S	US	χ^2	p -value	Remarks
Transformational	3	0	0	0	-	-	**
Transactional	9	0	0	0			
Situational	4	0	0	0			
Instructional	2	0	0	0			
Distributive	4	0	0	0			
Authoritative	9	0	0	0			
Total	31	0	0	0			

**No statistics are computed because Teachers’ Efficiency and Effectiveness is a constant

Table 11 reports a Chi-square examination of the association between school heads’ predominant leadership styles and teachers’ efficiency and effectiveness in Area 4, Leyte Division. The data show total homogeneity: all schools ($n = 31$; 100%) were rated “Outstanding” for teacher efficiency, regardless of whether leaders were transformational, transactional, situational, instructional, distributive, or authoritative. Because the dependent variable lacks variation, no Chi-square statistic or p -value could be computed—Chi-square requires observed frequencies distributed across multiple outcome categories. This uniformity implies that teacher efficiency is invariant across leadership styles within the sampled schools, so any direct statistical association cannot be tested with this dataset. The finding suggests institutionalization of high teacher performance, likely driven by formal performance management systems (RPMS, IPCRF), accountability mechanisms, and standardized professional processes that act as equalizers. The result supports Substitutes for Leadership Theory (Kerr & Jermier, 1978), which posits organizational structures can neutralize individual leadership effects, and aligns with studies arguing that embedded systems (Arar & Nasra, 2020; Lingatong, 2024; Siraj et al., 2022; Hoque & Atheef, 2024) institutionalize consistent outputs. Practically, while efficiency is uniformly outstanding, this may conceal qualitative differences in instructional innovation or adaptability not captured by standardized efficiency metrics.

3.6 Moderating Effect of School Head Profiles on the Relationship Between Management Practices and Organizational Productivity

Table 12 presents the results of the moderation analysis conducted using Hayes' Process-style regression model to determine whether the relationship between management practices and organizational productivity is contingent upon the professional profile of school heads in Area 4, Leyte Division.

Table 12 Moderation Analysis of School Head Profiles using Hayes' Process-Style Models

Variables		Organizational Productivity (dependent variable)		
		Estimate	P	Interpretation
Independent	Management Practices	0.8741	<0.001	Significant Direct Effect
Moderator	Educational Qualification	-0.0306	0.184	No Significant Direct Effect
Interaction	Management Practices & Educational Qualification	0.0177	0.716	No Significant Moderate Effect
Independent	Management Practices	0.9128	<0.001	Significant Direct Effect
Moderator	Years of Experiences	-0.0274	0.3	No Significant Direct Effect
Interaction	Management Practices & Years of Experiences	0.0945	0.146	No Significant Moderate Effect
Independent	Management Practices	0.86085	<0.001	Significant Direct Effect
Moderator	Age Group	0.0085	0.808	No Significant Direct Effect
Interaction	Management Practices & Age Group	0.01904	0.825	No Significant Moderate Effect
Independent	Management Practices	0.983	<0.001	Significant Direct Effect
Moderator	Sex	-0.184	<0.001	Significant Direct Effect
Interaction	Management Practices & Sex	0.198	0.078	No Significant Moderate Effect
Independent	Management Practices	0.9197	<0.001	Significant Direct Effect
Moderator	Current School Assignment	-0.0292	0.025	Significant Direct Effect
Interaction	Management Practices & Current School Assignment	0.0394	0.199	No Significant Moderate Effect

Note: -Statistically significant if p -value is less than or equal to 0.05

Across all models, management practices exerted a strong, consistent direct effect on organizational productivity ($\beta = 0.86085-0.983$, $p < .001$), indicating that better management reliably predicts higher productivity regardless of moderators. Interaction terms testing whether school head profiles (educational qualification, years of experience, age group, sex, current school assignment) moderated this relationship were uniformly non-significant (all $p > .05$): educational qualification ($p = .716$), years of experience ($p = .146$), age group ($p = .825$), sex ($p = .078$), and school assignment ($p = .199$). Although sex and current school assignment showed significant direct effects on productivity (sex $p < .001$; assignment $p = .025$), they did not alter the strength or direction of the management-productivity link. These results suggest that management practices act as a robust, context-independent driver of productivity in Area 4, Leyte Division: who the school head is matters less than how management systems are implemented. The pattern supports theories that structured organizational systems standardize outcomes—such as High-Performance Work Systems and Substitutes for Leadership theory (Hoque & Atheef, 2024; Kerr & Jermier, 1978)—and indicates institutional isomorphism under DepEd frameworks (DiMaggio & Powell), where standardized procedures and performance systems homogenize managerial effectiveness. Practically, strengthening and scaling effective management practices should produce productivity gains across diverse school-head profiles.

3.7 Participants' Insights:

Interview data from school heads and teachers were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic method to identify recurring patterns and meanings about leadership, management, and productivity. Table 13 summarizes codes, subthemes, and overarching themes that synthesize how leadership orientations and management practices are enacted in schools.

Theme 1: Situational Versatility. School heads in Area 4 do not strictly adhere to a single leadership style; instead, they employ situational leadership. Participant 2 explicitly mentioned transitioning between authoritative, transactional, and transformational styles depending on the urgency of DepEd directives or the needs of the staff. This flexibility is seen as a way to prevent teacher burnout while maintaining high standards.

Table 13 School Heads' Perspectives on Leadership and Productivity

Code	Sub-themes	Themes
Flexible/Situational Leadership, Visionary and Transformative, and Leading by Example	Adaptive Leadership Frameworks, Behavioral Flexibility, Contextual Application	Situational Versatility
Shared Governance / Empowerment Data-Driven Interventions, and Financial Transparency (MOOE/PTA)	Systems-Oriented Management, Evidence-Based Decision-Making, Accountability Mechanisms	Transparency and Data-Driven Accountability
Community Learning Programs, National Competency (NCII) focus on Innovation in Assessment, Research Innovation	Strategic Productivity Outputs, Technical Skills Development and Employability, Community Extension and Outreach Services	Holistic Productivity
Transformational and Transactional Accessible and approachable leadership, 10-minute focused observations	Dynamic Instructional Coaching, Monitoring Scheme, Technology Integration	Modernizing Supervision
Shared Governance as a core identity, Personality-based task assignment, and Technical assistance for neophyte staff	Relational Resource Management, Stakeholders, Networking Tasks	Human-Centric Governance and Staff Welfare
21st Century strategy injection, Ranking-based promotion (D.O. No. 7) and Peer-tutoring and student-led initiatives	Competency-Driven Growth, Standardization feat, Efficiency and Competence	Institutionalizing Meritocracy
Consultative and data-driven, Situational and distributive and Lead teacher/Mentor mindset	Adaptive Governance Identity, Adaptability & Coherence, Multi-faceted Learners	Contextual Versatility
Shift from comfort to discipline Technical assistance for financial "Implementing Units and Collective decision-making to avoid "888" reports	Strategic Operational Management, School Systems Operation, Equilibrium Maintenance	Systems Stabilization and Culture-Shifting Management
Garbo ni Senon (Culture of Appreciation), Career progression mentorship (T1 to T3/MT) and Support for graduate studies and researchers	Human Capital Optimization, Performance-based rewards, Professional Growth Culture	Merit-Based Recognition

Verbatim composite responses from participants reflect this pattern:

"My style is... I describe my leadership style as flexible. When the division needs data immediately, I need to be authoritative. But I don't want to pressure teachers... that leads to high performance." (P2)

"I use leadership style as transformative and democratic... I want the teachers to change from the traditional way of managing classrooms into a more better and conducive learning." (P4)

"Our leadership is more on compliance and ensuring that standards are met consistently across all indicators." (P5)

School heads rapidly assess and adapt their behavior and communication to suit situations, demonstrating situational awareness and a growth mindset that helps them handle challenges and diverse personalities. Teachers feel genuinely empowered to make classroom and administrative decisions, reflecting distributed leadership rather than top-down control. This shared-responsibility approach—supported by Witthöft et al. (2025) and Alghamdi (2024)—increases organizational flexibility and reduces reliance on a single leader. Empowerment is evident but stratified by tenure: senior teachers undertake broader planning and leadership tasks, while newer teachers assume focused, task-based responsibilities, creating layered levels of decision-making and responsibility.

Theme 2: Transparency and Data-Driven Accountability. Effective management practices are characterized by a heavy reliance on data and fiscal transparency. Leaders emphasize that decisions regarding interventions, such as reading programs or facility improvements, are based on generated school data rather than intuition. Transparency boards for Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) and Parents and Teacher (PTA) funds are used to build trust with stakeholders. These are supported by participants' insights.

"I see to it that I'm very much transparent... we are set to be understood by each one of my colleagues. Nobody must be left behind." (P1)

"I am data-driven. Proper data must be given so the school can decide which interventions are needed... for transparency, we discuss MOOE and PTA funds during portfolio day." (P2)

Theme 2 emphasizes that school heads practice transparency and accountability by operating openly and using data to guide decisions. Transparency—organizational, governmental, and interpersonal—means sharing financial reports, budgets (MOOE, PTA), supply-chain details, challenges, and the rationale behind decisions to build trust and eliminate hidden agenda. Fiscal openness during portfolio day demonstrates responsible resource management. Data-driven decision-making and distributed, stakeholder-inclusive processes position school heads as facilitators of collective intelligence. This approach, supported by School-Based Management maturity, High-Performance Work Systems, the AMO framework, and Social Exchange Theory, strengthens ethical governance, community partnerships, and reciprocal commitment among teachers.

Theme 3: Holistic Productivity. Productivity is viewed through the lens of Client-Centered Stewardship. This includes not only academic scores but also the acquisition of technical skills National Competency (NC) II certificates and community extensions. As mentioned by Participant 3 and 1, Community Learning Program shows that leadership extends productivity beyond the school gates into the surrounding villages.

"Our community learning program is considered as our extension service... we cluster the different barangays to extend our numeracy and literacy." (P3)

"We are aiming for our senior high school faculty to come up with NC2 certificates... try to be open to other avenues, especially in the electives." (P1)

"We always try to extend our services to the community, especially during outreach programs and literacy activities." (P8)

Schools in Area 4 pursue technical and community-oriented productivity by balancing learner competencies with local needs. They prioritize practical skills—e.g., promoting National Certificate (NC) II attainment for senior high students—to boost employability and align with labor-market demands. Schools also perform community extension through literacy and numeracy programs, clustering barangays to deliver learning resources to underserved areas, thereby acting as local development partners. These practices broaden institutional impact beyond academics into workforce preparation and social sustainability, consistent with research linking productive schools to community-centered initiatives and effective governance (Sariakin et al., 2025; Sanjaya et al., 2023).

Theme 4: Modernizing Supervision. A distinct shift in instructional leadership is evident. Participant 5 highlights a move away from the traditional one-hour observation toward a more agile 10-minute approach. This allows for more frequent, less intrusive coaching and immediate feedback, which school heads believe is more effective in a fast-paced school environment.

Some of the verbatim responses noted were:

“Our school head encouraged us to use ICT tools and new teaching strategies to make lessons more engaging for students.” (P14)

“We are encouraged to try new approaches in teaching, especially those that make students more active and interested in learning.” (P3)

“Our school head supports us when we use digital tools and even provides guidance on how to improve our teaching methods through innovation.” (P1)

Instructional innovation in Area 4 is emerging but uneven: schools adopt DepEd-driven reforms (digital integration, curriculum updates, tech-assisted instruction), yet classroom-level innovation relies mainly on teacher initiative and the degree of instructional leadership support. Quantitative results show “Training, Development, and Innovation” scored lowest among management indicators (still “Excellent”), while innovation practices had no significant link to leadership styles, signaling partial convergence with meaningful divergence. The theme aligns with Open Innovation and Knowledge Management perspectives (Witthöft et al., 2025) and the Input–Process–Output model: structural support exists, but effective transformation into transformative instructional practice remains incomplete. (Witthöft et al., 2025)

Theme 5: Human-Centric Governance and Staff Welfare. Participants emphasized teamwork, communication flow, and coordination as central to leadership effectiveness in schools. Leadership is viewed as a shared process rather than hierarchical command.

Verbatim responses include:

“We always conduct meetings and consultations before making important decisions in the school.” (P12)

“Communication with teachers is open, and we ensure everyone is informed about school activities.” (P11)

“Teamwork is very important because school success depends on coordination among teachers and administrators.” (P9)

“Leadership is not about control, but about building people.” (P12)

Area 4 exhibits a leadership culture rooted in collaboration and participatory governance, where team management and communication are consistently strong. Quantitative data (Table 3) show high, low-variability ratings for team management and communication, and qualitative findings confirm these practices remain robust regardless of leadership style. Literature supports this system-level strength: effective communication enhances organizational cohesion (Alonderiene & Majauskaiteite, 2022), and collaborative leadership boosts school effectiveness (Hallinger & Kulophas, 2021). Together, these results suggest collaboration is an institutionalized norm that stabilizes management effectiveness across Area 4 schools (Alonderiene & Majauskaiteite, 2022).

Theme 6: Institutionalizing Meritocracy. Leadership in Area 4 acts as a guardian of meritocracy. By strictly following DepEd Order No. 7, school heads remove the perception of favoritism (a key concern noted in teacher interviews). Additionally, they identify digital literacy as a core component of organizational productivity, using LAC sessions to bridge the gap for older teachers. School heads described training, development, and innovation as structured and policy-driven activities rather than discretionary initiatives.

Verbatim responses from teachers:

“Training programs are scheduled and aligned with DepEd requirements.”(P17)

"This is based on ranking... the first rank will be promoted without any doubt or any favoritism. I told them: your rival in your promotion is yourself." (P6)

"Innovation is introduced, but mostly through DepEd initiatives and approved programs." (P18)

Qualitative findings converge with Table 3: management practices for performance and decision-making scored highest, explained by fair recognition systems that sustain teacher motivation and consistent performance. This aligns with Table 6, where management practices predict teacher productivity, and with Table 6 which found no significant link between leadership style and decision-making—implying reward fairness is institutionally embedded. Professional development appears standardized, matching Table 7's lack of association with leadership style. Literature supports these patterns: HRM and knowledge management standardize training (Hoque & Atheef, 2024; Withhöft et al., 2025), SBM fosters training consistency (Lingatong, 2024), and institutionalized motivation enhances leadership effectiveness (Siraj et al., 2022).

Theme 7: Contextual Versatility. The final participants emphasize that leadership is not a static trait but a responsive action. Whether it is a data-driven approach to avoid administrative errors or a lead teacher role in instructional monitoring, these leaders view themselves as facilitators of the teachers' success.

"My leadership style is data-driven. If I'm going to decide, I make sure the teachers are part and parcel of the decision." (P9)

"I consider myself more than an administrator; I am a lead teacher who guides instruction, nurtures colleagues, listens to their ideas, and helps shape their practice." (P12)

"I demonstrate strong managerial capability by maintaining an organized system." (P3)

Participants strongly agree that decision-making in Area 4 is inclusive and evidence-based, with both senior and junior teachers routinely involved in planning—signaling institutionalized participatory governance. Some report consultative roles, while others describe active co-construction, indicating variation in participation depth. This inclusive practice fosters trust and effectiveness, consistent with findings that communication and participation strengthen organizational cohesion (Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2022) and that leadership effectiveness is mediated by structured management systems (Siraj et al., 2022). Research also links participatory systems to greater organizational commitment (Anderson, 2024) and underscores the role of evidence-based decision-making in education (Lyu & Yang, 2025).

Theme 8: Systems Stabilizing and Culture-Shifting Management. This theme highlights how school heads in Area 4, Leyte Division focus on improving school productivity and effectiveness through building upon institutional systems while slowly changing organizational culture.

Verbatim responses include:

"We have established systems that guide our daily processes, ensuring efficiency and accountability." (P8)

"Our school demonstrates strong capability in managing operations through effective organization, strategic planning, and sound decision-making." (P10)

"I managed school offices through clear systems and strong collaboration." (P11)

DepEd policies (SBM, RPMS) strongly standardize administration and management in Area 4, making organizational productivity—management, communication, and operational efficiency—largely system-driven rather than leader-dependent. Quantitative and qualitative convergence shows democratic, collaborative practices are consistently experienced by teachers, suggesting participatory governance is institutionalized across schools. This aligns with evidence that structured governance enhances consistency, efficiency, and accountability (Sanjaya et al., 2023) and that leadership effectiveness is mediated by institutional systems (Siraj et al., 2022). Communication's systemic basis is further supported by research linking organizational culture to communication quality (Alonderiene & Majauskaiteite, 2022).

Theme 9: Merit-Based Recognition. Teachers from across the board shared that the school's system for rewards and recognition is built on a very solid foundation of fairness.

Teachers described fairness and recognition systems:

"Promotion is based on performance." (P7)

"There is fairness in evaluation." (P9)

"Good performance is recognized." (P11)

"Merit system is followed." (P13)

"Evaluation is transparent." (P17)

Teachers perceive recognition and motivation systems in Area 4 as fair, merit-based, and performance-driven, fostering procedural justice that boosts motivation and reduces bias. These practices align with AMO Theory: ability via training, motivation through equitable rewards, and opportunity through participation. Interviews revealed consistent, transparent evaluations with no evidence of favoritism, indicating institutionalized fairness. Literature supports this linkage: structured appraisals and HPWS improve performance and commitment (Hoque & Atheef, 2024; Anderson, 2024), while governance systems produce cumulative advantages (Sariakin et al., 2025; Liu et al., 2026). Overall, fair reward systems are embedded in leadership practice and reinforce high management effectiveness. (Hoque & Atheef, 2024)

Table 14 Teachers’ Perspectives on School Heads’ Leadership Styles, Management Practices, and Organizational Productivity

Codes	Sub-themes	Themes
Participative decision-making, collaborative leadership, teacher motivation, confidence building, recognition of strengths, flexible instructional supervision, guided support, instructional guidance, mentoring support	Shared Decision-Making, Reassurance & Empowerment, Situational GIYA, Instructional Support	Transformative Relational Leadership
Delegation of responsibilities, mentor support system, team coordination, distributed tasks, leadership collaboration, financial openness, stakeholder trust, transparent fund utilization	Middle Management Level, Collaborative Governance, Accountability & Transparency	Distributed Governance
Gadget dependency, policy misunderstanding, research for compliance, lack of implementation, promotion requirement mindset, work overload, administrative burden	Digital & Policy Constraints, Research-Compliance Gap, Productivity Challenges	Productivity-Constraint Paradox

Theme 1: Transformative Relational Leadership. Teachers consistently described their school heads as open, consultative, and participative in decision-making.

Verbatim responses include:

"We are always asked before decisions are finalized in meetings." (P7)

"The principal listens to our suggestions during planning sessions." (P9)

"There is openness in discussions; we feel included." (P11)

"We are encouraged to voice opinions before implementation." (P14)

"Collaboration is always part of school decisions." (P16)

Participants consistently describe leadership in Area 4 as dialogical, inclusive, and transformational—focused on empowerment, collaboration, and professional support rather than unilateral control. School heads act as facilitators who co-construct decisions with teachers, increasing ownership, trust, and teamwork. This convergence across seniority and subject areas suggests participatory governance is institutionalized, aligning with high quantitative ratings for team management and communication (Table 3). The pattern implies system-driven norms (SBM, HRM) standardize collaborative practices, so leadership effectiveness is mediated by structures more than individual style (Lingatong, 2024; Siraj et al., 2022; Hoque & Atheef, 2024).

Theme 2: Distributed Governance. The second theme that emerged reflects how leadership responsibilities are intentionally shared among teachers, department heads, and other school stakeholders. This theme highlights the decentralization of authority within schools, where decision-making, instructional leadership, and operational responsibilities are extended beyond the formal position of the school head. It underscores a leadership culture grounded in empowerment, delegation, and shared accountability.

Teachers emphasized trust-based delegation and shared responsibility:

“Tasks are delegated properly to coordinators.” (P8)

“We are trusted to handle our own responsibilities.” (P10)

“Master teachers are empowered in planning.” (P12)

“Leadership roles are shared among staff.” (P15)

“We are given autonomy in assigned duties.” (P18)

This theme describes distributed leadership: authority and decision-making are shared across staff, with school heads acting as facilitators of collective intelligence and data-informed, participatory governance. Teachers report real classroom autonomy and role-differentiated responsibilities—senior staff handle strategic planning while newer teachers focus on task-level duties—so transactional structures are enacted through delegation and teamwork. This empowerment aligns with the AMO framework’s Opportunity element and promotes commitment via reciprocal trust (Anderson, 2024). Evidence and prior studies support benefits of shared leadership for flexibility, creativity, and responsiveness (Alghamdi, 2024; Dongxian & Batool, 2024; Sariakin et al., 2025); (Anderson, 2024).

Theme 3 describes a productivity-constraint paradox: efforts to modernize instruction clash with structural limits and teacher autonomy. A budding research culture—valuing inquiry, evidence generation, and data-informed leadership—supports continuous improvement, but full institutionalization remains incomplete and depends on stronger leadership encouragement and systemic support.

One school head expressed,

“I encourage teachers to undertake small action research projects, although not all yet feel confident conducting formal studies.”

Participants shared,

“Research is already part of our school culture, especially for improving instruction, but it is still not fully maximized due to workload constraints.” (P4)

“We try to do action research, especially when we have classroom problems, but we still need more training and guidance.” (P8)

Theme 3 shows partial convergence: “Training, Development, and Innovation” scored lowest in Table 3 yet still “Excellent,” while Table 7 found no link to leadership style—indicating structural support but uneven enactment. Administrative workload and limited research capacity constrain classroom innovation and action research (Nasution et al., 2025; Lyu & Yang, 2025).

3.8 Synthesis of Perceptual Alignment: The Cross-Case Joint Display of Perceptual Alignment

This cross-case comparison triangulates teachers’ experiences with school heads’ intentions (Table 8), offering a holistic view of organizational climate. Triangulation—comparing multiple data sources—enhances validity and interpretive depth by revealing convergence, partial convergence, and divergence between experienced reality and leadership intent (Denzin, 1978; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Convergence indicates institutional coherence and effective policy implementation; divergence exposes contextual gaps like workload or capacity constraints that hinder enactment. Methodological triangulation thus validates results through cross-verification and links quantitative patterns to lived experiences, strengthening explanatory power and guiding targeted interventions to align leadership practices with teacher experience (Denzin, 1978; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Table 15 Cross-Case Joint Display of Perceptual Alignment (Teachers vs. School Heads)

Emerging Themes	Teacher Narrative (Impact)	School Head Narrative (Intent)	Triangulation Result
Relational Leadership	"She highlights our strengths when we feel doubtful." (Participant 16)	"I mentor them to become confident and accountable." (School Head 12)	Convergence: Leadership is person-centered and restorative.
Operational Transparency	"We are informed of school funds and projects." (Participant 8)	"I involve the team in data-driven decisions." (School Head 4)	Convergence: High trust stems from fiscal and tactical transparency.
Productivity Friction	"Gadgets and student apathy make it hard to reach 100%." (Participant 11)	"Social media mindsets hinder traditional discipline." (School Head 10)	Convergence: External digital factors limit academic outcomes.
Research Utility	"We do research for Masteral but have no time to apply it." (Participant 12)	"Teachers are good in research but it's not yet applied." (School Head 8)	Convergence: Research is a check-box for career growth.

Table 15’s convergent narratives show school leadership in Area 4 operates via a standards-based evaluation framework (RPMS, GIYA), explaining why profile variables (age, tenure, education) do not moderate management-productivity links. Institutional calibration produces consistent management practices and strong relational alignment: heads intend to mentor and teachers feel supported, boosting teacher efficiency and commitment (Nietes et al., 2025; Hidayah & Alfany, 2025). Convergence also reveals a shared constraint: research and innovation remain limited by time and gadget-dependent practices, so research is often a promotion requirement rather than a knowledge-management driver (Witthöft et al., 2025).

3.9 Synthesis of Both Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

This section describes triangulating quantitative and qualitative results using a joint display in a convergent parallel design. Merging datasets validates and deepens understanding: quantitative analysis identifies patterns and relationships, while qualitative data explain contextual mechanisms and lived experiences. Integration yields a more complete, empirically grounded, and contextually meaningful interpretation of leadership and productivity.

Table 16 Joint Display Matrix for the Convergence of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

Quantitative Finding	Qualitative Theme	Integration
SOP 2: Very High Transactional Leadership (M=22.42)	Relational Leadership: Leaders focus on Confidence Building and Reassurance.	CONFIRMED: High leadership scores are driven by the emotional management and psychological mentorship provided by school heads
SOP 3: Very High Management Practices (M=4.64)	Distributed Governance: Reliance on Middle Managers (MTs/Dept Heads).	EXPANDED: Management efficacy is not centralized; it is a systematic overlap of roles that ensures operational continuity.
SOP 4: Lower Mean for Academic Performance (M=4.46)	Digital/Policy Constraints: Gadgets and Disciplinary Fear hinder classroom focus.	CONTEXTUALIZED: Statistical performance is hampered by an Authority Crisis driven by external technological and policy-related factors.

SOP 5: $X^2 = .152$ link between Leadership and Productivity.	The GIYA Mechanism: Flexible, supportive guidance drives operational success	VALIDATED: Leadership maturity, specifically Adaptive Stewardship, is the primary engine of organizational output in Area 4.
SOP 3: Lower Mean for Training, Development and Innovation (M=4.42)	Compliance Gap: Research is viewed as a Promotion Requirement only.	VALIDATED: Productivity in research is Extrinsic (career-driven) rather than Intrinsic (innovation-driven), creating a useful research culture.

Table 16 integrates quantitative and qualitative strands via a joint display, revealing how statistical patterns align with interview themes to explain leadership, management, and productivity in Area 4. Quantitatively high transactional leadership and management are deepened qualitatively by relational support and distributed governance: leaders combine accountability with emotional support and shared responsibilities, producing strong organizational systems. Lower academic performance links to digital and policy constraints rather than weak leadership. Training and research remain compliance-driven, limiting innovation. Integration shows productivity arises from system-standardization plus adaptive leadership. The LMOP Calibration Model is proposed to preserve strengths while addressing the research-compliance gap and workload constraints.

4 Conclusion

Sustaining school productivity requires combining strong management systems with leadership that is flexible, collaborative, and instructionally focused. This study will benefit society by guiding school leaders and policymakers in strengthening leadership development, reducing compliance burdens, and building a more innovative and productive public school system.

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