



**LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PRINCIPALS IN MANAGING TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION
AND INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT IN ALBAY**

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ABSTRACT

The rapid advancement of digital technology has redefined the landscape of educational leadership on a global scale. In the current decade, school heads are no longer merely administrative overseers; they have been thrust into the role of "digital architects" who must construct and maintain an ecosystem conducive to 21st-century learning. This qualitative study explored the digital leadership practices of 12 elementary SHs in the Schools Division of Albay for 2025. Using Braun and Clarke's Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA), the research examined technology management, instructional support, and challenges in resources, digital readiness, and policy implementation. The study analyzed adaptive strategies and developed a localized digital leadership framework to enhance technology-based instruction. Results revealed that School Heads in Albay demonstrate adaptive, context-sensitive leadership by transforming systemic barriers into opportunities for instructional growth. In managing technology, they navigate resource scarcity and delayed funding through strategic prioritization and transparent utilization. They address diverse digital literacy levels, especially among senior educators, by implementing gradual, inclusive capacity-building such as LAC

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sessions and peer mentoring. In terms of instructional support, leaders shift from traditional oversight to developmental supervision, utilizing pre- and post-conference dialogues to reduce teacher anxiety and provide constructive feedback. They mitigate challenges like heavy workloads and policy inflexibility through empathy, motivational support, and localized implementation of national mandates. Collaborative ecosystems allow school heads to strengthen teacher ICT skills and ensure meaningful technology use. This approach forms a localized digital leadership framework that sustains professional growth and improves learning outcomes despite resource and infrastructure gaps.

Keywords: *leadership practices; technology management; instructional support; resource management; digital readiness; instructional supervision; teacher engagement; and policy implementation; adaptive strategies; localized framework*

INTRODUCTION

Effective leadership transcends the simple execution of administrative functions; it represents a sophisticated interpersonal dynamic designed to bridge the gap between current organizational states and idealized future objectives. According to the framework established by Kouzes and Posner (2023), this process is optimized when leaders demonstrate authentic alignment between their values and actions, thereby transforming organizational goals from top-down mandates into a collective sense of purpose. By prioritizing structural and psychological empowerment over traditional hierarchical control, leaders cultivate an

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environment of psychological safety, a critical prerequisite for iterative learning and systemic innovation.

The integration of effective leadership principles with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4): Quality Education underscores a critical shift from administrative oversight to transformative governance. The realization of inclusive and equitable learning environments is fundamentally contingent upon a leadership paradigm that transcends traditional management to embrace pedagogical stewardship. Within this context, the alignment of a leader's ethical framework with the mission of lifelong learning facilitates the transition of educational institutions from rigid, bureaucratic hierarchies into dynamic communities of practice. By prioritizing the holistic development of the learner over standardized metrics, leaders operationalize the "idealized future objectives" of SDG 4, fostering an ecosystem where academic rigor and human flourishing are mutually reinforced (United Nations, 2025)

The Department of Education (DepEd) emphasizes the importance of integrating technology in schools to enhance teaching and learning. Through DepEd Order No. 16, s. 2023, the Department strengthened the implementation of the DepEd Computerization Program (DCP), which provides public schools with ICT equipment and resources to support classroom instruction and school management. The policy also highlights the role of school leaders in ensuring that these technologies are properly utilized to improve educational outcomes (Department of Education, 2023).

Similarly, DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017, which adopted the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), encourages teachers to effectively use technology in their

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instructional practices. In this regard, school principals are expected to provide instructional leadership, guidance, and professional support to teachers in integrating technology to improve the quality of teaching and learning (Department of Education, 2017).

According to Imron et al. (2025), the rapid advancement of digital technology has redefined the landscape of educational leadership on a global scale. In the current decade, school heads are no longer merely administrative overseers; they have been thrust into the role of "digital architects" who must construct and maintain an ecosystem conducive to 21st-century learning. School heads are expected to move beyond routine administrative tasks and serve as digital leaders who effectively manage technology, support teachers' professional growth, and promote innovative instructional practices.

In addition, Lasrin et al. (2025) emphasize that transformational leadership and technological literacy are key drivers of teacher innovativeness, influencing how schools adapt to emerging digital tools and systems. This evolution is driven by the realization that technology alone does not improve learning outcomes; rather, it is the leadership behind the technology that determines its efficacy. As classrooms become increasingly digital, leadership has evolved into a transformative role that requires balancing pedagogical vision with technological management. Recent global trends suggest that the "Technological-Pedagogical-Leadership" (TPL) framework is becoming the new standard for school administration.

Further, Volante et al. (2025) cited that without a shared vision, technology adoption remains fragmented, with "islands of innovation" existing in a sea of traditional teaching. The

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digital age demands a "holistic digital leadership" approach that integrates technical infrastructure with human capital development. In the Philippine context, the Department of Education (DepEd) has advanced several initiatives under the Digital Rise Program and the MATATAG Agenda to promote digital transformation in schools. These policies aim to modernize the Filipino classroom, equipping students with 21st-century skills. However, the implementation of these high-level policies falls squarely on the shoulders of school heads, who often find themselves caught between ambitious national goals and localized resource constraints.

The Philippine educational landscape is unique due to its archipelagic geography and socio-economic diversity. Amurao (2024) found that transformational leadership is instrumental in promoting innovation and collaboration, but contextual barriers often hinder consistent implementation across schools. The tension between "Instructional Leadership" (focusing on teaching) and "Technology Management" (focusing on tools) creates a paradox for school heads. Can a leader provide effective instructional support if they themselves are not digitally proficient? This question lies at the heart of this research.

On the other hand, Brown et al. (2024) stated that there is a significant gap in understanding the emotional and cognitive labor involved in being a digital leader in a developing nation. By focusing on the perspectives of school heads, this study seeks to provide a nuanced, "ground-level" view of the digital transformation process. Given these realities, this study explores the lived experiences of school heads as they navigate technology management and instructional support in the digital age. By drawing on their perspectives,

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the study seeks to contribute to the understanding of how educational leadership adapts within evolving digital ecosystems.

Transformational or digital leadership positively influences teachers' adoption of technology, instructional innovation, and willingness to integrate digital tools in teaching. Schmitz (2023) found transformational leadership behaviors (vision, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration) encourage teachers to use technology more meaningfully. AlAjmi et al. (2022) reported that principals' digital leadership during the pandemic increased teachers' technology integration. Saeed & Kang (2024) also emphasize a measurable positive impact of digital leadership on teachers' instructional performance and adoption of remote/hybrid practices.

In addition, leadership practices that prioritize continuous professional learning, mentoring, and collaborative professional communities are linked to stronger teacher competence in digital pedagogy. Olaniyan and Uzorka (2024) documented leadership's role in facilitating faculty development for technology integration. Raptis (2024) and Reimer (2024) stress that policy-aligned leadership and planning cultivate equitable, sustained digital practices and professional learning communities.

Further, multiple studies highlight infrastructure gaps, inequitable access, and contextual constraints (funding, policy inconsistency, digital divide) that limit how leadership practices translate into outcomes. Research on digital leadership implementation (Muhammadiyah case, literature reviews) and studies by Obied (2025) show that even strong leadership is constrained by infrastructure and system-level inequities.

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Furthermore, Antonopoulou (2025) and Okunlola (2025) point to the value of context-sensitive studies that examine digital leadership competencies and teacher-level digital leadership. Several reviews call for deeper qualitative work to unpack lived experiences and mechanisms how modeling, mentoring, and sociocultural processes transmit leadership practices. These works suggest a gap in phenomenological descriptions of how school leaders and teacher-leaders like Master Teachers enact digital leadership in their everyday practice. the case studies of tech-savvy principals and pandemic responses indicate leaders adopted crisis-driven innovations that reveal new competencies needed for the digital age (Alzahrani, 2022; Reimer, 2024). These studies show both the potential of digital leadership and the fragility of gains without sustainable planning.

In view of this, while existing transformational and digital leadership studies often highlight positive outcomes, few connect these leadership behaviors to social learning processes, especially in the Philippine context. Furthermore, contextualized frameworks for sustainable digital leadership remain scarce. Most studies focus on leadership effects or competencies but do not propose empirically grounded frameworks that address local challenges, including infrastructure limitations, equity issues, and policy constraints. Additionally, sustainability and post-crisis transitions in digital leadership are under-theorized. Thus, the present study bridges these gaps by providing in-depth phenomenological evidence on how school heads experience, model, and sustain digital leadership, integrating transformational, social learning, and sociocultural perspectives, and by developing a practical, context-sensitive framework for effective technology management and instructional support.

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This study contributes to a deeper understanding of educational leadership in the digital age by highlighting how school heads manage and integrate technology into everyday school operations, particularly in resource-constrained contexts. It brings forward their lived experiences, showing how they translate digital policies into meaningful instructional support for teachers and students despite challenges such as limited infrastructure, equity gaps, and policy constraints. By examining how technology management strategies influence teacher performance and student learning, the study identifies practical approaches that build teacher confidence, strengthen digital skills, and encourage classroom innovation. It also proposes a digital leadership framework that bridges theory and practice, offering a roadmap for sustaining innovation, enhancing instructional support, and guiding future leadership development and policy initiatives.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative research design to explore the lived experiences of school heads in managing and integrating digital technologies in their schools. Through in-depth, semi-structured interviews, the researcher gathered personal insights on leadership practices, challenges encountered, and adaptive strategies in the digital age. The interview guide, composed of main, follow-up, and probing questions, was validated by a research adviser to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study's objectives. Twelve school heads from small elementary schools in the Division of Albay were purposively selected based on their experience, involvement in digital initiatives, and willingness to participate. Data collection involved face-to-face or online interviews lasting 20–30 minutes, supported by audio

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recordings and field notes to capture both verbal and non-verbal responses. Ethical considerations, including informed consent and confidentiality, were strictly observed. The study site provided a diverse context, reflecting varying levels of resources and digital readiness, particularly in small schools where leaders often adopt flexible and hands-on approaches. Data were analyzed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis following Braun and Clarke's six-phase process, allowing the researcher to identify patterns and themes that describe the realities of digital leadership. This approach enabled a deeper understanding of how school heads navigate and respond to the demands of technology integration.

Research Design

A phenomenological research design was employed in this study to deeply explore and understand the lived experiences of school heads in managing and integrating digital technologies within their schools. Using in-depth interviews as the primary data collection method, the study captured participants' personal insights, reflections, and meanings attached to their leadership practices in the digital age. This design is the most appropriate because the study seeks to understand *how* school heads experience and interpret digital leadership in real-world contexts, rather than to measure variables or test relationships. Phenomenology allows the researcher to examine the essence of shared experiences, uncover common themes, and describe the realities faced by school heads from their own perspectives.

As a qualitative approach, this method emphasizes rich, detailed descriptions of human experiences and social phenomena. It enables a deeper exploration of meanings, behaviors, and contextual factors that shape leadership practices, insights that could not be fully captured

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through quantitative methods. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative research involves “an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world,” emphasizing how individuals make sense of their experiences and the meanings they attribute to them. In this approach, data are typically collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis, allowing the researcher to develop deep insights into participants’ perspectives and the complexity of social realities (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Participants of the Study

In this study, the informants comprised of 12 school heads coded as SH-1, SH-2, SH-3, SH-4, SH-5, SH-6, SH-7, SH-8, SH-9, SH-10, SH-11, SH-12 from selected small elementary schools in the Division of Albay. The following were the schools involved with their respective number codes: SH-1: Maipon ES- Guinobatan East District; SH-2: Magallang ES-Libon East District; SH-3: Cepres ES-Polangui North District; SH-4: De la Paz ES-Daraga South District; SH-5: Mariawa ES-Legazpi District 2; SH-6: Burabod ES-Malinao District; SH-7: Calayucay ES-Sto. Domingo District; SH-8: Bolo ES-Tiwi, District; SH-9: Inang Maharang ES- Manito District; SH-10: San Agustin ES- Oas South District; SH-11: Banag ES-Daraga North District; and SH-12: Basud ES- Bacacay East District .

The selection of participants was based on the following criteria: Currently employed as a school head in a small elementary school within the Division of Albay; has at least five (5) years of experience in their current position; has been actively involved in digital or technology-based teaching and learning programs; and willing to participate and share their experiences through interviews. The inclusion of participants is essential to obtain a

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comprehensive understanding of digital leadership practices, the challenges encountered; and the adaptive strategies. The school heads served as key informants because they are directly responsible for managing instructional programs, overseeing technology integration, and making leadership decisions that affect digital transformation within their respective schools. Their shared stories offered more than just data; they provided a window into the messy, daily reality of digital leadership

Research Instrument

Guide questions utilized during individual interviews with school heads to ensure independent and unbiased responses. The research instrument is consisting of three main questions. Each has a follow up and probe question. Number 1 question focuses on the leadership practices of school heads in managing and integrating digital technologies to enhance teaching and learning; followed by the challenges encountered by the school leaders; and number 3 examines the adaptive strategies of SHs in promoting effective technology-based instruction. The guide questions were composed of main questions follow-up, and deep-probing questions:

Validation of the Research Instrument

To ensure the quality of the interview guide, the research adviser carefully reviewed the set of guide questions before the data collection began. The adviser examined whether each question was clear, relevant, and aligned with the objectives of the study. With expertise in educational research, the adviser assessed if the questions would effectively encourage

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school heads to share their genuine experiences in managing and integrating digital technologies.

The adviser also checked the wording, structure, and sequence of the questions to ensure they were easy to understand, unbiased, and capable of generating in-depth responses. Based on the feedback provided, necessary revisions were made, including clarifying ambiguous terms and refining questions to promote richer discussion. This validation process strengthened the credibility and content validity of the instrument, ensuring that it was well-suited to capture the lived experiences of the participants.

Data Gathering Procedure

Before starting the data collection, the researcher first secured an endorsement letter from the Schools Division Superintendent and obtained approval from the participating school heads. After receiving permission, the researcher personally reached out to the selected participants to explain the purpose of the study, answer any questions, and obtain their informed consent. Interview schedules were then arranged based on the availability and convenience of each school head to ensure that their responsibilities were not disrupted.

Data were gathered through a face to face one-on-one semi-structured interviews using guide questions validated by the research adviser. While the questions provided direction, the format allowed the conversations to flow naturally and gave participants the opportunity to freely share their experiences. Each interview lasted about 20–30 minutes and was conducted either in a quiet and comfortable space within the school or through an online meeting platform, depending on what the participant preferred.

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With their permission, the interviews were audio-recorded to ensure that their responses were captured accurately. The researcher also took field notes to record important observations such as tone, facial expressions, and other non-verbal cues that added depth to the data. Throughout the process, participants were reminded that their participation was voluntary, that they could withdraw at any time, and that their responses would remain confidential. All information collected was handled with care and used strictly for the purpose of the study.

Data Analysis Plan

Thematic analysis is a qualitative method used to identify, analyze, and interpret patterns or themes within qualitative data. It employed Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) of Braun and Clarke. It provides a systematic yet flexible approach to organizing data and generating insights that capture participants' lived experiences, perspectives, and meanings. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis involves six phases: familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. In this process, the researcher immerses themselves in the data, such as interview transcripts or focus group discussions, to uncover recurring ideas or issues. These recurring ideas are then grouped into themes, which represent key patterns relevant to the research questions. Thematic analysis does not rely on a specific theoretical framework, making it suitable for various qualitative approaches such as phenomenology, case study, or grounded theory (Nowell et al., 2017).

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussions in this section are based on the school heads narratives from the small schools of Albay analyzed thematically. It focused on the leadership practices of school heads, challenges encountered, adaptive strategies, and localized digital leadership framework.

1. Leadership practices of School Heads (SH)

1.a. Technology Management

Technology management in schools involves more than just providing devices and internet access; it is about thoughtfully planning, coordinating, and overseeing digital tools and resources so they meaningfully support teaching, learning, and school operations. Effective technology management requires school leaders to be strategic, setting clear goals, allocating resources wisely, and building teachers' digital skills to promote confident and purposeful use of technology in instruction (Nicolas & Santos, 2024). In these roles, school heads guide how digital initiatives are integrated into everyday classroom practices, help create a supportive environment for teachers, and respond to challenges such as infrastructure gaps or varying levels of digital competence (Sarimin et al., 2025; Zeng et al., 2025). Thus, successful technology management is not just technical maintenance; it is a leadership function that aligns digital investments with instructional goals and enhances the overall learning experience.

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1.b. Instructional Support

The leadership practices of School Heads (SH) in the area of instructional support highlight three (3) central themes: mentoring, coaching, and reflective practice. These themes highlight the proactive role of school leaders in strengthening teaching quality and fostering professional growth among teachers. Through mentoring, School Heads provide guidance, share expertise, and support teachers, particularly those who are new or facing challenges, in navigating instructional demands. Coaching, on the other hand, involves collaborative goal-setting, classroom observation, constructive feedback, and continuous improvement to enhance pedagogical effectiveness. Reflective practice further complements these efforts by encouraging teachers to critically examine their teaching strategies, assess learner outcomes, and identify areas for refinement. Together, these leadership practices promote a culture of continuous learning, professional development, and improved student achievement within the school community. Dequillo (2022) found that the consistent conduct of Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions significantly enhances teacher efficacy. The study supports SH-1's claim, noting that when school heads take an active role in planning and monitoring these sessions, teachers feel more supported and are more likely to adopt innovative teaching strategies in the classroom. In addition, Munda and Refugio (2023) explored the impact of instructional supervision on teacher performance in Mindanao. Their research aligns with SH-10's focus on feedback, concluding that "clinical supervision" which involves pre-observation, observation, and post-observation conferences, is the most effective way to improve pedagogical skills. They argued that constructive feedback from school heads serves as a catalyst for professional

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reflection. While Bautista (2024), in a more recent study on adaptive leadership in Philippine public schools, emphasized that collaborative professional development (CPD) is the backbone of school improvement. The study highlights that school heads who engage in "shared leadership" (as seen in SH-10's collaborative planning) see a marked increase in teacher retention and morale, as educators feel their professional growth is a shared priority with their administration.

2. Challenges Encountered of the School Heads

2.a. Resource Management

The themes identified include financial constraints, facility, and external pressures regarding the challenges in resource management, followed by the specific verbatims from the School Heads (SH). Resource management in schools is inherently challenging due to limited funding, procedural delays, insufficient materials and facilities, equitable distribution demands, and human resource issues. School leaders may adopt strategic planning, prioritize urgent needs, maintain transparency in financial processes, and work collaboratively with stakeholders to optimize available resources. These practices not only address immediate challenges but also foster trust, fairness, and sustainable instructional support, supporting broader educational goals. Mutch (2021) explores the role of schools as "community hubs" during disasters, specifically highlighting how "natural disasters" (as cited by SH-3) force school leaders to pivot from curriculum to welfare. The study finds that without pre-allocated emergency resources, the "added pressure" (noted by SH-4) often leads to administrative burnout and long-term delays in school improvements. Netolicky (2020) investigated school

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leadership during the global health crisis and unexpected policy shifts. The findings resonate with SH-10's concern regarding "achievement while ensuring equitable support," concluding that rapid, unplanned changes in 2technology and health protocols exposed deep-seated resource inequities that required "heroic" rather than "systemic" leadership responses. Triyono, (2025) analyzed the management of "unforeseen maintenance and infrastructure crises" in public schools. The study supports SH-8's example of equipment failure, arguing that the lack of "maintenance contingency budgets" in schools turns minor technical issues into major disruptions of the teaching schedule, reinforcing the "unplanned urgent needs" highlighted by SH-12.

2.b. Digital Readiness

The thematic analysis of the data identifies challenges in digital readiness as a multifaceted obstacle for school administrators, requiring a transition from traditional pedagogical methods to technology-integrated environments. Three (3) themes were identified that include limited resources and infrastructure, teacher competence and resistance to change, and managing digital transformation and leadership approach. Smock, (2024) explored the "Digital Leadership Crisis" in schools, finding that the shift to blended learning (as noted by SH-5 and SH-7) placed an unprecedented burden on principals to act as technical support, pedagogical coaches, and crisis managers simultaneously. Their research validates the "frustration" and "delays" mentioned by SH-9. Karakose et al. (2021) investigated the "Digital Leadership Gap," highlighting that many school leaders felt they had to "force" technology adoption (echoing SH-10). The study concludes that "top-down" pressure without

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adequate "bottom-up" infrastructure (like the "poor connectivity" cited by SH-12) creates a toxic work environment and reduces the long-term effectiveness of digital tools. Padolina-Alcantara (2023) specifically examined the Philippine context of school leadership during the pandemic. Their findings support the strategies of SH-8 and SH-12, noting that "resourceful leadership," finding alternative solutions when devices and internet are limited, was the single most important factor in maintaining "learning continuity," even if it came at a high personal cost to the school heads.

2.c. Instructional Supervision

The thematic analysis identifies challenges in instructional supervision as a complex area of school leadership where administrative oversight meets the psychological and professional vulnerabilities of the teaching staff. This main theme highlights that effective instructional supervision is often hindered by a combination of challenges in instructional leadership and teacher supervision and support. Gumus et al. (2021) conducted a large-scale analysis of instructional leadership challenges, finding that "administrative overload" (as cited by SH-3 and SH-10) is the single greatest predictor of low-quality feedback. Their research confirms that when principals are "time-poor," supervision becomes a perfunctory "box-ticking" exercise rather than a developmental tool. Liu & Hallinger (2022) cited finding that "anxiety" (echoing SH-4 and SH-12) is often rooted in a lack of trust in the supervisory process. The study supports SH-11's findings, noting that veteran teachers often perceive supervision as a threat to their professional status rather than an opportunity for lifelong learning. On the other hand, Warsi, L. Q., and Rani, (2026) explored the "digital contingency gap" in modern

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classrooms. This study validates the concerns of SH-2, arguing that "overdependence on technology" without analog backup plans leads to significant learning loss during technical failures. The research suggests that "supervisory frameworks" must now include "resilience planning" as a key performance indicator for teachers.

2.d. Teacher Engagement

Challenges in teacher engagement arose from heavy workloads and limited time, shortages of resources, and barriers related to teacher motivation and attitudes. School heads observed that heavy administrative duties and overlapping responsibilities left teachers with little opportunity to participate actively in professional development or innovative teaching practices. Skaalvik & Skaalvik (2024) explored the impact of "Family-Work Conflict" on teacher engagement. Their research supports SH-2's findings, showing that financial stress and personal emergencies are "distractor variables" that reduce a teacher's "innovative work behavior" by nearly 35%, making them less likely to participate in school-wide digital initiatives. In addition, Kapur (2023) analyzed the "resistance to change in aging workforces" within educational settings. The study echoes SH-1 and SH-8, arguing that "hesitation" is often a mask for "technological anxiety." The research suggests that "recognition and involvement" (as proposed by SH-1) are the only effective "antidotes" to the resistance found in teachers who feel the modern classroom has outpaced their initial training.

2.e. Policy Implementation

The thematic analysis identifies *difficulties in policy implementation* as a critical junction where national or regional mandates meet the practical realities of the local school

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environment. This main theme suggests that successful implementation is not automatic; rather, it is frequently hampered by a misalignment between the requirements of the policy and the actual capacity of the school to execute them. The challenges highlighted include: *resistance to change, resource and infrastructure constraints, and time constraints, policy complexity, and administrative burden.* These challenges strengthen leaders' commitment to effective and responsible governance, ensuring that both teachers and learners benefit from consistent and contextualized policy practices. It can be recommended that regular workshops to clarify policy expectations and provide practical support for classroom adaptation be conducted.

Pollock et al. (2023) conducted an extensive study on "principals' work intensification," finding that the proliferation of "additional reporting requirements" (as noted by SH-4) and administrative tasks has drastically reduced the time leaders spend on instructional supervision. The study confirms that "overlapping responsibilities" (SH-12) lead to higher stress and lower job satisfaction. Mchunu et al (2022) explored the "Policy-to-Practice Gap," emphasizing that "broad policies" (cited by SH-8) often lack the necessary specificity for diverse school contexts. Their research suggests that when school heads are forced to "contextualize" unclear mandates (SH-3), it creates an "implementation lag" that can frustrate both staff and parents. In addition, Jedaman et al. (2023) recently validates the concerns of SH-1 and SH-7. The research concludes that when memos are issued "agad-agad" (immediately) without transition periods, it leads to "compliance-only" leadership, where the goal is to meet the deadline rather than achieve the actual intended educational outcome.

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3. Adaptive strategies of SHs in promoting effective technology-based instruction

The adaptive strategies employed by school heads (SHs) in promoting effective technology-based instruction evolved over time through their accumulated experiences. To better understand how these strategies were shaped, the researcher examined the lived experiences of school heads, focusing on how they responded to challenges, learned from practice, and refined their approaches to technology integration in teaching and learning. Three themes of adaptive strategies emerged from the information shared by the participants include *capacity building*, *context-responsive integration*, and *flexible technology leadership*. Pollock et al. (2023) validate SH-8's "rotational use" strategy, concluding that "collaborative access models" (sharing a few devices among many) can still achieve significant learning gains if the teacher is trained in group-based digital activities, proving that a 1:1 ratio is not the only path to success. Jedaman, et al. (2023) investigated the "shift to personalized professional learning." Their research supports the findings of SH-10 and SH-12, arguing that "generic, top-down workshops" are largely ineffective compared to "context-specific, hands-on mentoring" that adjusts to the school's unique limitations and the teachers' existing skill levels. Based on the synthesis of challenges and proactive strategies identified by SH-1 to SH-12, it is recommended that future initiatives focus on balancing policy expectations with the realities of school life. By fostering adaptive leadership, emphasizing collaboration, simplifying tools, and providing continuous support, schools can create an environment where both teachers and students thrive despite resource limitations.

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4. Localized digital leadership framework to improve instructions

Based on the findings, a Localized Digital Leadership Framework is proposed to enhance instructional practices by responding to the specific needs, contexts, and realities of individual schools. The framework emphasizes that effective digital leadership is not a one-size-fits-all approach but a context-sensitive process shaped by teacher readiness, resource availability, and instructional goals. At its core, the framework positions the school head as an instructional leader who strategically aligns technology integration with curriculum standards and learning objectives to ensure purposeful and meaningful use of digital tools.

The framework highlights capacity building and differentiated support as foundational elements, recognizing the varied levels of teachers' ICT competence and readiness. Through targeted training, peer mentoring, and hands-on assistance, school heads address both skill gaps and resistance to technology adoption. These strategies foster teacher confidence, gradually shifting attitudes from reluctance to acceptance and active engagement. Motivation, encouragement, and recognition are embedded as key leadership practices to create a supportive environment that values innovation while respecting teachers' experience and pacing.

Additionally, the framework integrates monitoring, supervision, and feedback as continuous processes that sustain instructional improvement. School heads regularly observe technology use, provide RPMS-aligned feedback, and guide reflective practice to ensure that digital tools enhance, rather than hinder, teaching and learning. Resource optimization is emphasized, encouraging leaders to creatively maximize available digital and physical

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resources within local constraints. The framework also encourages collaborative decision-making, ensuring that teachers' voices are included in planning and implementing digital initiatives, which strengthens buy-in and shared ownership. By fostering a culture of continuous learning and adaptation, the framework positions schools to respond proactively to emerging challenges in education technology. Overall, the Localized Digital Leadership Framework emphasizes that improving instruction through technology requires adaptive, reflective, and responsive leadership. By grounding digital leadership practices in the lived experiences of school heads, the framework supports meaningful, sustainable, and contextually relevant instructional improvement.

The operational cycle begins with Capacity Building and Differentiated Support, which emphasizes that professional development must be personalized. Rather than implementing blanket training, leaders are encouraged to utilize peer mentoring and hands-on assistance to meet teachers at their specific skill levels. This flows naturally into Monitoring, Supervision, and Feedback, where the focus shifts from the mere presence of technology to its pedagogical impact. By observing tech use and providing feedback aligned with the Results-based Performance Management System (RPMS), the framework ensures that digital tools are integrated into the professional inherent material of the school rather than treated as optional add-ons.

Sustainability within the framework is addressed through Resource Optimization and Motivation & Encouragement. Recognizing that local contexts often involve infrastructure gaps, the model advocates for the creative and maximized use of existing resources within

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specific constraints. Simultaneously, it highlights the importance of the affective domain, building a supportive environment that respects the individual pacing of staff and values innovation. This prevents "digital fatigue" and fosters a culture where teachers feel safe to experiment and innovate without the fear of immediate failure.

Ultimately, the framework is anchored by a solid foundation of Teacher Readiness, Resource Availability, and Instructional Goals. These three pillars feed into the primary objective: Instructional Improvement. The model posits that for digital leadership to be successful, the resulting educational changes must be meaningful, sustainable, and contextually relevant to the specific community. By maintaining this continuous loop of support, oversight, optimization, and motivation, school heads can move beyond simple digitization toward a truly transformed and localized learning environment. Figure 1 below illustrates the localized leadership paradigm.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations were set forth.

1. Enhance strategic leadership, the School Heads may strengthen technology management and instructional support through strategic resource use, continuous capacity building, and developmental supervision to improve leadership effectiveness.
2. Turn challenges into opportunities, for instance if the funding delays, low digital readiness, heavy workloads, and rigid policies should be addressed with prioritization, empathy, policy contextualization, and clear communication to sustain school effectiveness.

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3. Support technology integration, a gradual training, transparent resource management, and ongoing instructional support can reduce resistance and build teachers' ICT competencies for meaningful use of digital tools.

4. Adopt a localized digital leadership framework in the Schools Division of Albay- small Elementary School, through ground digital leadership in local realities and teacher needs to improve instructional practices and learning outcomes sustainably.

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