
Transformational Leadership and Emotional Intelligence of School Heads: Effects on Governance and Performance

Arante N. Arce

Department of Education-Biri National High School

Myla P. Adiaton

Department of Education School Head & NwSSU Graduate School Adjunct Professor

pandaymyla@gmail.com

Abstract — This study examined the effects of transformational leadership and emotional intelligence of school heads on school governance practices and school performance through School-Based Management (SBM) in selected secondary schools in the Schools Division of Northern Samar during School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it sought to determine the profiles of school heads and teachers; assess the extent of transformational leadership and the level of emotional intelligence of school heads; evaluate school governance practices and the level of SBM manifestation; and examine the relationships among leadership, emotional intelligence, governance, and school performance, with the end view of proposing a professional development program.

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design, involving 75 school heads and 340 teachers as respondents. Data were gathered using validated survey instruments and analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation.

Findings revealed that school heads demonstrated high to very high levels of transformational leadership across idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, and possessed very high emotional intelligence, particularly in self-awareness, motivation, empathy, and social skills. School governance practices were highly practiced in decision-making, resource management, and stakeholder involvement, while SBM was very highly manifested in academic achievement, teacher performance, and community engagement. Results further showed that self-awareness was the strongest predictor of

transformational leadership and SBM effectiveness, while demographic variables had limited influence. Leadership experience and contextual demands, however, were found to affect emotional intelligence and SBM implementation.

The study concludes that emotionally intelligent and transformational school leadership is critical to effective governance and sustained SBM performance. Based on the findings, a professional development program focusing on self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and transformational leadership competencies is proposed to strengthen school governance and performance.

Keywords : Transformational Leadership, Emotional Intelligence, School-Based Management, School Governance Practices, and School Performance

I. INTRODUCTION

Leadership is the invisible force that shapes the culture, direction, and success of every school; when it falters, so does the learning environment that millions of children depend on.

Transformational leadership has emerged as a widely recognized framework for strengthening school systems. Characterized by the ability to inspire, empower, and mobilize individuals toward shared goals, transformational leadership promotes innovation, collaboration, and collective commitment within schools (Northouse, 2022). Empirical studies consistently associate transformational leadership with improved teacher performance, stronger organizational commitment, and enhanced student outcomes. Complementing this leadership approach is emotional intelligence (EI), which enables school leaders to understand and manage emotions, build productive relationships, and navigate complex interpersonal demands. Together, transformational leadership and emotional intelligence form an integrated leadership framework that is particularly relevant in contemporary school environments marked by increasing accountability, diversity, and resource constraints.

International studies demonstrate that emotionally intelligent leaders contribute to improved school governance by strengthening decision-making processes, reducing workplace stress, and fostering collaborative cultures. Recent evidence shows that emotional intelligence significantly predicts transformational leadership behaviors such as inspirational motivation and individualized consideration, which are essential for sustaining instructional quality and teacher engagement. In disadvantaged and developing contexts, leadership quality becomes even more critical, as schools must rely on human and relational capacities to compensate for limited material resources (UNESCO, 2023).

In the Philippine context, leadership effectiveness is central to addressing persistent governance challenges, including uneven resource allocation, instructional supervision gaps, and learning disparities (World Bank, 2023). Local studies indicate that school heads with higher emotional intelligence demonstrate stronger participatory leadership, improved teacher morale, and more effective governance practices. Transformational leadership among Filipino school heads has likewise been linked to collaborative school cultures, enhanced teacher performance, and positive learner outcomes.

Despite these strengths, school leadership in the Philippines continues to be constrained by structural and contextual challenges. Limited funding, geographically isolated schools, leadership mobility, and bureaucratic demands place considerable pressure on school heads. Government data indicate that many rural secondary schools experience shortages in facilities and instructional materials, requiring leaders to demonstrate adaptability, emotional resilience, and strategic decision-making beyond technical competence alone (DepEd, 2024).

These challenges are particularly pronounced in the Schools Division of Northern Samar. Many public secondary schools in the province operate under conditions characterized by limited infrastructure, teacher shortages, high student–teacher ratios, and socioeconomic vulnerability. School heads in these contexts are expected to manage instructional leadership, administrative accountability, and community engagement simultaneously, often with minimal institutional support. Such conditions intensify the leadership demands placed on school heads and heighten the importance of transformational leadership and emotional intelligence in sustaining effective school governance.

However, existing local evidence suggests that leadership selection and development in some schools prioritize seniority and administrative compliance over competencies such as emotional regulation, relational leadership, and strategic visioning. As a result, some school heads experience emotional exhaustion and reduced leadership efficacy, limiting their capacity to enact transformational practices. These conditions reveal a significant research gap: the lack of localized, empirical studies examining how transformational leadership and emotional intelligence jointly influence school governance and school performance in geographically isolated and resource-constrained settings such as Northern Samar.

While international and national studies affirm the positive effects of transformational leadership and emotional intelligence on school effectiveness, most research remains concentrated in urban or well-resourced contexts. Moreover, leadership and emotional intelligence are frequently examined as separate constructs, with limited attention to their combined influence on school governance practices and school-based management outcomes. Few studies also consider how the demographic profiles of school heads and teachers interact with leadership behaviors and governance effectiveness. Within the Philippine setting, and particularly in Northern Samar, empirical evidence linking leadership capacities to governance and performance outcomes remains scarce.

Addressing these gaps, the present study examines the combined effects of transformational leadership and emotional intelligence of school heads on school governance and school performance in selected public secondary schools in the Schools Division of Northern Samar during School Year 2025–2026. It also analyzes how the demographic profiles of school heads and teachers relate to leadership behaviors, emotional competencies, governance practices, and school-based management outcomes. The findings of the study serve as the basis for the development of a context-responsive professional development program aimed at strengthening leadership effectiveness in underserved and geographically isolated school communities.

The study is significant to multiple educational stakeholders. For DepEd policymakers, it provides empirical evidence to inform leadership development and capacity-building initiatives, particularly in disadvantaged regions. For school heads, the findings offer a reflective basis for enhancing transformational and emotionally intelligent leadership practices. Teachers benefit from

improved leadership that fosters collaboration, communication, and supportive school climates, while students gain from strengthened governance systems that enhance instructional delivery and learning conditions. Community stakeholders and local government units may also use the findings to strengthen participation and shared accountability in school governance.

The study focuses on selected public secondary schools in the Schools Division of Northern Samar during School Year 2025–2026. It examines transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, school governance practices, and school-based management outcomes as perceived by school heads and teachers. The study excludes private and elementary schools and relies on self-reported data, which may involve subjective bias. The proposed professional development program is derived solely from the study’s findings and is not implemented within the scope of this research.

Taken together, this discussion highlights the critical role of transformational leadership and emotional intelligence in strengthening school governance and improving school performance, particularly in geographically isolated and resource-constrained contexts. By situating leadership effectiveness within the lived realities of public secondary schools in Northern Samar, this study contributes localized and context-sensitive evidence that may inform leadership development initiatives and governance reforms responsive to the needs of underserved educational communities.

Literature Review

Recent foreign theses, dissertations, and journal studies consistently report that transformational leadership (TL) is associated with stronger organizational functioning, innovation, and teacher performance, although effects vary by context and constraints. In a qualitative thesis in the aviation sector, Keskinen (2024) found that TL fosters trust, autonomy, and innovative work behavior by shaping supportive cultures. While the setting is non-school, the mechanism reported—trust-building and autonomy—mirrors education-based findings.

In school-based contexts, Šimunović et al. (2024) reported that Croatian teachers' positive affect increased when principals demonstrated TL, which was linked to higher job performance during remote learning. In China, Liu (2024) found a strong positive relationship between principals' TL and teachers' innovative work behavior in primary schools, reinforcing evidence that TL supports innovation and proactive professional behavior. Similarly, research from North India indicated that TL strengthens teacher self-efficacy and supports productive school functioning (Baba et al., 2021). In Zambia, Augustine and Rebekah (2024) likewise observed that TL contributes to a motivating school environment that enhances teacher job performance and recommended leadership training—an implication relevant to systems with limited formal leadership preparation.

However, not all findings show direct performance payoffs. Neal (2024) emphasized that TL does not always produce direct improvements in student achievement or instructional data use, suggesting that practical effects may be reduced by policy constraints, workload, or limited autonomy. This evidence reinforces that TL effects may be *context-sensitive* rather than uniform across settings (Neal, 2024).

Beyond performance and innovation, recent studies also connect TL to teacher well-being outcomes. Using a large sample of Chinese elementary teachers, Tian et al. (2022) found that TL negatively predicted teacher job burnout and operated indirectly through social-emotional competence and the student–teacher relationship. Their findings suggest that TL may reduce burnout by strengthening teachers' internal competencies and improving classroom relationships.

Additional work indicates that TL is also linked with leaders' diversity management and culturally responsive competencies. In Turkey, Cobanoglu (2021) found moderate positive correlations among teachers' cultural intelligence, principals' diversity management skills, and principals' TL, and reported that teacher cultural intelligence and diversity management predicted principals' TL. These findings imply that leadership effectiveness may intersect with sociocultural competence in diverse settings.

Across international literature, emotional intelligence (EI) appears frequently as a leadership-related factor shaping communication, decision-making, and organizational climate. Baroudi (2022) reported that emotionally intelligent leaders display stronger self-control,

adaptability, and relational capacity that support leadership effectiveness, particularly relevant when organizations transition into digitally mediated work.

Evidence also shows that EI may spread or “cascade” within school systems. A cross-sectional study in Afghanistan involving 395 teachers reported a statistically significant positive correlation between principals’ TL and teachers’ EI, with teacher EI varying by demographic characteristics (gender, education, experience, and school location) (Noori et al., 2024). This strengthens the argument that leader behavior and teacher socio-emotional capacity are linked in measurable ways within secondary school contexts.

EI has also been examined as a predictor of program implementation through leadership practice. In a large U.S. sample of 792 school counselors, Hilts et al. (2022) found that engagement in transformational leadership practices significantly mediated the relationship between counselors’ EI and implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program. This suggests that EI may not operate alone, but may produce organizational effects when enacted through TL behaviors (Hilts et al., 2022).

Other studies assess EI effects alongside principal leadership in predicting teacher work behavior. In Indonesia, Ramlah et al. (2023) found that EI and principal leadership significantly affected teacher work behavior, explaining a substantial portion of variance in teacher work behavior (reported determination $\approx 45\%$). Their findings highlight that both leader attributes and leadership practice jointly relate to professional work behavior in school settings (Ramlah et al., 2023).

In terms of teacher performance, mixed-method research in Botswana concluded that teachers require EI skills to improve classroom performance, instructional attitudes, and support strategies for learners and colleagues (Kgosiemang & Khoza, 2022). This expands EI outcomes beyond leadership to classroom-level professional practice.

EI has also been examined relative to standards and capacity-building. In Abu Dhabi public school leadership contexts, qualitative and quantitative studies linked EI attributes/dimensions with professional leadership performance standards and identified EI areas requiring development

to support school improvement (Hourani et al., 2023; Blaik et al., 2023). These findings position EI development as a practical capacity-building target rather than merely a personal trait.

Studies also connect EI and leadership style to openness toward organizational change. In Malaysia, Mukhtar and Fook (2020) reported that perceived leadership styles and EI were positively linked to teachers' attitudes toward organizational change. Their results suggest that both leadership behavior and emotional competencies matter when institutions implement reforms and policy shifts (Mukhtar & Fook, 2020).

Outside K–12 contexts, EI has been investigated in leadership-role populations. A quantitative correlational dissertation involving graduate students in leadership roles found that emotional/social intelligence competencies related to leadership styles and outcomes such as effectiveness, satisfaction, and extra effort (Ohiku, 2022). While not school-based, it supports the broader argument that EI competencies are associated with leadership outcomes across settings (Ohiku, 2022).

Leadership research during periods of organizational uncertainty reinforces the relevance of emotional intelligence–related competencies. A qualitative study of U.S. school principals highlighted the importance of high emotional intelligence, collaboration, care for others, and sensitivity to school–community context as critical leadership practices when schools face heightened pressure and complex challenges (Hayes & Derrington, 2023). These findings reinforce evidence that socio-emotional competencies become particularly salient when external disruptions intensify leadership demands and require leaders to manage uncertainty, stress, and stakeholder expectations effectively.

Several dissertations broaden the evidence base by examining leadership under resource constraints and demographic conditions. For instance, a predictive dissertation in Louisiana found that school socioeconomic status significantly predicted perceived transformational leadership; teachers in low-SES (Title I) schools perceived higher principal TL than teachers in higher-SES schools (Maxey, 2023). This suggests that TL may become more visible—or more necessary—in disadvantaged contexts where leadership must compensate for resource limitations.

Related dissertation evidence in non-principal leadership frames shows that effective leadership for high-performance cultures may combine relational leadership approaches (e.g., service orientation) with emotional and political intelligence, especially in complex equity-linked contexts (Maldonado French, 2021). Although centered on superintendents and servant leadership, the study highlights how EI-related competencies are leveraged in governance and stakeholder management (Maldonado French, 2021).

Philippine theses similarly show positive associations among TL, EI, governance, and teacher outcomes. Abdullah (2020) found that secondary principals with higher EI demonstrated stronger transformational leadership, which was linked to improved school governance and student outcomes in Region XII. Francisco (2019) reported that principal TL significantly influences teacher self-efficacy, supporting the view that leadership behaviors shape teacher confidence and motivation within Philippine schooling structures. Furthermore, Rodriguez (2022) found a weak but statistically significant relationship between principals' EI and school climate, implying that EI matters but may work alongside other governance determinants (e.g., policy pressures and community expectations).

Local findings also suggest TL may be especially salient in contexts marked by socio-economic disadvantage. Maxey (2023) (international dissertation but relevant by mechanism) aligns with Philippine observations that disadvantaged contexts may intensify leadership demands; similarly, earlier Manila-based evidence (study of public and private secondary principals) reported no significant differences in TL behavior assessments between school types and between principal self-assessments and teacher assessments, emphasizing the need for leadership training programs that strengthen leadership behaviors across contexts (Transformational leadership behavior among public and private secondary school principals in Manila (2022)).

Across foreign and local literature, TL is frequently associated with higher teacher motivation, innovative behavior, work behavior, and improved organizational climate (Augustine & Rebekah, 2024; Liu, 2024; Ramlah et al., 2023; Šimunović et al., 2024), and in some studies, reduced burnout through socio-emotional pathways (Tian et al., 2022). EI likewise appears consistently linked to leadership effectiveness, work behavior, crisis leadership competence, and school improvement standards (Baroudi, 2022; Hayes & Derrington, 2023; Hourani et al., 2023;

Kgosiemang & Khoza, 2022). Importantly, evidence suggests EI may shape outcomes indirectly through TL practices (Hilts et al., 2022) and that TL–outcome relationships may weaken under policy, workload, or structural constraints (Neal, 2024).

The remaining gap—especially relevant in a resource-constrained Philippine division such as Northern Samar—is the need to clarify how TL and EI jointly relate to governance outcomes under centralized systems where autonomy, workload, and resource scarcity can reduce leadership impact. This supports the rationale for examining TL and EI together in the Philippine public-school governance context, where leadership must operate within strong bureaucratic constraints while still sustaining teacher engagement and institutional functioning.

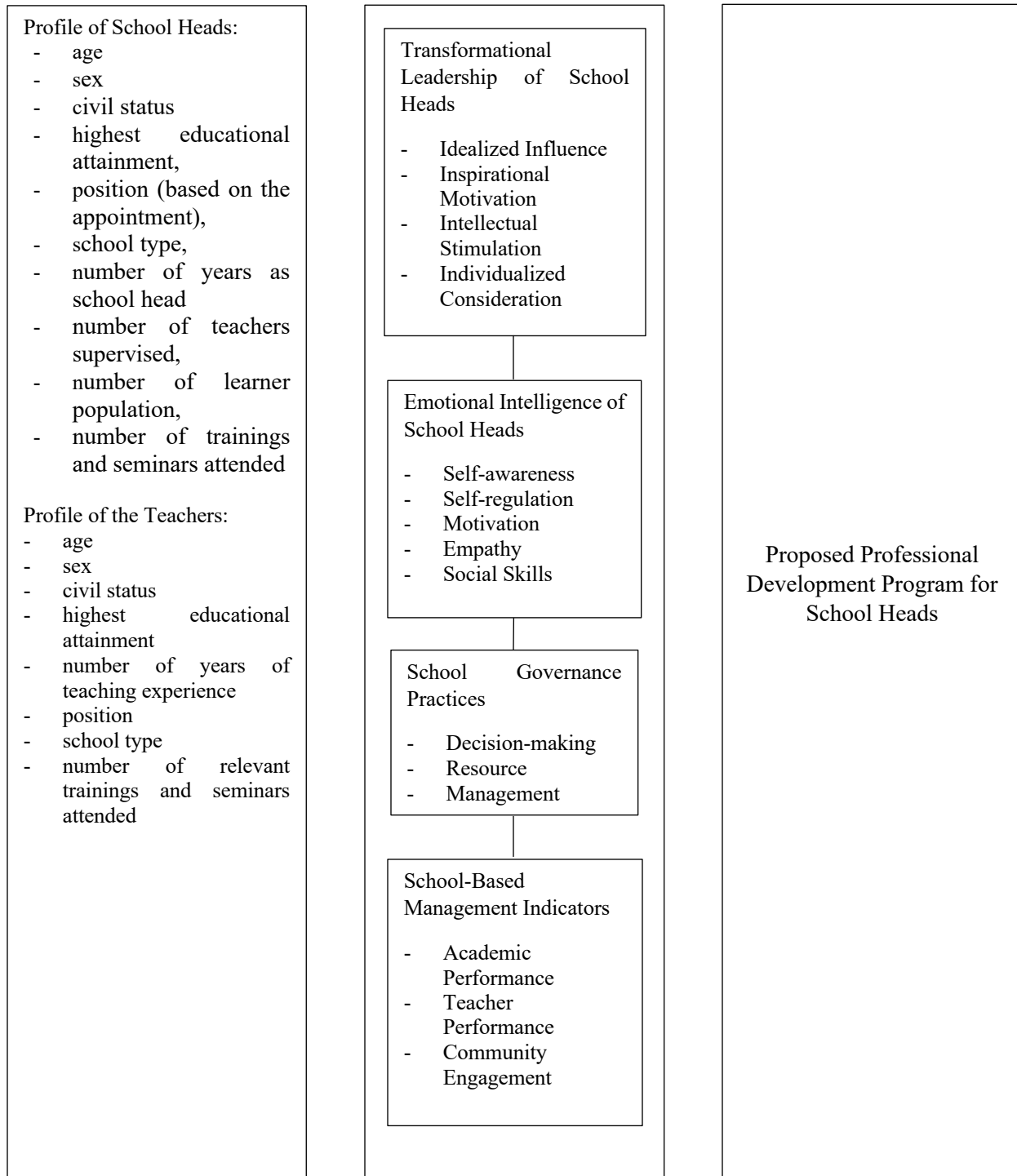


FIGURE 1
A SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM OF THE STUDY “TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF SCHOOL HEADS: EFFECTS ON GOVERNANCE AND PERFORMANCE

II. METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design, which allowed the researcher to systematically describe existing conditions and examine the relationships among transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, school governance, and school performance in selected secondary schools in the DepEd Schools Division of Northern Samar for SY 2025–2026. According to Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2023), a correlational design would be appropriate when the intent is to determine the degree to which variables are related without manipulating them, making it suitable for addressing the study’s central research problem.

This study employed a descriptive–correlational research design, which is appropriate for examining existing conditions and determining the magnitude and direction of relationships among variables without manipulating them. This design was selected because the primary purpose of the study was to assess, describe, and establish relationships among transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, school governance practices, and school-based management outcomes in selected secondary schools in the Schools Division of Northern Samar during School Year 2025–2026.

The descriptive component of the design was utilized to determine the profile of the school heads and teachers, as well as to describe the extent of transformational leadership, the level of emotional intelligence, the school governance practices, and the level of manifestation of school-based management as perceived by the respondents. This component directly addressed Research Problems 1 to 5, which required an objective presentation of existing leadership and governance conditions in the schools under study.

The correlational component of the design was employed to examine the significant relationships among variables specified in the research problem. This design component was used to determine whether the profiles of the school heads and teachers are significantly related to transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, school governance practices, and school-based management outcomes. It was also used to establish the relationships among transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, governance practices, and school-based management indicators, thereby addressing Research Problems 6 to 10.

By integrating both descriptive and correlational approaches, the research design enabled a comprehensive analysis of leadership behaviors and governance outcomes within their natural school context. This approach ensured that conclusions were grounded in empirical evidence while remaining aligned with the non-experimental nature of the study. The findings generated through this design served as the basis for proposing a professional development program intended to strengthen transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, and governance practices among school heads.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

These are the results of the study on the effects of transformational leadership and emotional intelligence of school heads on school governance practices and school performance through School-Based Management (SBM) in selected secondary schools in the Schools Division of Northern Samar during School Year 2025–2026.

School heads were mostly female, middle-aged, and held at least master's units. Most served as Head Teachers in small to medium-sized schools and had limited years of experience as school heads. Teachers were generally early- to mid-career, balanced by sex, mostly married, and held Teacher I–III positions, with many pursuing or having completed graduate studies. Participation in training and seminars was limited for both groups.

Both school heads and teachers rated transformational leadership as high to very high across idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. School heads consistently gave higher ratings than teachers, though teachers also recognized strong supportive and people-centered leadership behaviors.

School heads demonstrated very high emotional intelligence. All domains—self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills—were rated high, with self-regulation obtaining comparatively lower but still high ratings.

School governance practices were rated highly in decision-making, resource management, and stakeholder involvement. Both groups perceived governance systems as transparent, participatory, and functional.

The level of SBM manifestation was rated very high in terms of academic achievement, teacher performance, and community engagement, indicating that SBM was well implemented and contributed positively to school performance.

Among school heads, age and position showed significant relationships with selected dimensions of transformational leadership. For teachers, profile variables showed generally weak or no significant relationships with perceived transformational leadership.

Most profile variables of school heads were not significantly related to emotional intelligence. However, the number of teachers supervised showed significant negative relationships with several emotional intelligence domains.

The profile of school heads was not significantly related to school governance practices. Among teachers, selected profile variables showed weak but significant relationships with certain governance dimensions.

For school heads, age, school type, and years of experience were significantly related to SBM manifestation. Among teachers, profile variables showed minimal influence on SBM, with a weak relationship observed for years of teaching experience.

Significant positive relationships were found among self-awareness, transformational leadership, and SBM. Self-awareness emerged as the strongest predictor across transformational leadership dimensions, with overall emotional intelligence also showing strong associations with effective SBM implementation.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, conclusions were drawn to synthesize the key results and highlight their implications for school leadership, governance, and School-Based Management in the selected secondary schools of the Schools Division of Northern Samar.

1. The school heads and teachers are generally qualified and capable; however, uneven access to continuous professional development, particularly among teachers, suggests the need for more inclusive and sustained capacity-building opportunities.
2. School heads consistently demonstrate strong transformational leadership, showing ethical conduct, inspiration, innovation, and genuine concern for teachers and stakeholders.
3. The close alignment between school heads' and teachers' perceptions of leadership indicates shared recognition of effective leadership practices, though greater visibility of visionary and innovation-oriented initiatives may further strengthen trust and engagement.
4. School heads possess very high emotional intelligence, especially in self-awareness, motivation, empathy, and social skills, enabling them to manage relationships and foster positive school climates.
5. School governance practices are firmly established, with schools demonstrating transparency, participatory decision-making, sound resource management, and active stakeholder involvement.
6. School-Based Management is highly functional and contributes meaningfully to academic performance, teacher effectiveness, and community partnership, confirming its role as a driver of school improvement rather than mere compliance.
7. Transformational leadership is shaped more by leadership maturity and role demands than by basic demographic factors, emphasizing the importance of experience and responsibility in leadership effectiveness.
8. Emotional intelligence is influenced by contextual pressures, particularly supervisory workload, highlighting the need to balance administrative demands to sustain emotionally responsive leadership.
9. Governance effectiveness is not dependent on the demographic profile of school heads; however, teachers' experience and professional standing influence their expectations for participatory governance.

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10. Self-awareness stands out as the key implication of the study, serving as the critical foundation that links emotional intelligence, transformational leadership, and effective School-Based Management. Strengthening self-awareness among school heads can enhance leadership practices, improve governance processes, and sustain high levels of SBM implementation.

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