



**LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF NEWLY PROMOTED ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL HEADS IN THE ISLAND SCHOOLS: INPUT FOR
AN INDUCTION PROGRAM**

CLIENTY P. MARCELLA
Elementary Teacher
Precious Gems Christian Academy
clientymarcella98@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study explored the leadership practices of newly promoted school heads in island schools in the 5th Congressional District of Iloilo as a basis for developing a contextualized induction program for School Year 2025–2026. Employing a phenomenological qualitative design, the study gathered data through in-depth interviews with ten school heads and analyzed the responses using thematic analysis. The findings showed that school heads emphasized promoting instructional leadership, establishing a clear vision, fostering shared collaboration, and empowering teachers. However, they encountered challenges such as financial and resources constraints, geographic isolation, and unstable internet connectivity. To address these difficulties, they employed coping strategies including engaging in adaptive planning, maximizing available resources, providing professional growth opportunities, and strengthening community linkages. The study recommends the development of practical induction programs that promote adaptive, collaborative, and resilient leadership to support effective school management and improve the quality of instruction.

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Keywords: *Leadership Practices, Newly Promoted School Head, Island Schools, Input, Induction Program*

INTRODUCTION

Leadership practices of school heads usually depend on the location and situation where they are assigned as school leaders.

Leadership within educational institutions fundamentally shapes school performance, teacher engagement, and learner success. School heads—often principals or head teachers—are entrusted not only with administrative duties but also with instructional and community leadership, especially in geographically isolated or island contexts where unique challenges demand adaptive and contextualized leadership practices (Silam et al., 2021).

In island schools, often characterized by limited resources, logistical constraints, and close-knit communities, leadership practices are shaped by both competency requirements and contextual demands. A qualitative study of an island school in Sabah, Malaysia, emphasizes that effective leadership hinges on a school principal’s competencies in knowledge, skills, and behavior to manage teaching, school operations, and changing educational demands. These competencies enable head teachers to plan systematically, respond to dynamic conditions, and sustain school performance despite environmental constraints (Silam et al., 2021).

Similarly, research among school principals in Tablas Island, Philippines, during the COVID-19 pandemic identified an adaptive leadership model emerging from real practices.

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This model highlights key practices such as stakeholder involvement, resource management, health and curriculum adaptation, quality teaching oversight, and teacher support.

The study underscores that principal in island settings must often integrate health protocols and contextualized curriculum review alongside traditional leadership functions, reflecting a blend of adaptive, collaborative, and instructional leadership in response to crisis and isolation (Famero, 2024).

Another dimension found in island or archipelagic school contexts examines situational leadership, where school heads adjust their leadership style based on teacher readiness, community needs, and the available human resources. This approach—diagnostic, adaptive, and professionally strengthening—creates a reflective leadership cycle that fosters collaboration and teacher professional growth even under constraints typical of island communities (Usman & Afaidi, 2025).

In the Philippine archipelago, specific studies conducted in island provinces (e.g., Bohol Island) also indicate that school heads' leadership styles significantly influence teacher effectiveness and instructional outcomes, linking leadership practices with improved teaching accomplishment despite geographical isolation (Olasiman & Torreon, 2024).

Collectively, these recent studies illustrate that leadership practices in island schools extend beyond administrative functions to encompass adaptive, contextualized, instructional, and community-oriented leadership. The literature suggests that school heads in such settings must balance strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, teacher support, and adaptive

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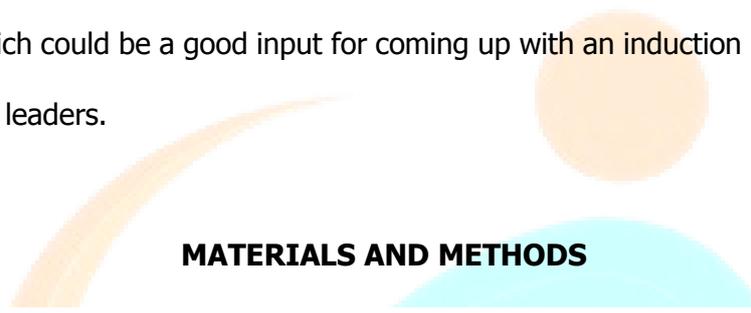
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decision-making to foster resilient and high-performing school environments (Silam et al., 2021).

In the 5th Congressional District of Iloilo, school heads who are assigned in the island school have unique leadership practices. Some of these leadership practices might be different from other school heads and sometimes these leadership practices don't work or effective for the teachers, which could be a good input for coming up with an induction program for newly promoted school leaders.



MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology

This chapter outlines the research methodology, including the research design, study participants, data-gathering procedures, research instrument, and data analysis to be employed in the study. It aims to examine the leadership practices of school heads assigned to the island schools in the 5th Congressional District of Iloilo as a basis for developing an induction program for newly promoted school leaders.

Research Method

The study employed a descriptive method within a qualitative research framework, using in-depth interviews as the primary data-gathering technique.

The descriptive research method focuses on systematically describing a phenomenon as it exists in its natural setting, without manipulating variables.

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According to Elliott (2025), it aims to provide an accurate portrayal of current conditions, practices, or relationships within educational settings, enabling researchers to understand trends, patterns, and implications for practice. This approach is particularly useful in educational studies that seek to document and analyze real-world events, behaviors, or perceptions without altering the environment in which they occur (Elliott, 2025).

During the interview, the interviewer and interviewee were seated at an appropriate distance to allow the participant to reflect on the series of questions about a particular issue. The goal was to obtain the participants' key insights and essential perspectives on the issue within a social context through their responses.

Research Design

The study adopted a phenomenological research design. Phenomenology is regarded as a philosophical approach to qualitative research that seeks to understand how individuals perceive and interpret the world around them, particularly how their perspectives may differ from widely accepted views. It focuses on a person's subjective understanding of lived experiences and is commonly applied in disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and social work through interviews that explore participants' impressions.

Moreover, phenomenology centers on examining the structures of consciousness from the first-person point of view. Its primary purpose is to explore and describe phenomena as they are directly experienced in consciousness, without relying on causal theories or being shaped by unchecked assumptions (Biemel and Spiegelberg, 2024).

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Participants of the Study

The study employed ten (10) school heads purposely chosen from the school heads assigned in the island schools of the 5th Congressional District of Iloilo during the school year 2025-2026.

These participants must be a regular permanent school heads and have been assigned in the island schools for at least one school year.

They must be willing to be interviewed and voluntarily share the leadership practices they adopt in the island schools.

Sampling Design

The study employed purposive sampling. According to Nikolopoulou (2023), purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which participants are intentionally selected because they possess the specific characteristics needed for the sample.

In other words, individuals are chosen deliberately based on their relevance to the study. Also known as judgmental sampling, this method depends on the researcher's discretion in identifying and selecting the individuals, cases, or events that can provide the most useful information for achieving the objectives of the study.

Research Instrument

The research instrument used in the study was a researcher-developed interview schedule. An interview schedule, in research methodology, is a written set of carefully prepared questions—whether structured, semi-structured, or open-ended—designed to guide the interviewer in gathering information consistently from participants. It serves as a

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standardized data-gathering tool that ensures the same topics and questions are covered in each interview, thereby supporting systematic comparison and analysis. During face-to-face, telephone, or electronic interviews, the interviewer follows the schedule, asks the prepared questions, and records the participants' responses (Socio.health, 2024).

The interview schedule contains three major questions that center on the leadership practices of school heads in island schools, the challenges they encounter in carrying out their leadership roles, and the coping strategies they employ in addressing these challenges.

Voice and video recorders were used for data collection and documentation, subject to the consent of the participants.

Validity of the Research Instrument

Before determining the validity of the researcher-made interview schedule, the adviser, the Dean of the Graduate School, and a panel of jurors recognized for their expertise in research, testing and assessment, and English were asked to review, validate, and suggest revisions for each question.

Validity refers to the degree to which the findings, interpretations, and conclusions of a study are accurate, meaningful, and appropriate in representing the concept being investigated. It ensures that the research instrument measures what it is intended to measure and that the results provide a credible reflection of reality. In establishing content validity, the questions and format of the instrument must be aligned with the study's variables and objectives to ensure that each item accurately represents the construct being examined. This process commonly involves expert evaluation to determine whether the items are clear,

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relevant, and representative of the concepts under study. By making sure that the content and structure of the instrument are consistent with the study's framework, researchers improve the accuracy and usefulness of the data gathered in relation to the research objectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

The comments, corrections, and suggestions provided by the panel of validators regarding the interview schedule were taken into consideration using the appropriate form of Good and Scates (1972), as cited by Soqueña (2021)

Data Gathering Procedures

Approval to conduct the study was secured from the adviser, the Dean of the Graduate School, the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent, the Office of the District Supervisors, the School Heads, and the individual participants.

The researcher personally visited the school, community, or any other location convenient for the participants to carry out the interviews.

The researcher encouraged the participants to sign a waiver or consent form regarding their participation in the study.

Through the use of in-depth interviews, voice and video recorders were utilized to fully capture the interviewees' responses, subject to their permission.

After completing the series of interviews, the researcher compiled and organized all the data gathered.

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Data Analyses

The data was collected through the interview schedule and analyzed using thematic analysis, a qualitative method designed to identify, interpret, and report recurring patterns or themes within narrative data.

This approach enables the researcher to uncover meaningful insights into the responses of the participants of their leadership practices in the island schools, the challenges they encountered in their leadership practices, and the coping strategies they made as school heads on the encountered challenges in their leadership practices in the island schools.

According to Braun and Clarke (2023), thematic analysis offers a flexible yet systematic framework for examining qualitative data, enabling researchers to uncover both the explicit and underlying meanings found in participants' narratives. It is especially appropriate for educational research that aims to explore complex social and organizational processes. Likewise, Nowell et al. (2021) noted that thematic analysis strengthens the transparency and credibility of qualitative studies through systematic coding and careful interpretation of data.

The interview transcripts were examined using Thematic Analysis, as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2023), because it is highly appropriate for identifying, analyzing, and presenting patterns or themes within qualitative data.

The analysis follows the standard six-phase process:

(1) Familiarization with the Data – reading and rereading the transcripts in both the local language and their English translations;(2) Generating Initial Codes – assigning brief labels or phrases to meaningful sections of the data, such as “shared phone,” “fear of

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judgment,” and “poor signal”;(3) Searching for Themes – organizing the initial codes into broader potential themes and subthemes that reflect significant patterns, for example grouping codes such as “no insult” and “private correction” under one theme;(4) Reviewing Themes – refining and checking the themes against the entire dataset to ensure that they accurately represent the participants’ meanings and align with the focus of the study;(5) Defining and Naming Themes – formulating clear, concise, and academically appropriate labels for the final emerging themes, which were presented in Chapter 4; and(6) Producing the Report – integrating the themes, supported by direct quotations, into the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of data in Chapter 4 and relating them to the theoretical framework.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study examined the leadership practices of school heads assigned in the island schools in the 5th Congressional District of Iloilo as a basis for developing an induction program for newly promoted school leaders for School Year 2025–2026.

The study employed a descriptive method within a qualitative research framework, using in-depth interviews. It adopted a phenomenological research design.

The participants of the study were ten (10) school heads assigned in the island schools in the 5th Congressional District of Iloilo.

A researcher-made interview schedule was used as the main research instrument to collect data from the participants. This instrument underwent content validation by a panel of

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experts. Necessary permits were secured, and consent letters were distributed to the participants.

The researcher conducted the in-depth interviews individually with each participant. Voice and video recorders were also used for data collection, subject to the participants' consent.

After completing the series of interviews, the researcher consolidated all the gathered data. The narratives were then collected, identified, reported, and analyzed using thematic analysis.

The following are the findings of the study:

Based on the results of the in-depth interview, the school heads have different leadership practices as newly promoted elementary school heads in the island schools.

The school head leadership practices were focused on the promoting instructional leadership, establishing a clear vision, fostering shared collaboration, and empowering teachers.

During the in-depth interviews with the participants, it was found that school heads faced challenges in their leadership practices, including financial and resources constraints, geographic isolation, and unstable internet connectivity.

The school heads' coping strategies on the challenges they encountered in their leadership practices, based on the results of the in-depth interview, were maximizing available resources, engaging in adaptive planning, providing professional growth opportunities, and strengthening community linkages.

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CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the insights were drawn:

Newly promoted school heads in the island schools exhibit leadership practices that are both diverse and context-sensitive. Their focus on promoting instructional leadership, establishing a clear vision, fostering shared collaboration, and empowering teachers indicates a holistic approach to school management, where the development of both the staff and the learning environment is prioritized.

However, these school heads face significant contextual challenges, including financial and resources constraints, geographic isolation, and unstable internet connectivity. These challenges highlight the unique difficulties of leading island schools, where logistical constraints can directly affect the implementation of leadership initiatives and instructional quality.

The coping strategies employed—maximizing available resources, engaging in adaptive planning, providing professional growth opportunities, and strengthening community linkages—demonstrate the school heads' resilience, creativity, and commitment to sustaining effective leadership practices despite these limitations.

This underscores the importance of adaptive leadership and resourcefulness in isolated educational contexts, suggesting that leadership development programs for newly promoted heads should emphasize practical problem-solving, resource optimization, and strategies for fostering community support.

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