

---

## Leadership Perspectives in Basic Education: A Scholarly Analysis of the Insights and Views of Eminent School Heads



Ernalyn Advincula-Cortez

Mabilbila Integrated School

---

**ABSTRACT:** Educational challenges continuous to grow; thus, school management and leadership should transcend through times. This study explored the insights and perspectives of the eminent school leaders in basic education regarding their experiences influencing their leadership approaches, values, and practices. Five seasoned and eminent school leaders participated in a semi-structured interview, which was thematically analyzed and interpreted. Based on the analyzed data, two themes were central in the discussion: (1) Commitment to Lifelong Learning and Professional Growth; and (2) The Transformative Power of Leadership Qualities. The study revealed that the school leadership approaches and practices are shaped by a deep commitment to lifelong learning and professional growth. Furthermore, the school heads believed that the positive values and behaviors in leadership can have a transformative impact to the school community and the people in it. Hence, there should be targeted leadership programs for new school heads in the basic education to further boost their leadership competence.

**KEYWORDS:** leadership approaches, leadership qualities, eminent school heads

---

### INTRODUCTION

Leading is not a thing that is added in the job description; rather, it is a job that has to be embodied. Having an effective leader matters in an educational institution to set visions, achieve the goals, and produce desired outcomes. Morgan (2020) said that a leader fuels the right motivation in leading and serving, in achieving positive results, and in promoting excellence at the work. Malik and Azmat (2019) defined leadership as “a process in which a person/s inspire(s) and motivate(s) the people to meet the shared goals or objectives, which may be changed or added as per the needs and challenges.” The concept of leadership is bound to its redefinition based on the set of parameters on which the leaders are focused. Morgan (2020) described leadership as diverse in the sense that it can cover a variety of perspectives and a leader with knowledge, heart, and competencies. In addition, Ryan (2019) said that outstanding leaders come from all walks of life and an array of backgrounds. The most significant part of the leader is that he or she possesses a wider understanding about effective leadership and how to make it in practice to run everything smoothly, specifically in uniting the organization to work for a common vision and mission.

School leadership has been continually evolving over time and in different contexts (Day et al., 2020). With the unpredicted demand of time, leadership approaches and styles in schools have also been developing to ensure that quality education is still served. Today, schools need to have a strong leadership foundation to facilitate educational policies and issues. Stein (2016) mentioned that the school principals and even district superintendents have a critical role in seeking to improve, or even optimize, existing systems and processes. Hence, for them to become effective leaders, they have to get directed with their institution's mission and vision, with an acute sense of situational awareness. In achieving this, school leaders should have 21st-century views on educational management for a better understanding of the social, economic, and political forces that influence education at this contemporary time (National Conference of State Legislators, n.d.).

With the emerging trends in technology and the adverse shift to modern advancement, many aspects seem difficult for some educational leaders to gain or cope with. Gittens (2018) argued that challenges of the leaders underlie the modernization of workspaces and a change in modes of work. Moreover, Mulford (2008) mentioned that the advances in science and technology, changes in demography, increased globalization, and pressures on the environment are powerful contextual forces that challenge the effectiveness of the educational leader. These then test their ability to address these more serious and complex challenges. Thus, they need to refurbish their leadership styles to match the environment and conditions and to have consistency and sustainability of works and actions over time. The potential of the individuals to face the hard times in the organization, educational

## Leadership Perspectives in Basic Education: A Scholarly Analysis of the Insights and Views of Eminent School Heads

organization in particular, is immense and unprecedented. Wise (2015) revealed that educational leaders, specifically school principals, face emerging challenges that make their extensive fieldwork difficult at times and impossible to do well. He further emphasized that these are not regional challenges as seen by the responses; they are found in schools of every type and in every location. There is no unique challenge that an educational leader handles within his or her context. On the contrary, educational leaders may have congruities in facing all these challenges in their respective posts. It only differs in how they structure things to solve them.

Leaders must have clearer views on how to effectuate leadership to achieve a high standard of performance despite the inevitable challenges in their management work. From this, the major challenge lies in the continuity of the education-teaching process (Dayagbil et al., 2021). Hung, Huang & Tan (2020) claimed that there is a need to recalibrate leadership and seek opportunities in gearing up to a sustainable and enduring approach to effective leadership. Rutkiewicz (2018) claimed that it is needed for optimum effectiveness within the organization, but it is never as simple as it seems. Leadership does not only come with a step-by-step manual, but much of it is based on experience and learning through personal trials and errors (Ryan, 2019). This requires a lot of gains and means, holds a great responsibility, composes varied and multiple components, and entails steered moving parts to be treated with utmost concern. This means that leadership is dynamic in the sense that it represents and equates fundamental and multi-dimensional aspects for it to become effective.

With the significant change in the landscape of the educational system, a new way of thinking on school leadership also emerged to address the necessities of the school during tumultuous time (Gurr, 2020). School leadership is a challenging and demanding role, especially when a crisis arises and difficult decisions have to be made (Rutkiewicz, 2018). Slade and Gallagher (2021) mentioned that there is no discreet handbook that guides the school leaders in leading during the unprecedented challenges. Many of them have stuck to their leadership stance while the majority have been trialing and experimenting as they go. The leadership path may seem risky and challenging, but the key to being an effective leader is the skill to shift and adjust leadership approaches based on what is needed (Jambo & Hongde, 2020). Savvy leaders need to seize the opportunity to find an advantage amid the chaos with the development of fresh approaches and strategies in leading (Levenson & Mclaughlin, 2020).

In the Philippine context, school principals still encountered serious challenges that generally affect their managerial performance and practices. Such include the political instability, corruption, and resource constraints (Macapobre et al., 2024). The irregular procurement processes and inadequate funding support hinder them from implementing innovative programs and activities that will boost the quality of education among the learners (Chua, 2022). The quality of instruction and learning in Philippine schools is directly impacted by the difficulties in implementing the curriculum (Uy et al., 2023). Thus, there is a need to mitigate if not to provide an accurate response to these challenges to better the provision of learning and improve the school management practices.

Despite the significance of the school leadership, particularly in the basic education where the learning is initially nurtured, there is a noticeable gap focusing on the perspective of the eminent school leaders who have championed the challenges in schools. There is a need to thoroughly understand how they effectively and efficiently manage the schools despite the evident hindrances they encountered (Aquino et al., 2021). While studies have been conducted on educational leadership, there is a lack of findings that focus on the voices and perspectives of school principals and their experiences in championing these educational and managerial challenges (Estacio & Estacio, 2022).

This study aimed to address this gap by exploring the insights and perspectives of the eminent school leaders in basic education regarding their experiences influencing their leadership approaches and practices and their leadership skills and qualities as school heads in basic education. Through an in-depth investigation of these, this study sought to provide empirical data for practitioners, researchers, and policymakers to better improve and sustain the educational and managerial services in schools.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Various scholars considered leadership approaches as the focus of their investigation. Minadzi & Nyame (2016) investigated the effects of the school heads' leadership styles on teachers' performance. Their paper elaborated on almost all the leadership styles that leaders should adopt and concluded that head teachers practice situational leadership styles where they adapt their style of leading to suit the current work environment and/or needs of their people. This is confirmed by the study of Rehman et al. (2019) that school heads adopted several leadership styles, which primarily included instructional leadership, transformational leadership, and moral leadership. School heads activated these different leadership styles depending on the needs of different situations they needed to address. Furthermore, Estacio & Estacio (2022) found that a school head is responsible for both administrative and instructional supervision, thus performing educational leadership, people leadership, and strategic leadership. However, in the study of Boniao et al. (2020), they found that school leaders were still transitioning to leadership styles, with a few using delegative and authoritarian styles, and none applying the participative style.

## **Leadership Perspectives in Basic Education: A Scholarly Analysis of the Insights and Views of Eminent School Heads**

The challenges of tomorrow require a dedicated and intentional focus on leadership development in today's graduate and professional education programs (Gigliotti & Spear, 2022). Previous research finding emphasized that the quality of leadership provided by school principals depends largely on the quality of their training experience (Pannell et al., 2016). Principals have serious responsibilities as schools' instructional leaders for the students, including those with special needs. Thus, principals should be well exposed and prepared with various programs to reconsider and reconstruct philosophies and practices (Lynch, 2012). Alladatin et al. (2022) found that well-designed training programs for school principals are increasingly essential to help them develop the leadership and other skills needed for effective performance in their roles.

Education stakeholders expect school leaders to promote a vibrant culture of inclusive decision-making and create unity among staff, teachers, and students to enhance the effectiveness of the educational system (Kalkan et al., 2020). Co-curricular experiences can serve as valuable leadership development opportunities for school heads. Mentorship or coaching are other strategies that promote social interaction, and they are particularly important for women and minorities who may be underrepresented in their fields or in the leadership ranks. The most effective initiatives are likely those that incorporate various components for leadership development (Janke et al., 2016).

Republic Act No. 9155, also known as the Governance of Basic Education Act 2001 under Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of rule VI-6.1, states that there shall be a school head for all public elementary schools and public high schools or a cluster thereof. The school head, whom an assistant school head may assist, shall be both an instructional leader and an administrative manager. In the study of Krasnoff (2015), he emphasized that effective principals are dedicated to enhancing student achievement by prioritizing the quality of instruction. (Krasnoff, 2015). Furthermore, they promote ongoing professional development. They focus on research-based strategies to enhance teaching and learning and foster discussions about instructional methods, both within teams and with individual teachers (Krasnoff, 2015). Aside from these responsibilities, school leaders should set an example and are expected to enhance relationships and interactions among various stakeholders, foster a positive environment, and improve teaching and learning outcomes to achieve positive educational results (Agyeman & Aphame, 2024).

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Research Design**

This study was anchored on the qualitative approach using the case study design to explore the specific leadership characteristics, best and effective leadership practices and the leadership complexities and challenging forces encountered of an educational leader who has successfully created change predominantly within the educational organization, academic institution and in the communities and beyond. The case study approach is particularly useful to employ when there is a need to obtain an in-depth appreciation of an issue, event, or phenomenon of interest, in its natural real-life context (Crowe et al., 2011).

#### **Population and Locale of the Study**

Qualitative samples are purposive, that is, selected under their capacity to provide richly-textured information, relevant to the phenomenon under investigation (Vasileiou, Barnett & Thorpe, 2018). The participants for the study were the five (5) seasoned and eminent school leaders in the basic education in the Province of Ilocos Sur. In choosing the participants, the criterion sampling method was employed by the researcher. The following criteria were used as the guidelines for the selection: (1) currently a school head of an elementary school; (2) a school head at least for 15 years; (3) received multiple awards as a school head; (4) willing to be interviewed and to participate in the study. The study sought to include participants representing diverse socio-economic backgrounds to enrich the depth and breadth of insights to be gathered.

#### **Research Instrument**

The semi-structured interview was used as a tool for gathering the data needed from the participants. Addressing the aims and objectives of the study, the interview questions were logically conceptualized and developed through A Priori Code. Furthermore, the theoretical aspects of the study were also be considered as bases for generating suitable questions in the interview. The instrument was validated by experts.

#### **Data Gathering Procedure**

A letter of consent highlighting the purpose of the study was forwarded to the identified participants requesting their participation in the interview. Upon giving their consent, the researcher commenced communicating with the willing participants regarding their interview preferences and also their availability.

Throughout the interview process, the researcher ensured that the participants were comfortable enough to answer the interview questions by having a friendly approach. Each interview lasted from 30-45 minutes and was personally administered by the researcher. A recording application was used to record all information obtained from the interview. In the interview, the

## **Leadership Perspectives in Basic Education: A Scholarly Analysis of the Insights and Views of Eminent School Heads**

researcher followed the guidelines identified by McNamara (2009) as cited by Turner (2010) in conducting a qualitative interview. These include 1) choosing a setting with little distraction; (2) explaining the purpose of the interview; (3) addressing terms of confidentiality; (4) explaining the format of the interview; (5) indicating how long the interview usually takes; (6) telling them how to get in touch later if they want to; (7) asking them if they have any questions before the interview starts; and (8) not counting on memory to recall their answers.

All interview responses, messages, recordings, and transcriptions were confidentially stored and kept for the researcher's review only.

### **Data Analysis**

The researchers analyzed the gathered data from the interview using the thematic analysis framework of Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis began with (1) familiarization with the data by reading and re-reading them. Then, (2) the initial coding was done to generate the most meaningful codes from the data sets. After all data had been initially coded and collated, the (3) different codes were sorted to form overarching themes. The (4) generated themes were carefully reviewed to validate their consistency and coherence. (5) The themes were then defined and further (6) refined through a substantial discussion of the presented themes, along with the maternal narratives from older generations that were shared with the young mothers to shape their parenting experiences.

### **Ethical Consideration**

Informed consent was duly and carefully forwarded to and reviewed by each participant in the study, and questions and clarifications were encouraged before agreeing. Their participation in the study was voluntary.

Before the start of the interview, the participants were informed that they could skip any of the questions they did not wish to answer and that the interview could be stopped at any time if they became uncomfortable with the questions or did not wish to continue for any reason. They were also informed about the duration of the interview, which would last between 30-45 minutes.

The researcher was mindful of the risks of sharing personal and confidential information, and as such, participants identity and the information they provided were not disclosed.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Experiences of eminent school heads influencing their leadership approaches and practices**

The systematic coding of the transcribed interview of the eminent school heads in the basic education resulted to two themes culled out as their personal experiences that greatly influenced their leader approaches and practices. These are (1) Commitment to Lifelong Learning and Professional Growth; and (2) The Transformative Power of Leadership Qualities. These core themes were further elucidated through the underlying sub-themes.

#### **Commitment to Lifelong Learning and Professional Growth**

The successes of the school heads were deeply rooted in their rich experiences. A true leader is fashioned by excellence, driven by commitment, and hardened by experience. These molded them to establish a strong stance toward rendering meaningful services to the community and leave a legacy in their profession through their commitment and dedication. Describing this theme, the researcher identified two sub-themes under this category: personal experience in shaping leadership and attending schooling and training in shaping leadership.

##### **Personal Experience in Shaping Leadership**

The school heads believe that being a leader comes from within, as it is a decision they have to make to create a meaningful impact on the teachers, learners, and community. They collectively perceive leadership as a commitment that reflects on the intrinsic motivation. Thus, they do not see it as a source of power to control and a superior from their subordinates but as an opportunity to grow and become more inspiring to others. This can be supported by one participant who views leadership "as a chance to develop herself as a person and professional because of the eagerness to prove her worth as an educator." She further explained that "when I was still new in the service, my senior colleagues did not see my potentials as a future leader. They saw me as a soft and indecisive teacher because of my personality." Another participant specifically shared that "Sometimes, I questioned my purpose as a teacher before, because this was not my chosen career. But, I reflected many times and thought the path I was traversing—to be a leader who can make a difference to the community." These responses show that the school heads started their career with a rough start. However, they were able to find their way and eventually envisioned themselves as future leaders. Aquino et al. (2021) concluded in their study that school heads' experiences as teachers contributed to their being school leaders, as it served as their strong foundation to work and develop their innate leadership skills and traits, regardless of their age.

## Leadership Perspectives in Basic Education: A Scholarly Analysis of the Insights and Views of Eminent School Heads

It could be implied that the more experiences that the school heads acquired as classroom teachers, the more they enthused to become future leaders. They were not given the chance to share their ideas on the emerging pedagogies to improve learning and on the things to improve the learning environment. Hsieh et al. (2024) found that most teachers in school strive for innovativeness, emphasizing the need for new ideas in teaching and learning and for ways in solving problems in school. However, they were not given the platform to share their insights due to some doubts about their capabilities (Liu et al., 2021). As one teacher said, *"I had inner belief that I had strong potential to lead the school because I was open to learning and re-learning."* Another stated, *"I did not allow myself to just stay in that box for nothing; I learned every corner of it, and when I went out, I knew exactly what to do."*

They believe that these experiences help them to mold their leadership approaches. One said that *"I used my personal experiences as a classroom teacher to understand what my teachers are going through and how they can be provided with a support system."* This response connotes the relationship of personal experience and effective leadership practice. This means that the school heads can relate to teachers on a deeper level, guiding them with practical and relevant actual needs of educators. It highlights the importance of empathy and experience in leadership, especially in contexts like education.

In addition, one participant mentioned, *"I felt uncomfortable passing the burden I encountered as a neophyte teacher before to the young entrants in the department."* She continued, *"I don't want them to feel unmotivated; kaya lagi ko sinasabi sa kanila na kaya nilang gawin ang mga tasks dahil sila ang susunod sa akin (so I always tell them that they can do the tasks because they are next to me)."* This shows the awareness and understanding of the school heads of the difficulties that come with starting out in the teaching profession. A school leader knows how to encourage the young professionals by reinforcing their potentials and leading them so they will also be like them in the future, having the skills to handle responsibilities.

This result indicates an apprentice leadership approach where the school leaders provide mentorship and the gradual transfer of knowledge, skills, and experiences from seasoned leaders to emerging or future leaders. In this context, school leaders who have already navigated their own leadership journeys take on the role of guiding and supporting younger or less experienced teachers, helping them develop their leadership potential over time. Schedlitzki (2019) found that teachers can grow with the supportive hands of the leaders and a nurturing environment. Therefore, this approach to leadership reinforces the idea that leadership development is a continuous, collaborative process with the experienced leaders guiding the future leaders to address challenges as they arise and ensuring that they feel empowered and equipped for the leadership tasks ahead (Thorpe, 2024).

### **Attending Schooling and Training in Shaping Leadership**

All the school head participants consensually expressed their agreement on the need for continuous professional development. They believe that attending seminars and trainings would enable them to learn and be abreast of the latest trends and innovations in teaching and school management, thereby accommodating them in practice. One participant stated, *"Even though I have already been a principal for more than 15 years, I am still active in attending seminars and training relevant to management. I consider this an important avenue to learn the rich perspectives of my fellow educational leaders, so I could adopt them and apply them in my field of assignment."*

Another participant explained, *"I think there are more things that I have to learn and discover. I am not the kind of leader who is contented only with what I know. I see myself collaborating with other practitioners in various trainings and listening to their ideas. In this way, I come to understand what they deal with in their schools and how they address them."*

These responses mean that the school heads deeply value ongoing learning and adaptation as part of the requirement in educational leadership. This suggests that they view leadership not as a stagnant role to perform but as an evolving function as new challenges, innovations, and insights arise that can affect the institution and organization they lead and manage. The emphasis of the collaboration as mentioned by the participants indicates that learning towards leadership is a communal one, where ideas and practices from fellow leaders are considered valuable resources. Therefore, it can be drawn that the school heads, as educational leaders, should be consistently attending trainings to improve their own leadership practices, foster collaboration, and ensure that their schools stay responsive to current educational needs and trends. Wibowo et al. (2021) found that the strengthening of training programs for school principals can positively impact their performance; thus, they participate in those trainings primarily to fulfill their duty obligations. School heads' initiatives to improve their managerial skills through proper training are tantamount to the performance of their schools and their learners (Gamala & Marpa, 2022).

Effective training programs for school principals are essential for helping them develop the leadership and other skills necessary to perform at a high level in their roles (Alladatin et al., 2024). One of the participants explained, *"Training can greatly enhance my understanding of my roles and help me develop a leadership approach that is both unique and worthy of sharing with fellow school leaders and teachers."* This response implies the need to foster a more learning environment for the school heads where they can reflect on their functions and think of the best strategies and practices that they can implement for the betterment

## Leadership Perspectives in Basic Education: A Scholarly Analysis of the Insights and Views of Eminent School Heads

of the school they manage. Pont et al. (2011) demonstrated that effective training and preparation can help principals enhance their competence in three key areas: improving teacher quality, managing school resources strategically, and collaborating with external partners, all of which contribute to better school performance.

In addition, they also believe that enrolling in postgraduate studies can be helpful to widen their perspectives in educational leadership. One participant mentioned, *"In order to make yourself better, you need to consider learning as part of your system, especially since you are a leader. It should not stop only on what you have acquired."* Another participant also stated, *"A leader lends her ear to another leader, and I believe that I will meet true leaders with exemplary works when I enroll in my doctor's degree."* These responses highlight that as an educational leader, one must possess in-depth knowledge and well-mastered competencies to effectively meet leadership standards. A key way to achieve this is through ongoing professional development, such as pursuing higher education. In this context, professors and the graduate school programs can offer valuable insights and guidance, helping future leaders refine their leadership skills and strategies to enhance their effectiveness within their respective schools. Gigliotti and Spear (2022) emphasized that graduate programs help build future school leaders' confidence and competence, instilling the expectations and values necessary to effectively engage in leadership and achieve their goals.

Furthermore, they believe that completing their postgraduate studies can inspire teachers to pursue further education. They see themselves as role models, encouraging teachers to aim higher—not just for promotion, but to enhance their professional competence and develop their leadership skills. One participant pointed out, *"I always wanted to continue working on my doctorate degree so I can inspire others. Para sa ganun, maipakita ko sa kanila na mahalaga ito para sa personal at professional na kalinangan (For that I can show them that this is important for personal and professional development.)"*

Hence, attending the graduate programs can explicitly and implicitly hone their skills from diverse formal and informal sources and experiences (Rathi et al., 2024). It can be suggested to support the initiatives of future school leaders by encouraging them to explore leadership development through continuous graduate programs. These programs can provide valuable opportunities for enhancing their leadership skills, fostering a deeper understanding of educational practices, and preparing them for the complex challenges of leading schools in the future.

### The Transformative Power of Leadership Qualities

Several leadership qualities have been identified to be inherent with a good leader. Cherry (2021) mentioned that successful leadership is linked to the displayed leadership traits and characteristics. Githui (2022) argued that the contingency perspective of leadership focuses on understanding the leader's behavior as being functional and adaptable, rather than being strictly tied to specific contexts. Educational leaders do not have a one-size-fits-all leadership approach. Rather, their decisions and actions are contingent upon the context in which it occurs. This theme emerges from the responses of the school heads when they describe the qualities that an eminent school leader should possess. The researcher identified four sub-themes under this category: goal-oriented, integrity-building, overcoming adversity, and adapting to change.

#### Goal-oriented

The school heads collectively believe that leaders should have the inner drive and clear vision on things that they want to achieve and how to attain them. One participant said, *"I initially set my goals, my personal mission, and my vision because it will serve as my compass. I have my purpose, and I have to fulfill it, because I don't aim for failure but for success."* Another participant also said, *"Visions and goals will not work for themselves; they have to be dealt with and worked on."* These responses indicate that school leaders are goal-oriented and consider all means to make it happen. Furthermore, it means that goals, when guided by clear values and a sense of purpose, become a powerful driving force that inspires a leader to pursue excellence and set high standards for themselves and their team. Irada (2024) mentioned that school leaders should have the energy to initiate what is envisioned and to carry the magnanimous effort to build and make it a reality, thus activating the achievement-oriented approach.

#### Integrity-building

The participant believes that it is through transparency and accountability that they can earn trust and confidence from their subordinates and colleagues. One participant said, *"I know I have already established myself. I know even without people saying it, they respected me based on the amount of trust and confidence they gave me because I always imbibe ethical practice with my position as a leader."* Another mentioned, *"I know myself that I didn't ask people to respect me; I actually worked hard for it from being able to perform my roles truthfully."* Another participant said, *"I really had tough moments to work for it, to prove myself, and to display ethical choices that are acceptable to others."* It is a common thought that integrity building is not easy because of the consistent conviction to gain from individuals with diverse perceptions. Furthermore, leadership integrity has also

## Leadership Perspectives in Basic Education: A Scholarly Analysis of the Insights and Views of Eminent School Heads

been critical to sustain, especially in the verge of a leadership crisis. It can be said that if the foundation is weak, there is a great chance for it to collapse. In contrast, a solid foundation can withstand time and support more.

### Overcoming adversity

No leader is excused from encountering some emerging complexities and challenges. Educational leaders are vulnerable to risks and problems, especially in this contemporary world. Thus, a recognition that these really exist and a deeper understanding of the challenges and the priorities within the larger system would be necessary to better orchestrate the tasks to achieve success.

Leadership complexities and challenges were also one of the aspects that were given emphasis in this study. The participants were asked about the critical challenges or problems they encountered as educational leaders and how they handled them. One said, *"...the collaboration and active participation of the members of the organization in doing the job."* Motivating the team to achieve performance and to boost productivity in the team is a difficult task because it really entails a lot of effort to gain its actualities. This might also be anchored on problems with interpersonal relationships. Developing good working relationships with others would have to be established with a very strong foundation to gain the trust and confidence of the team in the leader.

The school heads unanimously encountered financial problems to sustain school operation. Though they have strategic goals, they were constrained in achieving them because of limited resources. One educational leader said, *"In my learning and experience, I have come to attest that the financial resources are really important in providing services to our clients."* Another said, *"Sometimes, I see budgeting as a serious matter to deal with."* This implies that financial management and resource allocation are central to the successful implementation of the school's strategic goals. Without proper financial planning, even the best intentions may falter, and school operations may suffer. Therefore, it is essential for educational leaders to have the skills and support necessary to manage finances effectively, ensuring that the school can continue to provide quality services despite financial challenges.

### Adaptive to change.

Leadership style varies from one leader to another. Leaders have a unique personal style to execute in meeting the changing requirements of the organization/institution and its employees. However, Kloefkorn (2017) mentioned that leaders are faced with different circumstances and that their style might not fit into it; thus, it needs to be adjusted. One participant responded with a touch of jest, *"I don't think I stick to one style. I love to explore various styles."* The point now is the fact that an educational institution has multiple dimensions, like instruction, administration, management of resources, etc. In each area, there would be problems that may arise and need to be addressed. The educational leader said, *"My eyes can see all sides and corners. I don't know, but I believe a leader should have an eagle's eye to see what is lacking and needs to be improved."* With their inputs, it highlights that leaders have to be vigilant and sensitive to various conditions and situations. Thus, a leader must be flexible to switch in any of these situations.

When asked whether to focus on accomplishing a task or establishing a relationship with colleagues, one said, *"With that, I always weigh it based on what is needed."* Furthermore, one answered the question with an answer, *"Why do you choose one if you can have both?"* With these responses, the school leaders consider both task and relationship as equally important styles to use.

## CONCLUSION

The experiences of eminent school heads reveal that their leadership approaches and practices are shaped by a deep commitment to lifelong learning and professional growth, as well as by the transformative power of core leadership qualities. Their personal experiences as teachers, combined with ongoing training and education, allow them to develop empathy, resilience, and adaptability, which are essential for effective leadership. Moreover, the emphasis on goal-setting, integrity-building, overcoming adversity, and adapting to change highlights the multifaceted nature of leadership in education. These leaders demonstrate that successful educational leadership is not only about personal development but also about empowering others, fostering collaboration, and navigating challenges to ensure the success of both the school and its community.

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that educational institutions and policymakers prioritize the continuous professional development of school leaders by providing opportunities for ongoing training, mentorship, and advanced studies. This should include targeted programs that address emerging trends in educational leadership, financial management, and effective resource allocation. Additionally, fostering a culture of collaboration and knowledge-sharing among school leaders can help enhance their leadership qualities and adaptability in facing diverse challenges. Encouraging leaders to engage in postgraduate education can further

## Leadership Perspectives in Basic Education: A Scholarly Analysis of the Insights and Views of Eminent School Heads

strengthen their competence and inspire teachers to pursue their own professional growth, thereby creating a cycle of continuous improvement within the educational system.

### REFERENCES

- 1) Agyeman, N. Y. & Aphame, V. (2024). Exploring school leadership styles used to improve instruction and learning in schools. *Journal of Research Initiatives*, 8(3), 1-26. <https://digitalcommons.uncfsu.edu/jri/vol8/iss3/1>
- 2) Alladatin, J., Lionel, R., & Insaf, A. (2023). School principal's training programs, challenges, and improvement opportunities: rapid review. *International Journal of Educational Innovation and Research*, 3(1), 17–26. <https://doi.org/10.31949/ijeir.v3i1.6830>
- 3) Aquino, C. J. C., Afalla, B. T., & Fabelico, F. L. (2021). Managing educational institutions: School heads' leadership practices and teachers' performance. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE)*, 10(4), 1325. <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v10i4.21518>
- 4) Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- 5) Boniao, R. R., Alpuerto, M. D., & Sales, E. L. (2020). School Heads' Leadership Styles of Public Schools, Sub-Congressional District III, Bohol. *University of Bohol Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 8(1), 58–73. <https://doi.org/10.15631/ubmrj.v8i1.129>
- 6) Cherry, K. (2021). *Understanding the trait theory of leadership*. Retrieved from <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-the-trait-theory-of-leadership-2795322>
- 7) Chua, D. T. S. (2022). The Filipino Nation and its Fabrication: From a Catholic Perspective. *Zenodo (CERN European Organization for Nuclear Research)*. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6844530>
- 8) Crowe, S., Cresswell, K., Robertson, A. et al. (2011). The case study approach. *BMC Med Res Methodol* 11, 100. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-11-100>
- 9) Day, C., Sammons, P. & Gorgen, K. (2020). *Successful school leadership*. Retrieved from University of Nottingham, Education Development Trust. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED614324.pdf>
- 10) Dayagbil, F. T., Palompon, D. R., Garcia, L. L., & Olvido, M. M. J. (2021). Teaching and learning continuity amid and beyond the pandemic. *Frontiers in Education*, 6. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2021.678692>
- 11) Estacio, M. R., & Estacio, D. L. (2022). Public school heads' leadership style and best practices in the Department of Education in Bulacan, Philippines. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Applied Business and Education Research*, 3(9), 1622–1629. <https://doi.org/10.11594/ijmaber.03.09.03>
- 12) Gamala, J. J., & Marpa, E. P. (2022). School environment and school heads' managerial skills: Looking into their relationships to school's performance. *International Journal on Social and Education Sciences (IJonSES)*, 4(2), 218-235. <https://doi.org/10.46328/ijonSES.285>
- 13) Gigliotti, R. A., & Spear, S. E. (2022). Essential leadership concepts and models for graduate and professional school learners. *New Directions for Student Leadership*, 2022(176), 65–74. <https://doi.org/10.1002/yl.20531>
- 14) Githui, J.N. (2022). Leadership qualities and their consequences in an organizational context: Literature review. *American Journal of Leadership and Governance*, 7(1), 29-47.
- 15) Gittens, N. (2018). Leadership practices that affect student achievement: Facilitating high-quality learning experiences for students (Doctoral dissertation, Boston College). <https://bit.ly/3iOEwWi>
- 16) Gurr, D. (2020). Educational Leadership and the Pandemic. *Academia Letters*, Article 29. <https://doi.org/10.20935/AL29>
- 17) Hsieh, C., Tai, S., & Li, H. (2024). Impact of school leadership on teacher innovativeness: evidence from multilevel analysis of Taiwan TALIS 2018. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2024.2397040>
- 18) Hung, D., Huang, J.S. & Tan, C. (2020). Leadership in times of pandemics: Reflections from Singapore. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, 48(2), 56-63.
- 19) Irada, A. M. P. (2024). Path Goal Leadership of school heads and team effectiveness among public secondary teachers in DIGOS City Division. *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*, 4378–4383. <https://doi.org/10.55248/gengpi.5.0624.1562>
- 20) Jambo, D., & Hongde, L. (2020). The Effect of Principal's Distributed Leadership Practice on Students' Academic Achievement: A Systematic Review of the Literature. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 9(1), 189-198. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1240510>
- 21) Janke, K. K., Nelson, M. H., Bzowycyk, A. S., Fuentes, D. G., Rosenberg, E., & DiCenzo, R. (2016). Deliberate integration of student leadership development in Doctor of Pharmacy programs. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 80(1), 2. <https://doi.org/10.5688/ajpe8012>



## Leadership Perspectives in Basic Education: A Scholarly Analysis of the Insights and Views of Eminent School Heads

- 22) Kalkan, Ü., Aksal F. A., Gazi, Z. A., Atasoy, R., & Dağlı, G. (2020). The relationship between school administrators' leadership styles, school culture and organizational image. *SAGE Open*, 10(1), 1–15. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/2158244020902081>
- 23) Kloefkorn, S. (2017). *Advantages of switching among leadership styles*. Retrieved from <https://www.bizjournals.com/phoenix/news/2017/04/20/advantages-of-switching-among-leadership-styles.html>
- 24) Krasnoff, B. (2015). Leadership qualities of effective principals. *Northwest Comprehensive Center*. <http://nwcc.educationnorthwest.org/filesnwcc/research-brief-leadership-qualities-effective-principals.pdf>
- 25) Levenson, A. & Mclaughlin, P. (2020). *New Leadership Challenges for the Virtual World of Work*. Retrieved from <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/new-leadership-challenges-for-the-virtual-world-of-work/>
- 26) Liu, Y., Bellibaş, M.Ş., & Gümüş, S. (2021). The effect of instructional leadership and distributed leadership on teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction: Mediating roles of supportive school culture and teacher collaboration. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 49(3), 430–453. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143220910438>
- 27) Lynch, Jeremy. (2012). Responsibilities of today's principal: Implications for principal preparation programs and principal certification policies. *Rural Special Education Quarterly*, 31. 40-47. 10.1177/875687051203100205.
- 28) Macapobre, K., Kilag, O. K., Sasan, J. M., Uy, F., Villegas, M. A., Solatorio, R., & Suba-an, J. (2024). Educational Leadership in the Philippines: The Challenges. *International Multidisciplinary Journal of Research for Innovation, Sustainability, and Excellence (IMJRISE)*, 1(6), 1021-1026. <https://risejournals.org/index.php/imjrise/article/view/547>
- 29) Malik, M.A. & Azmat, S. (2019). Leader and leadership: historical development of the terms and critical review of literature. *Annals of the University of Craiova for Journalism, Communication and Management, Department of Communication, Journalism and Education Sciences, University of Craiova*, 5(1), 16-32.
- 30) Minadzi, V. M. & Nyame, G. (2016). Leadership styles of basic school head teachers: How does it influence teachers' classroom performance? *The International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention*, 3(4), 1983-1991. DOI: 10.18535/ijsshi/v3i4.5
- 31) Morgan, J. (2020). What is leadership, and who is a leader? Retrieved from <https://www.chieflearningofficer.com/2020/01/06/what-is-leadership-and-who-is-a-leader/>
- 32) Mulford, B. (2008) The Leadership Challenge: Improving Learning in Schools. <http://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=acer>
- 33) National Conference of State Legislators. (n.d.). School Leadership.
- 34) Pannell, S., Peltier-Glaze, B. M., Haynes, I., Davis, D., & Skelton, C. (2015). Evaluating the Effectiveness of Traditional and Alternative Principal Preparation Programs. *Journal of Organizational and Educational Leadership*, 1(2). <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1131525>
- 35) Pont, B., Nusche, D., & Moorman, H. (2011). Improving School Leadership, Volume 1. In OECD eBooks. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264167995-1t>
- 36) Rathi, D., Branch-Mueller, J., & Stang, C. (2024). Doctoral degree programs and soft skills: Reflections by faculty members. *Proceedings of the Annual Conference of CAIS / Actes Du Congrès Annuel De L ACSI*. <https://doi.org/10.29173/cais1864>
- 37) Rehman, A., Khan, M., & Waheed, Z. (2019). School heads' perceptions about their leadership styles. *Journal of Education and Educational Development*, 6(1), 138–153. <https://doi.org/10.22555/joeed.v6i1.2288>
- 38) Ryan, D. (2019). *Why being a leader is harder than it looks*. Retrieved from <https://medium.com/swlh/why-being-a-leader-is-harder-than-it-looks-bf2abceb9805>
- 39) Rutkiewicz, J. (2018). *Leadership Is Simple but Not Easy*. Retrieved from <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/leadership-simple-easy-john-rutkiewicz>
- 40) Schedlitzki, D. (2019). Developing apprentice leaders through critical reflection. *Higher Education Skills and Work-based Learning*, 9(2), 237–247. <https://doi.org/10.1108/heswbl-09-2018-0095>
- 41) Slade, S. & Gallanger, A. (2021). Transformational vs. Instructional Leadership. Which Is Better?.
- 42) Stein, L. (2016). Schools need leaders - not managers: It's time for a paradigm shift. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 15(2), 21-30. DOI: 10.12806/V15/I2/I3
- 43) Thorpe, Graeme (2024) *How does an apprentice completing a management and leadership apprenticeship experience compassion during coaching?* Masters thesis, St Mary's University. Retrieved from <https://research.stmarys.ac.uk/id/eprint/6526/>
- 44) Turner, D. W. (2010). Qualitative Interview Design: A Practical Guide for Novice Investigators. *The Qualitative Report*, 15(3), 754-760. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol15/iss3/19>

## Leadership Perspectives in Basic Education: A Scholarly Analysis of the Insights and Views of Eminent School Heads

- 45) Uy, F. T., Sasan, J. M., & Kilag, O. K. (2023). School Principal Administrative-Supervisory Leadership During the Pandemic: A phenomenological Qualitative study. *International Journal of Theory and Application in Elementary and Secondary School Education*, 5(1), 44–62. <https://doi.org/10.31098/ijtaese.v5i1.1208>
- 46) Vasileiou, K., Barnett, J., Thorpe, S. *et al.* (2018). Characterising and justifying sample size sufficiency in interview-based studies: systematic analysis of qualitative health research over a 15-year period. *BMC Med Res Methodol* 18, 148 <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-018-0594-7>
- 47) Wibowo, U. B., Wijayanti, W., Abdul Jabar, C. S., Utari, R., & Rahmat, B. (2021). Can Strengthening Training for School Principals Improve Their Performance? Udik Budi Wibowo, Wiwik Wijayanti, Cepi Safruddin Abdul Jabar, R. *KnE Social Sciences*, 6(2), 612–620. <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v6i2.10019>
- 48) Wise, D. (2015). Emerging Challenges Facing School Principals. *National Council of Professors of Educational Administration*, 16 (2), 103-115. <https://bit.ly/3CCTUwR>



There is an Open Access article, distributed under the term of the Creative Commons Attribution – Non Commercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits remixing, adapting and building upon the work for non-commercial use, provided the original work is properly cited.