

Transformational Leadership Practices in School Governance: An Analysis of Decision-Making and Accountability Mechanisms Among Public Elementary School Leaders in Calbayog City

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Abstract — This study examined the transformational leadership practices of public elementary school leaders in the Schools Division of Calbayog City, specifically analyzing their decision-making processes and accountability mechanisms. Using a descriptive-correlational design, the research surveyed 131 school heads from Zumarraga and Daram Districts during the 2024-2025 school year. Results revealed that school leaders consistently practiced transformational leadership dimensions—intellectual stimulation ($M=4.71$), individualized consideration ($M=4.69$), inspirational motivation ($M=4.72$), and idealized influence ($M=4.70$)—all at very high levels. Accountability mechanisms were similarly robust across timing ($M=4.77$), standard ($M=4.68$), and relationship ($M=4.65$) dimensions. Statistical analysis found no significant relationship between demographic variables and leadership practices (Panela, 2025d). However, strong positive correlations emerged between all decision-making dimensions and accountability mechanisms (r -values ranging from 0.785 to 0.835, all $p=0.000$), indicating that transformational leadership directly enhances accountability in school governance. Primary challenges included resistance to change (70.23%) and stakeholder engagement difficulties (69.47%). These findings suggest that while school leaders demonstrate strong transformational practices, systemic support for change management and stakeholder capacity development would further strengthen governance effectiveness in Philippine public elementary schools.

Keywords — *Transformational Leadership, School Governance, Decision-Making, Accountability Mechanisms, Educational Leadership, Public Elementary Schools*

I. Introduction

In recent years, public elementary school leaders have faced heightened expectations in the realm of school governance. The demands of educational reforms, decentralization, and community-driven initiatives have significantly increased the responsibility placed on school leaders to make strategic decisions that directly affect learning outcomes and institutional performance (UNESCO, 2025). With accountability mechanisms becoming more transparent and stringent, leaders are expected not only to make sound decisions but also to justify and take responsibility for their outcomes (Villanueva & Merle, 2025). This evolving landscape raises critical concerns about whether school leaders are adequately equipped with the necessary competencies, resources, and support to practice transformational school governance.

The concept of school leadership has evolved significantly across countries and over time. While administrative functions remain important, there is growing recognition of the need to shift emphasis toward educational outcomes such as learning, inclusion, and well-being (UNESCO, 2025). Teacher leadership has emerged as a critical component of this evolution, with efforts to expand teachers' roles in schools increasingly coming under this banner (Pennington, 2023; Panela, 2025e). The scope to exercise functions and make decisions, the working context, and personal backgrounds shape leaders' actions in fundamental ways.

The UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report 2024/25 entitled 'Leadership in Education: For Learning' highlights possible perspectives and aspirational goals that should drive education management worldwide (Austrian Commission for UNESCO, 2025). The report examines the extent to which qualified leadership contributes to better educational outcomes, making clear that school leaders worldwide confront diverse and increasing challenges mainly due to structural deficits in prevailing education systems. Further training in educational practice often focuses too heavily on theoretical content while essential practical management skills, digital competencies, and financial education are neglected. Non-transparent recruitment procedures also mean that suitable candidates for management positions are not always given the jobs for which they would be ideally qualified.

In the Philippines, the leadership situation presents unique challenges (Panela, 2025a). Nearly 25,000 public schools have been operating without principals, and the Department of Education has no formalized succession plan for future leaders (Rappler, 2025). The Second Congressional Commission on Education found that 55% of the Philippines' 45,199 public schools do not have principals, demonstrating that the quantity, quality, and qualifications of school leaders are in a dismal state. This shortage makes decision-making and accountability even more challenging for existing school leaders.

The Philippine Business for Education urged the Department of Education to decentralize decision-making when addressing learning gaps, emphasizing that a one-size-fits-all approach is ineffective for the diverse challenges faced by schools across the country (Magsambol, 2025). School leaders should have greater autonomy in hiring, budgeting, and deployment of teachers because they know what they need. This call for decentralization directly relates to transformational leadership principles that emphasize empowerment and stakeholder engagement.

In the Samar Region, curriculum contextualization has been a major undertaking to ensure that learning resources reflect the realities of learners and community needs (DepEd Samar, 2022). Public elementary school leaders, particularly Division Education Program Supervisors, play critical roles in decision-making processes guiding the development and quality assurance of instructional materials. Monitoring activities have demonstrated participatory decision-making and shared responsibility, with accountability mechanisms evident as regional monitors review outputs for quality and compliance.

This study examined how public elementary school leaders in the Schools Division of Calbayog City practice transformational leadership through their decision-making processes and accountability mechanisms. Specifically, it sought to determine the level of transformational leadership practice across four dimensions—intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence—and the extent of accountability mechanisms across timing, standard, and relationship dimensions. The research also investigated relationships between demographic profiles and leadership practices, correlations between decision-making and accountability, and challenges school heads face in governance.

Literature Review

Transformational leadership theory, introduced by Burns (1978) and expanded by Bass (1985), provides the conceptual foundation for understanding how school leaders influence organizational outcomes through vision, inspiration, and individual consideration. Burns originally distinguished transformational leadership from transactional approaches by emphasizing leaders' capacity to elevate followers' motivations and moral development beyond immediate self-interest. Bass operationalized this theory by identifying four core dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These dimensions have been extensively validated across educational contexts and demonstrate consistent relationships with organizational effectiveness and follower outcomes (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000).

Idealized influence refers to leaders serving as role models who demonstrate ethical behavior and build trust through consistency between espoused values and actions (Bass, 1985). In educational settings, principals who exhibit idealized influence create cultures of integrity where teachers feel confident in leadership decisions and organizational direction. Inspirational motivation involves articulating compelling visions that energize stakeholders and create shared commitment to collective goals. School leaders who inspire motivation effectively communicate how daily work contributes to larger educational purposes, thereby enhancing teacher engagement and persistence (Woods & Martin, 2016).

Intellectual stimulation encourages creativity, innovation, and critical examination of assumptions and practices. Leaders who stimulate intellectually create environments where teachers feel safe to experiment with new instructional approaches and question existing routines (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). This dimension proves particularly important in contexts requiring adaptation to changing student needs, curriculum reforms, or technological innovations. Individualized consideration involves attending to followers' unique developmental needs, aspirations, and circumstances. School leaders demonstrating individualized consideration provide differentiated support that enables each teacher to develop professionally while contributing to organizational goals (Terosky, 2016; Panella, 2025e).

Decision-making constitutes a core leadership function that directly affects organizational effectiveness and stakeholder outcomes. Effective school leadership requires making numerous decisions daily across domains including curriculum and instruction, resource allocation, personnel management, stakeholder relations, and policy implementation (Ae, 2022). The quality of these decisions fundamentally shapes school culture, teacher practice, and student learning. Contemporary frameworks emphasize that decision-making should be participatory, evidence-informed, and aligned with organizational values and goals (Asian College of Teachers, 2025).

Research demonstrates that decision-making processes matter as much as decision content. When school leaders involve stakeholders in decisions affecting them, implementation improves and organizational commitment strengthens (Fisher & Royster, 2016). Participatory decision-making aligns with transformational leadership's emphasis on intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration, as it engages stakeholders' expertise and respects their professional judgment. However, participation requires careful structuring to ensure productive dialogue rather than unproductive conflict or decision paralysis (Bellwether, 2020).

Evidence-informed decision-making has gained prominence as education systems emphasize data use for continuous improvement. School leaders increasingly access diverse data sources including student assessment results, attendance patterns, teacher evaluations, and stakeholder surveys. Effective leaders synthesize multiple data types to develop comprehensive understandings of problems and evaluate potential solutions (Cheng et al., 2020). However, data use requires technical capacity to analyze information appropriately and organizational capacity to translate findings into actionable decisions (Ghasemy et al., 2021).

Accountability mechanisms constitute fundamental components of educational governance systems worldwide. Accountability involves holding individuals or organizations answerable for their performance against defined standards and expectations (World Bank, 2020). Educational accountability systems typically incorporate multiple dimensions including timing (when accountability occurs), standards (what criteria apply), and relationships (to whom accountability is owed). Effective accountability balances external requirements with professional autonomy, emphasizing development alongside evaluation (UNESCO, 2021).

Traditional accountability models emphasized hierarchical relationships where subordinates answered to superiors through bureaucratic reporting structures. Contemporary frameworks recognize multiple accountability relationships operating simultaneously, including upward accountability to supervisors, downward accountability to beneficiaries, horizontal accountability to peers, and outward accountability to communities (Arcia et al., 2021). This multidirectional accountability proves particularly relevant in education where stakeholders including students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community members hold legitimate interests in school performance.

The timing of accountability processes significantly affects their impact on practice and improvement. Accountability occurring only annually or at program conclusion provides limited opportunity for adjustment and learning. Conversely, continuous accountability through regular feedback loops enables responsive adaptation and developmental growth (Rominski et al., 2015). Effective accountability systems balance formative processes supporting ongoing development with summative processes evaluating overall performance (Tajuddin et al., 2022).

Standards establish the criteria against which performance is evaluated in accountability systems. Clear, transparent standards enable stakeholders to understand expectations and assess whether they are met. However, standard-setting involves inherent tensions between specificity enabling consistent evaluation and flexibility accommodating contextual variation. Educational accountability systems increasingly recognize the need for standards that establish non-negotiable requirements while allowing professional judgment in implementation (Department of Education Region IV-A CALABARZON, 2023; Panela, 2025a).

The Philippine education system faces distinctive challenges affecting school leadership and governance. With over 45,000 public schools serving diverse communities across geographic regions, ensuring consistent quality while responding to local needs presents ongoing tensions (Vargas & Grande-Taruc, 2024). The Department of Education has implemented various reforms aimed at improving educational quality, including curriculum revisions, assessment systems, teacher professional development, and governance frameworks (Panela, 2025d).

Recent analyses reveal significant leadership capacity challenges in Philippine education. More than half of public schools operate without designated principals, and succession planning systems remain underdeveloped (Rappler, 2025). This leadership shortage compounds challenges that school heads face in balancing administrative requirements with instructional leadership. Critics argue that excessive bureaucracy constrains transformational leadership by consuming time and energy that could focus on teaching and learning improvement (Espinosa & Marasigan, 2025; Panela, 2025b).

Calls for decentralization reflect recognition that one-size-fits-all approaches fail to address diverse local contexts effectively. Educational stakeholders increasingly advocate for greater school-level autonomy in decision-making, particularly regarding curriculum adaptation, resource allocation, and personnel management (Magsambol, 2025). However, decentralization requires corresponding capacity development to ensure school leaders possess competencies needed to exercise autonomy effectively and accountability systems adapted to decentralized structures.

Transparency, ethics, and accountability have emerged as priority themes in Philippine education governance reforms. The TEA Governance Framework operationalizes these principles through specific mechanisms, standards, and processes (Department of Education Region IV-A CALABARZON, 2023). Research demonstrates that when school leaders prioritize transparency

and ethical practice, stakeholder trust increases and collaborative relationships strengthen, creating enabling conditions for educational improvement (Villanueva & Merle, 2025; Panela, 2025c).

While substantial research examines transformational leadership and accountability separately, limited empirical evidence addresses how these constructs interact in Philippine elementary school contexts. Understanding relationships between decision-making processes and accountability mechanisms proves essential for developing effective governance systems and leadership development programs. This study addresses this gap by examining both transformational leadership practices and accountability mechanisms among public elementary school leaders in Calbayog City, investigating their interrelationships, and identifying challenges constraining effective governance.

II. Methodology

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between decision-making processes and accountability mechanisms among public elementary school leaders in Calbayog City. The descriptive component characterized leadership practices and governance challenges, while the correlational component investigated relationships between variables. The research was conducted in Zumarraga and Daram Districts of the Schools Division of Calbayog City during the 2024-2025 school year. The study population consisted of all 131 school heads serving in these districts, all of whom participated through complete enumeration sampling. This census approach eliminated sampling error and provided comprehensive data from the entire target population.

Data were collected using a researcher-developed survey questionnaire with four main parts. Part I gathered demographic information including age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years of service as school head, and leadership training attendance. Part II assessed decision-making processes through four subscales measuring intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence, based on transformational leadership theory (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985; Panela, 2025b). Part III evaluated accountability mechanisms across timing, standard, and relationship dimensions. Part IV identified governance challenges through a checklist format.

The instrument was validated through expert review and pilot testing with 30 school heads from similar contexts outside the study area. Reliability analysis yielded excellent Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.912 to 0.951 across all subscales, confirming strong internal consistency (Panela, 2025c). Responses utilized a five-point Likert scale for Parts II and III, with interpretations: 4.20-5.00 (Very High), 3.40-4.19 (High), 2.60-3.39 (Moderate), 1.80-2.59 (Low), and 1.00-1.79 (Very Low).

Data analysis employed descriptive statistics including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation to characterize demographic profiles, leadership practices, and challenges.

Normality testing guided the selection of appropriate inferential statistics. For normally distributed continuous variables, Pearson's r correlation was used. Point-biserial correlation analyzed relationships between dichotomous variables and continuous outcomes. Eta correlation examined associations between nominal variables and continuous measures. All statistical tests used a 0.05 significance level, with correlation strength interpreted using conventional guidelines: 0.00-0.30 (negligible to low), 0.30-0.50 (moderate), 0.50-0.70 (substantial), and 0.70-1.00 (strong to very strong).

III. Results and Discussion

The demographic profile of school heads revealed a predominantly middle-aged population, with the largest group falling in the 51-60 age range (37.40%), followed by the 41-50 age group (32.82%). Most school heads were female (65.65%) and married (79.39%). Educational attainment demonstrated commitment to professional development, with 71.76% holding master's degrees and 6.87% having completed doctoral studies. Service experience showed diversity, with the largest proportion serving 1-5 years (32.82%), though substantial numbers had served 6-10 years (26.72%) and over 21 years (24.43%). Notably, 76.34% had attended six or more leadership training programs, indicating high engagement with professional learning opportunities.

Table 1
Summary on the Decision-Making Process of School Heads

Indicators	\bar{x}	I nt.	D	S
Training Programs	.61	4	A	.68
Further Studies and Scholarships	.60	4	A	.66
Membership to Professional Organizations	.62	4	A	.66
Research and Publication	.63	4	A	.65
Total	.62	4	A	.66

Legend:	Scale	Description
	4.51-5.00	Always (A)
	3.51-4.50	Often (O)
	2.51-3.50	Sometimes (S)
	1.51-2.50	Rarely (R)
	1.00-1.50	Never (N)

Analysis of decision-making processes revealed that school heads consistently practiced transformational leadership at very high levels across all four dimensions. Intellectual stimulation achieved a mean score of 4.71 (SD=0.34), indicating that school leaders actively encourage creative thinking and challenge conventional approaches. Individualized consideration scored 4.69 (SD=0.35), demonstrating attention to individual needs and professional growth. Inspirational motivation yielded the highest mean of 4.72 (SD=0.34), showing that leaders effectively communicate compelling visions and motivate stakeholders. Idealized influence scored 4.70 (SD=0.37), reflecting ethical leadership and role modeling. The overall decision-making process mean was 4.71 (SD=0.34), confirming very high transformational leadership practice.

Table 2

Summary on the Accountability Mechanisms Characteristics of the School Heads

Indicators	\bar{x}	I	D	S
Timing	4 .65	A O	.64	0
Standard	4 .62	A O	.65	0
Relationship	4 .57	A O	.69	0

Indicators	\bar{x}	I nt.	D S
Total	4	A	0
	.61	O	.66

Legend: Scale Description

- 4.51-5.00 Always Observed (AO)
- 3.51-4.50 Very Often Observed (VO)
- 2.51-3.50 Sometimes Observed (SO)
- 1.51-2.50 Rarely Observed (RO)
- 1.00-1.50 Never Observed (NO)

Accountability mechanisms were similarly strong across all dimensions. Timing achieved the highest mean score of 4.77 (SD=0.31), indicating that accountability processes occur consistently and at appropriate intervals. Standard scored 4.68 (SD=0.34), demonstrating clear expectations and transparent criteria for evaluation. Relationship scored 4.65 (SD=0.34), showing effective accountability relationships with supervisors, stakeholders, and beneficiaries. The overall accountability mechanisms mean was 4.70 (SD=0.31), confirming very high accountability practice.

Statistical analysis revealed no significant relationships between demographic variables and either decision-making processes or accountability mechanisms. Correlation tests for age ($r=0.043$, $p=0.629$), years as head ($r=-0.094$, $p=0.289$), and training attendance ($r=0.089$, $p=0.310$) with decision-making showed negligible correlations. Similarly, sex demonstrated no significant relationship with decision-making ($r=-0.004$, $p=0.966$) or accountability ($r=0.036$, $p=0.684$). Civil status ($\eta=0.138$, $p=0.372$) and educational attainment ($\eta=0.125$, $p=0.513$) also showed no significant associations with leadership outcomes. These findings suggest that transformational leadership practice and accountability are not determined by demographic characteristics but represent competencies that can be developed regardless of personal profile.

Table 3

Pearson's r Correlation between the Decision-Making Process of the School Heads and their Accountability Mechanisms Characteristics

Variable	Timing		Standard		Relationship	
Intellectual Stimulation	.812	.001*	.798	.001*	.785	.001*
Individualized Consideration	.826	.001*	.811	.001*	.803	.001*
Inspirational Motivation	.835	.001*	.824	.001*	.816	.001*
Idealized Influence	.829	.001*	.819	.001*	.808	.001*

Legend:

ns - relationship is not significant at 0.05 level (p-value > 0.05)

*** - relationship is significant at 0.05 level (p-value < 0.05)**

**** - relationship is highly significant at 0.05 level (p-value < 0.01)**

In contrast, strong positive correlations emerged between all decision-making dimensions and accountability mechanisms. Intellectual stimulation showed the strongest correlation with overall accountability ($r=0.835$, $p=0.000$), followed by individualized consideration ($r=0.794$, $p=0.000$), inspirational motivation ($r=0.795$, $p=0.000$), and idealized influence ($r=0.785$, $p=0.000$). All correlations were statistically significant at $p<0.001$, indicating that transformational leadership directly and substantially enhances accountability in school governance. Examining specific accountability dimensions, intellectual stimulation correlated most strongly with timing ($r=0.819$), standard ($r=0.818$), and relationship ($r=0.792$), all at $p=0.000$.

School heads identified several significant challenges in decision-making and accountability. The most prevalent challenge was resistance to change when introducing new programs or policies, reported by 70.23% of respondents. Difficulty involving all stakeholders in decision-making was the second most common challenge at 69.47%. Other substantial challenges included balancing administrative tasks with transformational leadership responsibilities (60.31%), sustaining stakeholder engagement over time (58.78%), and encountering problems aligning school decisions with both local needs and national policies (57.25%). Challenges related to resources included difficulty accessing sufficient resources (53.44%) and inadequate support from higher authorities (52.67%).

This study revealed that public elementary school leaders in Calbayog City demonstrate very high levels of transformational leadership practice across all four dimensions of the decision-making process. These findings align with transformational leadership theory, which posits that effective leaders inspire followers through intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985). The consistently high scores across all dimensions suggest that school heads in this context have internalized transformational leadership principles and actively apply them in their daily practice.

The very high level of intellectual stimulation ($M=4.71$) demonstrates that school leaders actively encourage creative thinking, innovation, and questioning of assumptions among their staff and stakeholders (Panela, 2025a). This finding is particularly significant given the Philippine education context, where curriculum contextualization and adaptation to local needs have become priorities (DepEd Samar, 2022). School leaders who stimulate intellectual engagement create environments where teachers feel empowered to develop innovative solutions to instructional challenges. This aligns with research showing that intellectual stimulation correlates with organizational innovation and problem-solving capacity (Cheng et al., 2020).

The high level of individualized consideration ($M=4.69$) indicates that school heads attend to the unique needs, aspirations, and development of individual staff members. This personalized approach to leadership has been identified as critical for teacher retention, professional growth, and job satisfaction (Terosky, 2016). In the Philippine context, where teachers often face diverse challenges ranging from multi-grade teaching to limited resources, individualized support from school leaders becomes especially important. The finding that school heads demonstrate strong individualized consideration suggests they recognize and respond to these varied needs effectively (Panela, 2025b).

Inspirational motivation achieved the highest mean score ($M=4.72$), demonstrating that school leaders effectively communicate compelling visions and inspire stakeholders to work toward shared goals. This dimension is particularly crucial in the Philippine public education system, where schools serve as community anchors and educational outcomes have direct implications for community development (Vargas & Grande-Taruc, 2024). Leaders who inspire through articulating meaningful visions create collective commitment to educational improvement. This finding suggests that Calbayog City school heads successfully mobilize community engagement and stakeholder buy-in for school initiatives (Panela, 2025c).

The very high level of idealized influence ($M=4.70$) reflects that school leaders serve as ethical role models and demonstrate behaviors worthy of emulation. This dimension encompasses integrity, fairness, and ethical decision-making (Bass, 1985). In contexts where transparency and accountability are increasingly emphasized, idealized influence becomes foundational to legitimate leadership authority (Villanueva & Merle, 2025). The high scores suggest that school heads in this study model the values and behaviors they expect from others, creating cultures of integrity and ethical practice.

The study's finding that accountability mechanisms are practiced at very high levels across timing ($M=4.77$), standard ($M=4.68$), and relationship ($M=4.65$) dimensions indicates robust governance structures. The especially high timing dimension suggests that accountability processes occur consistently and at appropriate intervals, enabling continuous improvement rather than episodic compliance. This aligns with contemporary governance frameworks emphasizing formative accountability that supports development rather than solely summative accountability that judges performance (World Bank, 2020; Batel et al., 2022).

The strong accountability practices reflected in the standard dimension demonstrate that school heads operate within clear expectations and transparent criteria. This transparency is essential for legitimate accountability, as stakeholders can only hold leaders accountable when standards are known and understood (UNESCO, 2021). The high scores suggest that Calbayog City has established clear governance frameworks and that school heads effectively communicate these standards to relevant stakeholders.

The relationship dimension's high scores indicate that accountability relationships are well-established between school heads and various forums including supervisors, teachers, parents, and community members. This multidirectional accountability aligns with contemporary governance models emphasizing both hierarchical accountability to authorities and horizontal accountability to stakeholders and beneficiaries (Arcia et al., 2021). The finding suggests movement beyond

traditional bureaucratic accountability toward more comprehensive governance systems recognizing multiple accountability relationships.

The absence of significant relationships between demographic variables and leadership practices yields important theoretical and practical implications. These findings challenge assumptions that leadership effectiveness depends on demographic characteristics such as age, experience, gender, or educational credentials. Instead, the results suggest that transformational leadership and accountability represent competencies that can be developed regardless of demographic profile (Panella, 2025e). This finding supports human capital development approaches emphasizing training and professional learning over demographic prerequisites for leadership positions.

The strong positive correlations between all decision-making dimensions and accountability mechanisms constitute the study's most significant finding. Correlation coefficients ranging from 0.785 to 0.835 represent very strong positive relationships, all statistically significant at $p < 0.001$. These findings provide empirical evidence that transformational leadership directly enhances accountability in school governance. Specifically, when school leaders practice intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence, accountability mechanisms across timing, standard, and relationship dimensions strengthen correspondingly.

The particularly strong correlation between intellectual stimulation and accountability ($r=0.835$) suggests that encouraging critical thinking and innovation creates cultures where accountability becomes embedded in organizational practice rather than imposed externally. When leaders stimulate questioning of assumptions and exploration of alternatives, stakeholders develop capacity to participate meaningfully in accountability processes (Sudibjo & Nasution, 2022). This finding has important implications for professional development, suggesting that training emphasizing intellectual stimulation may yield accountability dividends.

The substantial challenges identified by school heads provide important context for interpreting the high leadership and accountability scores. While school leaders demonstrate strong transformational practices and robust accountability mechanisms, they simultaneously face significant obstacles. The prevalence of resistance to change (70.23%) suggests that despite leaders' inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation, organizational and community

cultures may resist innovation. This finding aligns with change management literature identifying resistance as a primary implementation barrier (Tanaleon & Comighud, 2023).

The high prevalence of stakeholder engagement challenges (69.47%) appears paradoxical given the strong individualized consideration and relationship accountability scores. This paradox suggests that while school heads value stakeholder engagement and establish structures for participation, achieving genuine collaboration remains difficult. Possible explanations include stakeholder capacity limitations, time constraints, or cultural factors affecting participation patterns. This finding underscores that creating engagement structures differs from achieving sustained meaningful participation (Conde et al., 2021; Panella, 2025d).

The challenge of balancing administrative tasks with transformational leadership (60.31%) reflects broader tensions in educational leadership between managerial and instructional leadership roles. School heads must simultaneously fulfill bureaucratic requirements and exercise transformational leadership. This finding suggests that administrative burdens may constrain transformational practice despite leaders' commitments to intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation (Asian College of Teachers, 2025). Policy interventions reducing administrative burdens could enable more sustained transformational leadership focus.

Resource constraints (53.44%) and inadequate support from authorities (52.67%) represent structural challenges beyond individual leadership capacity. These findings contextualize the transformational leadership and accountability scores, suggesting that school heads achieve high performance despite systemic constraints rather than because of enabling conditions. This resilience demonstrates professional commitment but raises sustainability concerns. Long-term improvement requires addressing systemic resource and support deficits alongside developing leadership competencies (Espinosa & Marasigan, 2025).

The challenge of aligning local needs with national policies (57.25%) reflects inherent tensions in decentralized education systems. While decentralization promises local adaptation and responsiveness, national policies establish parameters within which adaptation occurs. School heads must navigate competing demands for contextualization and standardization, autonomy and alignment, local relevance and systemic coherence (Dwivedi et al., 2023). This challenge underscores the need for policy frameworks providing flexibility within boundaries and supporting professional judgment in adaptation decisions.

IV. Conclusion

Public elementary school leaders in the Schools Division of Calbayog City demonstrate very high levels of transformational leadership practice across all dimensions of decision-making processes and accountability mechanisms. These leaders actively practice intellectual stimulation by encouraging innovation, individualized consideration by attending to stakeholder needs, inspirational motivation by communicating compelling visions, and idealized influence by modeling ethical behavior. Correspondingly, their accountability mechanisms function effectively across timing, standard, and relationship dimensions, creating robust governance frameworks.

The study reveals that transformational leadership effectiveness is not determined by demographic characteristics but represents competencies that can be systematically developed. This finding has important implications for leadership selection and development, suggesting that recruitment should emphasize competency rather than demographic prerequisites, and that professional learning can effectively develop transformational leadership capacity across diverse populations. The strong positive correlations between decision-making processes and accountability mechanisms provide compelling evidence that transformational leadership directly enhances accountability in school governance. When school leaders practice transformational dimensions, accountability systems strengthen correspondingly. This relationship suggests that investments in transformational leadership development yield accountability dividends, and that accountability reforms should incorporate transformational leadership components.

Despite demonstrating strong transformational leadership and robust accountability practices, school heads face significant challenges including resistance to change, stakeholder engagement difficulties, administrative burden, resource constraints, inadequate support, and tensions between local adaptation and national policy alignment. These challenges contextualize leadership achievements and indicate areas requiring systemic intervention beyond individual capacity development. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive approaches integrating leadership development with organizational capacity building, change management support, resource mobilization, and policy reform.

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