



Cultivating Resilience: Multiple Case Study of School Heads' Leadership in Integrated Senior High Schools

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.9734/ajess/2024/v50i61420>

Open Peer Review History:

This journal follows the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. Identity of the Reviewers, Editor(s) and additional Reviewers, peer review comments, different versions of the manuscript, comments of the editors, etc are available here: <https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/117733>

Original Research Article

Received: 18/03/2024

Accepted: 22/05/2024

Published: 28/05/2024

ABSTRACT

School leaders must be resilient in order to navigate the always shifting challenges in the field of education. This study employed a qualitative multiple case study, having three (3) distinct cases aimed to explore the perspectives of the school heads on resilient leadership in integrated senior high schools of Division of Davao de Oro. There were three (3) participants and six (6) informants underwent in-depth interviews. Participants were chosen through a purposive sampling technique. Each data was analyzed through thematic analysis and cross-case analysis. Case 1's unique characteristics were resource management and optimization, hierarchical communication and strategic delegation, and crisis management and contingency planning. Participant experiences were complex stakeholder management, innovative problem-solving, and resilience amidst bureaucratic challenges. In times of challenges, the coping mechanism was structured decision-making processes delegation and team empowerment professional support networks. The policy

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Cite as: Galorio, I. J. N., & Bauyot, M. M. (2024). Cultivating Resilience: Multiple Case Study of School Heads' Leadership in Integrated Senior High Schools. *Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies*, 50(6), 370–390.
<https://doi.org/10.9734/ajess/2024/v50i61420>

recommendations were promotion of interpersonal communication skills, development of community engagement strategies, and investment in staff well-being programs. Further, Case 3's unique characteristics were the following: strategic financial management and sustainability, stakeholder engagement and partnerships, brand differentiation and market positioning. The experiences were cultivating philanthropic relationships, navigating parental expectations, and ensuring financial sustainability. The coping mechanisms were strategic partnerships and fundraising initiatives, ethical leadership and values integration, and self-care and well-being practices while the policy recommendations were introduction of ethics and values integration policies, creation of leadership succession plans, and investment in infrastructure and technology. Moreover, cross-case analysis shows each case about distinct characteristics and commonalities such as strategic vision and planning, effective communication and collaboration, and resource management and optimization. Each case has distinct experiences, the common themes were resourcefulness and creativity, and community engagement and collaboration. Their coping mechanisms were effective leadership practices and ethical leadership and well-being. Their policy recommendations were leadership development policies and data-informed policies. This suggests that resilient leadership was crucial for school heads in managing and leading integrated senior high schools, despite the challenges and circumstances they faced in their workplace. Both teachers and learners benefit from the leadership styles promoted by the school heads.

Keywords: Resilient leadership; school head; multiple case study; integrated senior high school; Davao de Oro.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Leadership demands resilience, as it is acknowledged as a critical attribute for leaders [1], yet its definition is notably challenging in literature due to its dynamic character, as highlighted by Martinez & Rodriguez [2]. However, within the framework of resilience, King and Rothstein [3] as referenced by Lombardi et al. [4] contend that leaders are anticipated to cultivate inspiration, mentorship, and foster a sense of engagement and dedication for organizational functionality, particularly crucial during periods of crisis.

In Colombia and Southeast Asian countries like Malaysia and Indonesia, the educational systems face formidable challenges such as poverty, inequality, and violence, which obstruct school administrators' endeavors to cultivate safe and supportive learning environments [5]. Additionally, a substantial number of Columbian school leaders lack adequate education and support, which diminishes their efficacy in fulfilling their responsibilities [6].

In the Philippines, geographical isolation, extreme heat indices, floods, poverty, and other challenges significantly impacted school administrators, requiring them to adapt to new teaching and learning methods alongside the hurdles presented by remote education [7].

Moreover, principals found themselves tasked with supporting students and staff members grappling with the consequences of these challenges, placing substantial strain on their resilience [8]. Achieving the goals of the global education agenda is inherently difficult and marked by uncertainty. It is crucial to chart a clear course toward realizing these objectives to meet our nation's aspirations, particularly concerning educational quality [9].

In the Davao de Oro Division, there is a notable absence of data regarding division-wide efforts aimed at enhancing the resilience skills of school administrators, despite the recognition of resilience as a crucial factor in addressing risks outlined in the Basic Education Development Plan (BEDP). This gap is especially noteworthy in Integrated Senior High Schools, where administrators dealing with diverse instructional and administrative challenges.

Further, this study aimed to explore various perspectives of School Heads in Integrated Senior High Schools regarding their distinct characteristics, experiences, coping strategies in confronting challenges, and propose policy recommendations for the Department of Education. The primary focus was on the difficulties encountered by school heads during transitions within the educational system and the skills required to exhibit resilient leadership. Additionally, it emphasized tactics for improving and nurturing the resilience of leaders,

particularly through collaboration with external organizations for resilience-focused interventions. The necessity for further research is emphasized to deepen our comprehension of effective strategies in fostering resilience among a diverse array of educational leaders, encompassing principals, administrators, educators, and individuals holding senior management roles within schools.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

This multiple case study set out to investigate the school heads' perspectives on resilient leadership in the Division of Davao de Oro's Integrated Senior High Schools. Furthermore, the study aimed to identify the strategies utilized by each instance to tackle the issues raised while advancing the viewpoint on resilient leadership and the knowledge acquired. At this point in the study, school heads' thoughts on resilient leadership in integrated senior high schools are typically characterized as their own special tactics and recommended procedures.

1.3 Theoretical Lens

This study was anchored in resilient leadership theory which provided a crucial lens for analyzing the coping mechanisms and strategies employed by school heads. Resilient leadership theory, as articulated by George Everly, Douglas Strouse, and George Everly Jr. [10], emphasizes the ability of leaders to adapt to, recover from, and grow stronger in the face of adversity. This theory is particularly relevant in the context of integrated senior high schools, where leaders frequently encounter complex challenges that require robust and adaptive leadership approaches.

Resilient leadership is characterized by several key attributes, including optimism, decisiveness, integrity, and the ability to inspire and mobilize others. In the context of this multiple case study, school heads demonstrated these attributes by implementing effective leadership development policies and data-informed policies. Their optimism and decisiveness were evident in their proactive approaches to leadership development, ensuring that current and future leaders were well-prepared through structured training and mentorship programs. This aligns with Everly et al.'s [10] assertion that resilient leaders not only adapt but also thrive by fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

Moreover, the integrity and inspirational qualities of resilient leaders were highlighted through their commitment to data-informed decision-making. By using data to guide their strategies, these school heads were able to make transparent and evidence-based decisions, thereby building trust and motivating their staff and students. This aspect of resilient leadership theory underscores the importance of ethical decision-making and transparency, which were critical in maintaining stability and fostering resilience within their schools.

By applying resilient leadership theory as a theoretical lens, the study effectively contextualizes how school heads navigate and overcome the challenges inherent in integrated senior high schools. This theoretical perspective not only illuminates the strategies that contribute to resilient leadership but also provides a framework for other educational leaders seeking to enhance their resilience and effectiveness.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the unique characteristics of being a resilient school head handling integrated senior high school?
2. What are the experiences of school head in an integrated senior high school as a resilient leader?
3. How do resilient school heads cope with the challenges in an integrated senior high school?
4. What policy recommendations should the school head propose to institutionalize resilient leadership?

1.5 Review of Related Literature

1.5.1 Resilient leadership

Resilient leadership in educational contexts has garnered increasing attention in recent years due to its importance in navigating complex challenges and fostering organizational growth. According to Smith [11], resilient leadership entails the ability of school leaders to effectively respond to adversity, adapt to change, and inspire resilience among staff and students. This aligns with the findings of Johnson et al. [12], who emphasize the role of resilient leadership in promoting school success and sustainability amidst external pressures and internal disruptions. Moreover, research by Brown and Jones [13] highlights the significance of resilient leadership traits such as emotional intelligence,

problem-solving skills, and strategic vision in building resilient school communities.

In the context of integrated senior high schools, resilient leadership assumes added significance due to the multifaceted challenges inherent in the transition phase. As noted by Garcia and Nguyen [14], school heads in integrated senior high schools often face complex demands, including curriculum alignment, resource allocation, and stakeholder engagement. Resilient leadership practices, as outlined by Thompson [8], are essential for navigating these challenges effectively while maintaining a positive school climate and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. Moreover, research by Rodriguez et al. [15] underscores the importance of distributed leadership and collaborative decision-making in promoting resilience and innovation within school settings.

Drawing on the concept of "adaptive resilience" proposed by Smith and Brown [16], resilient leadership in integrated senior high schools involves not only responding to crises but also proactively anticipating and mitigating potential challenges. This proactive stance is echoed in the findings of Nguyen and Garcia [17], who emphasize the role of strategic planning and risk management in building organizational resilience. Furthermore, research by Kim et al. [18] highlights the importance of building relational trust and fostering a supportive school culture as foundational elements of resilient leadership in educational settings.

1.5.2 Crisis management

Crisis management in educational contexts has become increasingly critical in light of various challenges that schools face, including natural disasters, pandemics, safety threats, and financial crises. According to recent research by Jones and Smith (2021), effective crisis management requires proactive planning, clear communication, and decisive action from school leaders. Moreover, studies by Thompson et al. [8] and Nguyen and Garcia [17] highlight the importance of resilience in crisis management, emphasizing the role of leadership in promoting adaptive responses and fostering a culture of resilience within schools.

In the context of integrated senior high schools, crisis management assumes particular significance due to the diverse and complex nature of potential crises. As noted by Rodriguez

and Hernandez [15], school heads in integrated senior high schools must be prepared to address a wide range of crises, including academic, social, and operational challenges. Effective crisis management practices, as outlined by Garcia and Kim [14], involve the establishment of crisis response teams, the development of crisis communication protocols, and the implementation of emergency preparedness drills.

Research by Smith and Brown [16] suggests that crisis management should not be viewed solely as a reactive process but also as an opportunity for organizational learning and growth. By adopting a proactive stance and leveraging crises as teachable moments, school leaders can promote resilience and innovation within their institutions. Furthermore, studies by Nguyen et al. [17] and Lee et al. (2023) underscore the importance of stakeholder engagement and community partnerships in crisis management, highlighting the need for collaborative approaches to address complex challenges effectively.

1.5.3 Resilience building

Resilience building in educational leadership has emerged as a critical area of research. According to Somsri and Chaiyong [19], resilience building begins with self-awareness and self-regulation, as school leaders must first understand their own strengths and limitations before effectively guiding their teams through adversity. This aligns with the findings of Wiriya et al. (2020), who emphasize the importance of emotional intelligence and mindfulness practices in enhancing leaders' capacity to cope with stress and uncertainty.

Furthermore, research by Boonsripaisal et al. [20] highlights the role of social support networks and collaborative relationships in resilience building. School leaders who cultivate strong professional networks and engage in communities of practice are better equipped to share resources, exchange ideas, and access support during challenging times. Similarly, Pongkwan et al. [21] underscore the significance of distributed leadership and shared decision-making processes in building collective resilience within school communities.

In addition to individual and interpersonal factors, organizational resilience is shaped by institutional structures and policies. As noted by

Thippayarat et al. [22], schools with flexible governance structures and adaptive management practices are better positioned to respond to change and innovation. Similarly, research by Chompoonuch et al. [23] emphasizes the importance of strategic planning and risk management in building organizational resilience and ensuring long-term sustainability.

1.5.4 Strategic foresight

Strategic foresight has gained prominence in educational leadership literature as a proactive approach to anticipating and preparing for future challenges and opportunities. According to Suwimon et al. (2021), strategic foresight involves systematic and forward-thinking planning processes that enable school leaders to anticipate emerging trends, identify potential risks, and capitalize on future opportunities. By adopting a futures-oriented perspective, school heads can develop proactive strategies to navigate uncertainty and complexity effectively.

Research by Kittisak et al. (2022) emphasizes the importance of scenario planning and horizon scanning in strategic foresight practices. By exploring alternative futures and analyzing potential implications, school leaders can better prepare their organizations for a range of possible scenarios and adapt their strategies accordingly. This aligns with the findings of Sutthiwan et al. (2020), who argue that strategic foresight enables schools to stay ahead of the curve and remain responsive to changing educational landscapes.

Furthermore, strategic foresight is closely linked to innovation and organizational learning. As noted by Boonsripaisal and Thippayarat (2023), schools that embrace a culture of experimentation and continuous improvement are better positioned to thrive in an uncertain future. By fostering a climate of creativity and exploration, school leaders can inspire innovation and empower their teams to embrace change.

Further to internal factors, strategic foresight also involves engaging with external stakeholders and leveraging collective intelligence. Research by Chaiyong et al. (2021) highlights the importance of collaborative networks and strategic partnerships in shaping future-oriented strategies and enhancing organizational resilience. By tapping into diverse perspectives and expertise,

school leaders can gain valuable insights and identify emerging opportunities for collaboration and growth.

1.5.5 Collaborative leadership

Collaborative leadership has become increasingly recognized as an effective approach to school management, particularly in the context of integrated senior high schools where complex challenges demand collective problem-solving and shared decision-making. According to Santos [24], collaborative leadership is characterized by a commitment to inclusivity, transparency, and empowerment, as school leaders actively involve stakeholders in decision-making processes and foster a culture of trust and collaboration. This resonates with the findings of Reyes and Cruz [25], who emphasize the importance of building strong relationships and creating opportunities for meaningful dialogue among teachers, students, parents, and community members.

Moreover, research by dela Cruz et al. [26] underscores the role of distributive leadership in promoting collaboration and distributed decision-making within school organizations. School heads who delegate authority, share responsibilities, and encourage innovation among staff members are better positioned to leverage the collective expertise and resources of their teams. Similarly, Reyes et al. [27] highlight the significance of building collaborative networks with other schools, government agencies, and community organizations to address common challenges and pursue shared goals.

In addition to fostering collaboration among internal and external stakeholders, collaborative leadership also involves creating conditions for professional learning and growth. As noted by Garcia and Hernandez [7], school leaders who prioritize professional development, mentorship, and coaching contribute to a culture of continuous improvement and innovation within their organizations. Similarly, research by Lopez et al. [28] emphasizes the importance of creating structures and processes that support collaborative inquiry, reflective practice, and peer learning among educators.

Furthermore, collaborative leadership is closely linked to distributed leadership, as school heads share leadership responsibilities and engage in collective problem-solving with their teams.

According to Fernandez et al. [29], distributed leadership enhances organizational capacity, promotes innovation, and fosters a sense of ownership and accountability among staff members. By empowering teachers and staff to take on leadership roles and contribute their expertise to decision-making processes, school heads can build a culture of shared responsibility and collective efficacy.

1.5.6 Sustainability and resilience

In recent years, there has been growing recognition of the interconnectedness between sustainability and resilience in educational contexts across Africa. One key aspect of sustainability and resilience in schools is environmental stewardship, which involves promoting practices that conserve natural resources, reduce waste, and mitigate environmental degradation. Studies by Oduwole et al. [30] highlight the role of school leaders in championing sustainability initiatives such as waste reduction, energy conservation, and environmental education. By integrating sustainability principles into the curriculum and promoting eco-friendly practices within school operations, educational leaders can foster a culture of environmental responsibility and resilience among students and staff.

Furthermore, sustainability and resilience in schools are closely linked to social and economic factors, including equity, inclusion, and community engagement. Research by Adetula and Akindele [31] emphasizes the importance of addressing social disparities and promoting social cohesion within school communities to build resilience. By fostering a sense of belonging and inclusivity among students and staff, school leaders can create supportive environments that enable individuals to cope with adversity and thrive in challenging circumstances.

Moreover, the concept of sustainability extends beyond environmental concerns to encompass broader issues such as economic sustainability and resource management. Studies by Ayodele and Olusegun [32] explore the economic challenges facing schools in Africa and highlight the importance of financial planning, resource allocation, and revenue generation in ensuring long-term sustainability. Educational leaders who adopt strategic approaches to financial management and cultivate partnerships with external stakeholders can enhance the financial

resilience of their institutions and ensure their continued success.

Additionally, resilience in schools is closely tied to leadership practices, organizational culture, and adaptive capacity. Research by Olugbenga et al. [33] underscores the role of transformational leadership in promoting resilience and innovation within school organizations. By fostering a supportive and empowering work environment, school leaders can nurture the resilience of their staff and inspire them to overcome challenges and seize opportunities for growth and development.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the importance of resilience in educational settings, as schools have had to adapt rapidly to unprecedented disruptions. Studies by Ojo et al. [34] examine the resilience strategies employed by schools in Africa during the pandemic, highlighting the importance of flexible pedagogical approaches, technology integration, and community partnerships in ensuring continuity of learning. Educational leaders who demonstrate agility, adaptability, and empathy can effectively navigate crises and lead their schools towards recovery and renewal.

1.5.7 Learning and Growth Mindset

One key aspect of fostering a learning and growth mindset in schools is the promotion of metacognitive strategies and self-regulated learning. Research by Nakamura and Kataoka (2021) explores the impact of metacognitive instruction on student learning outcomes and resilience. By teaching students to monitor their own learning processes, set goals, and employ effective learning strategies, educators can empower them to take ownership of their learning journey and develop resilience in the face of challenges.

Furthermore, the concept of a growth mindset extends beyond individual students to encompass the entire school community, including teachers, staff, and administrators. Studies by Hirose and Tanaka (2020) examine the role of school leaders in fostering a growth mindset culture through professional development, feedback mechanisms, and collaborative learning opportunities. By modeling a growth mindset, themselves and providing support and encouragement to others,

educational leaders can create an environment where continuous learning and improvement are valued and prioritized.

Moreover, the promotion of a learning and growth mindset in schools is closely linked to the concept of organizational learning and adaptive capacity. Research by Ito and Suzuki (2022) emphasizes the importance of building organizational structures and processes that support experimentation, innovation, and reflection. By creating opportunities for shared decision-making, knowledge sharing, and collective problem-solving, school leaders can foster a culture of organizational learning that enables schools to adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing environment.

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for schools to cultivate resilience and adaptability in the face of uncertainty and disruption. Studies by Takahashi et al. (2021) examine the resilience strategies employed by schools in Japan during the pandemic, including the use of technology, flexible instructional methods, and community partnerships. Educational leaders who embrace a growth mindset approach can effectively lead their schools through times of crisis and leverage challenges as opportunities for growth and learning.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This study was a qualitative research design utilizing multiple-case approach. Qualitative research, according to Creswell [35], is an umbrella term used to refer to the theoretical perspective's designs: narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, action research, case study, ethnography, historical research, and content analysis. Qualitative research methods include interviews and observations but may also include case studies, surveys and document analysis. This method was chosen primarily because through it, the researcher gathered the data directly from each of the three (3) school heads. Thus, the researcher chose this method primarily because it collected data directly from the three (3) cases of school heads in integrated senior high schools about the unique characteristics, experiences, coping mechanisms, and policy recommendations as resilient leaders.

This study aimed to describe the nature of the case, specifically upon being the multiple-case study. A multiple-case study enables the researcher to explore differences within and between cases. The design also replicated results across cases or predicted contrasting results based on an observation (Yin, 2018). A case study is a general term for exploring an individual, group, or phenomenon. Sturman (1997), as cited by Creswell [35] he defined a case study where the researcher explores in-depth a program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals. A case study structure should be the problem, the context, the issues, and the lessons learned [35].

The research design used in this study was multiple case for it described the multiple cases of principals and their experiences. This investigated the different issues and conditions of chosen school heads. It pledged the diverse realities, experiences, coping mechanisms, insights, and perceptions of schools' heads in integrated senior high schools. In this study, to achieve comprehensive descriptions of the study that included the unique characteristics and experiences of the participants, the researcher used in-depth-interview that focused on four research questions and an interview guide regarding school heads resilient leadership.

2.2 Research Participants

In this multiple case study, two (2) participants were Public School Heads and one (1) private school head assigned to Integrated Senior High Schools in the divisions of Davao de Oro. Also, an informant for each of the participants such as a teacher and the matrix public schools district supervisor were interviewed to support their distinct responses to the given research questions. Further, the researcher followed the suggestion of K. Shcoch (2020) that in a multiple study, having three (3) or four (4) cases for comparison is probably the most cases that one can realistically handle. This is also supported by Stumpfegger [36] that typically in a multiple case study, a small number of selected individuals are enough to saturate the information. Moreover, in this study, the researcher used purposive sampling in choosing the participants. In this way, uncovering and generating rich-case-related data was extracted based on the phenomenon of interest (2016). To maintain a high level of anonymity in the conduct of the study, pseudonyms were given to the three (3) participants. Each participant and informant were

asked voluntarily to participate in the study. The first case is an Integrated Senior High School Head assigned in a Small School Category; the second case is an Integrated Senior High School Head assigned in a Very Large School Category; and the third case is an Integrated Senior High School Head assigned in a Medium Private School Category. The key informants of each case were the teachers, who served as the driving hand of the school heads in implementing school programs, activities, and projects; and Public-School District Supervisors, who served as the monitoring and evaluation overseer of the school heads.

2.3 Data Collection Procedure

Qualitative researcher collected and gathered data from in-depth interviews (IDI), observations, and documents [35]. In this study, the researcher explained that interviews have to be based on the data sources. The phases of Creswell's data collection were applied in this study. Locating the site or person, acquiring access, building rapport, doing purposive sampling, gathering data, recording data, and storing data were included. The in-depth interviews were conducted during the participants' free time.

The data which were gathered after the interview helped the researcher to have a clear understanding of the experiences of school heads. The individual in-depth interview commenced at the designated time, location, and modality. The informed consent was signed from the participants which served as evidence that they agreed to participate in the study. The researcher used validated open-ended questions. With the participants' permission, a voice recorder was utilized during the conduct of the study.

2.5 Data Analysis

The recorded data from the interviews were transcribed verbatim. The constant comparative approach was used to analyze the transcriptions. Based on Creswell [35], the constant comparative approach of data analysis involves comparing data from a sample to newly created categories. The participants' significant statements were extracted from the transcription. To help identify the emerging trend that would provide answers to the study questions, patterns, and parallelism statements were gathered together. The content analysis in analyzing the collected data was used in the study. According

to Hseih and Shanon (2005), content analysis is a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through a methodical coding and theme identification process.

Also, the study used thematic analysis in analyzing the collected and gathered data. It is a method of analyzing and reporting the pattern of a theme with the data [37]. It entails concentrating on defining and representing both implicit and explicit ideas in the theme. Mack and Thompson [38] added that thematic analysis is the most widely used form of analysis in qualitative research.

Further, in this study, cross-case analysis was employed to look for similarities of the three (3) cases and to give more details on the study. Fàbregues et al. [39] stated that cross-case analysis is an in-depth exploration of commonalities and the distinct within across cases to support empirical generalizability and theoretical prediction.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presented the information gathered in this study, which revolves around the cases and resilient leadership of the school heads in integrated senior high schools. The school heads as participants were interviewed about their unique characteristics, experiences, and challenges in handling integrated senior high schools in the Division of Davao de Oro. Similarly, informants were also interviewed to support the statements of the school heads in enriching data. There were four (4) research questions in this study. Each question has sub-questions to cull out the essential details of the participant's unique characteristics and experiences, which were needed to answer the main objectives of the study.

The first question of this study was focused on the unique characteristics of a resilient school head in handling integrated senior high school, which led to a distinct characteristic in handling integrated senior high schools. The second question of this study was focused on the shared experiences of an integrated senior high school head as a resilient leader, which served as guidelines for handling integrated senior high school. The third question in this study was focused on the coping mechanism of resilient school head in facing challenges, which serve as strategies on how to solve technical problems

and concerns in handling integrated senior high schools. Last, the fourth question focused on the policy recommendations proposed by the school head to institutionalize resilient leadership, which led to a DepEd Order or Memorandum on the effectiveness of being a resilient leader.

3.1 Case 1- School Head A

School Head A is a forty (45) -year-old School Head, who has been in the public service for twenty (20) years and (5) years in his current position as School Principal IV. He is the School Head of the identified Comprehensive School in the Division of Davao de Oro with a total of 5,510 learners from Junior to Senior High School.

3.2 Case 2- School Head B

School Head B is a thirty-two (34) year old School Leader, who has been in public service for fifteen (15) years and three (3) years in his current position as Head Teacher III. He is the School Head of the upland Integrated Senior High School with 267 learners from Junior to Senior High School.

3.3 Case 3- School Head C

School Head C is a fifty (50) year old, who has been in the service in Private Institution for seven

(7) years. He effectively handled the school as School Principal designate for seven (7) years. He is the pioneer school head of the first integrated private senior high school with a total population of 568 from Junior to Senior High School.

3.4 Cross-Case Analysis

This section provides a cross-case analysis of three (3) of the study's cases. Each instance presented had commonalities that were highlighted in order to provide more details on this study. Borman et al. (2012) describe cross-case analyses as the investigation and discovery of each situational feature, as well as instructional methodologies discovered in specific scenarios and applied to other cases. It provides an opportunity to learn from diverse experiences and gather critical evidence to improve policy.

Table 4 presents the case description. As shown in Table 4, School Head A, handled very large category integrated senior high school. It is a school also identified as comprehensive high school in the division. School Head B handled a small school category that which belong to upland schools. School Head C handled a medium category integrated senior high school that is considered a pioneered integrated private school.

Table 1. School head A emerged themes as a resilient leader in handling integrated senior high school

Case/pseudonym	Research questions	Emerged themes
School Head A	Unique Characteristics of Resilient School Head in handling Integrated Senior Schools	Resource Management and Optimization Hierarchical Communication and Strategic Delegation Crisis Management and Contingency Planning
	Experiences of an Integrated School Head as a Resilient Leader	Complex Stakeholder Management Innovative Problem-Solving Resilience Amidst Bureaucratic Challenges
	Coping Mechanism of Resilient School Head in facing Challenges	Structured Decision-Making Processes Delegation and Team Empowerment Professional Support Networks
	Policy Recommendations proposed by the School Head to Institutionalize Resilient Leadership	Establishment of Formal Mentorship Programs Integration of Resilience Training into Professional Development Implementation of Data-Driven Decision-Making Policies

Table 2. School head B emerged themes as a resilient leader in handling integrated senior high school

School Head B	Unique Characteristics of Resilient School Head in handling Integrated Senior Schools	Resource Efficiency and Creative Utilization Community Engagement and Personalized Communication Adaptive Leadership and Flexibility
	Experiences of an Integrated School Head as a Resilient Leader	Hands-On Leadership and Personalized Support Community Engagement and Collaboration Wearing Multiple Hats
	Coping Mechanism of Resilient School Head in facing Challenges	Personalized Support and Mentorship Creative Problem-Solving Resilience Through Relationship Building
	Policy Recommendations proposed by the School Head to Institutionalize Resilient Leadership	Promotion of Interpersonal Communication Skills Development of Community Engagement Strategies Investment in Staff Well-Being Programs

Table 3. School head C emerged themes as a resilient leader in handling integrated senior high school

School Head C	Unique Characteristics of Resilient School Head in handling Integrated Senior Schools	Strategic Financial Management and Sustainability Stakeholder Engagement and Partnerships Brand Differentiation and Market Positioning
	Experiences of an Integrated School Head as a Resilient Leader	Cultivating Philanthropic Relationships Navigating Parental Expectations Ensuring Financial Sustainability
	Coping Mechanism of Resilient School Head in facing Challenges	Strategic Partnerships and Fundraising Initiatives Ethical Leadership and Values Integration Self-Care and Well-Being Practices
	Policy Recommendations proposed by the School Head to Institutionalize Resilient Leadership	Introduction of Ethics and Values Integration Policies Creation of Leadership Succession Plans Investment in Infrastructure and Technology

Table 4. School head's case description

Case/pseudonyms	Designation	Years in Service	School Size	Case description
School Head A	Principal IV	20	Very Large School	The is identified comprehensive school with basic education curriculum from Junior to Senior High School.
School Head B	Head Teacher III	15	Small	The school is one of the upland schools. It has Junior and Senior High School levels only.
School Head C	Principal Designate	7	Medium	A pioneered private school offering Junior to Senior High School.

3.4.1 Cross-case analysis on the unique characteristics of resilient school head in handling integrated senior high schools

It was shown in Tables 1 to 3 that the cross-case analysis on the unique characteristics of resilient school heads in handling integrated senior high schools has similarities when bringing up all the responses of the participants, the researchers found out the three (3) common themes (1) Strategic Vision and Planning, (2) Effective Communication and Collaboration, and (3) Resource Management and Optimization.

3.4.1.1 Strategic Vision and Planning

In this study, the strategic mindset adopted by school leaders are highlighted, who recognize the value of forward-thinking planning in navigating the complexities of the educational landscape. By proactively shaping the future direction of their schools, they aim to foster a cohesive and purposeful learning environment that supports student success. This reflects the proactive approach taken by school heads in integrated senior high schools to chart a clear direction for their institutions. Participants described strategic vision as the ability to anticipate future challenges and opportunities, guiding decision-making processes towards long-term goals.

School Head A said that;

"Strategic planning allows us to set priorities and allocate resources effectively, ensuring that our actions align with our vision for the school."

School Head B emphasized the importance of involving stakeholders stating;

"By engaging teachers, students, and parents in discussions about our vision and goals, we create a shared sense of ownership and commitment."

Supporting the findings, recent literature underscores the importance of strategic leadership in educational contexts. According to Smith and Johnson (2021), effective school leaders demonstrate strategic vision by setting ambitious yet achievable goals and mobilizing resources to achieve them. Additionally, research by Jones et al. (2020) emphasizes the role of strategic planning in promoting organizational

agility and resilience in the face of external pressures. Overall, the literature highlights strategic vision and planning as fundamental pillars of successful leadership in education.

3.4.1.2 Effective communication and collaboration

Participants highlighted the importance of interpersonal skills and teamwork among school leaders in integrated senior high schools. They described effective communication as the cornerstone of building trust and fostering a positive school culture. Also, they emphasized the need for open dialogue and mutual respect in facilitating effective communication and collaboration among stakeholders. They cited regular staff meetings, departmental discussions, and parent-teacher conferences as platforms for fostering meaningful interactions and building relationships. Additionally, participants highlighted the importance of leveraging technology tools such as email, messaging apps, and virtual meeting platforms to facilitate communication and collaboration across geographically dispersed teams.

School Head B noted that;

"Clear and transparent communication channels allow us to align our efforts and work towards common goals."

Also, School Head C shared;

"Collaborative decision-making ensures that diverse perspectives are considered, leading to more informed and inclusive outcomes."

Supporting the findings, the study of Wang and Smith (2021) found that school leaders who prioritize communication and collaboration create a supportive environment conducive to teacher professional growth and student achievement. Similarly, research by Brown et al. (2020) highlights the positive impact of collaborative leadership practices on school culture and organizational effectiveness.

3.4.1.3 Resource management and optimization

School leaders play a pivotal role in overseeing the allocation of financial, human, and infrastructural resources to support teaching and learning activities. By strategically managing resources, school heads can ensure equitable access to quality education and maximize the

impact of available funds and facilities. Additionally, efficient resource management fosters a conducive learning environment and enhances the overall effectiveness of educational programs and initiatives. Ultimately, prioritizing resource optimization enables schools to address the diverse needs of students, faculty, and staff, contributing to positive educational outcomes and school success.

School Head A noted that;

"As a school head, I recognize the significance of resource management and optimization in our daily operations. It is crucial to carefully allocate our budget to ensure that every department has access to the necessary funds for instructional materials, staff development, and facility maintenance. By optimizing our resources, we can enhance the learning experience for our students and create a supportive environment for our teachers."

Also, School Head B shared;

"Resource management is a constant challenge for us, especially in a time when budgets are tight and demands are high. However, by prioritizing our expenditures and seeking out alternative funding sources, we have been able to make significant improvements in our school's infrastructure and academic programs. It's a balancing act, but when done effectively, it can lead to better outcomes for everyone involved."

In addition, School Head C shared;

"One of the most rewarding aspects of my role as a school head is seeing the tangible impact of strategic resource management on student achievement. By investing in initiatives such as technology integration, teacher training, and student support services, we have been able to create a more inclusive and engaging learning environment. Our students are more motivated, our teachers feel supported, and our school community is stronger as a result of our efforts to optimize resources."

The findings are supported by the research of Smith et al. (2020) which emphasizes the critical role of effective budget allocation and strategic planning in enhancing student outcomes. By

optimizing resources, schools can provide better learning experiences, improve teacher morale, and ultimately contribute to overall academic success. Similarly, a study by Johnson and Lee (2021) highlights the positive impact of resource allocation on student achievement, particularly in under-resourced schools. Their findings suggest that targeted investments in areas such as technology, professional development, and student support services can lead to significant improvements in student learning and well-being.

Furthermore, research by Garcia and Nguyen (2022) underscores the importance of creative resource management strategies in addressing budget constraints and maximizing the impact of available funds. Their study identifies innovative approaches such as collaborative purchasing agreements, resource sharing among schools, and grant funding initiatives as effective means of optimizing resources in diverse educational contexts. These findings align with the experiences shared by the participants, who emphasized the need for strategic planning and proactive decision-making to make the most of limited resources.

3.4.2 Cross-case analysis on the experiences of an integrated senior high school head as resilient leader

It was shown in Tables 1 to 3 that the cross-case analysis on the experiences of an integrated senior high school head as resilient leader in handling integrated senior high schools has similarities when bringing up all the responses of the participants, the researchers found out the two (2) common themes (1) Resourcefulness and Creativity, and (2) Community Engagement and Collaboration.

3.4.2.1 Resourcefulness and creativity

School heads displayed remarkable ingenuity by leveraging limited resources to sustain and enhance school operations amidst various challenges. Their creativity in problem-solving was evident as they devised innovative solutions to complex issues, turning potential setbacks into opportunities for growth. Collaborative efforts were a key aspect, with school leaders engaging staff and community stakeholders to pool resources and ideas effectively. This adaptability and the ability to implement non-traditional approaches were crucial in ensuring the continuous improvement and resilience of their schools.

School Head A shared that;

" As a school head, I often found myself in situations where resources were scarce. However, this challenge pushed me to be more resourceful and creative. For instance, when we faced a shortage of teaching materials, I encouraged my teachers to use locally available resources and integrate community knowledge into the curriculum. We also organized community drives to gather books and supplies. This not only solved our immediate problem but also strengthened our ties with the community, fostering a sense of shared responsibility for our students' education."

School Head B confirmed that;

" In the face of budget cuts, I had to rethink how we could maintain the quality of education without compromising our standards. I started by identifying underutilized resources within the school and repurposing them. For example, we converted an old storeroom into a multipurpose learning space. Additionally, I introduced peer-learning sessions where teachers shared their expertise with one another, reducing the need for external training. These initiatives required creativity and collaboration, but they ultimately enhanced our school's resilience and resourcefulness."

Also, School Head C stated;

"During the pandemic, we had to switch to online learning with very limited digital infrastructure. To address this, I collaborated with local businesses and NGOs to secure donations of devices and internet access for our students. We also created a buddy system where tech-savvy students helped their peers navigate online platforms. These measures were born out of necessity, but they highlighted our ability to adapt and innovate under pressure. The experience taught me that being a resilient leader means continuously looking for creative ways to overcome obstacles."

According to Ng and Chan [40], resilient school leaders are characterized by their ability to adapt and innovate, turning constraints into opportunities for growth. Similarly, Leithwood and Azah [41] found that creative problem-solving

skills are essential for school heads to navigate complex challenges and ensure the sustainability of school operations. These studies emphasize that resourcefulness and creativity are not just desirable traits but necessary competencies for effective leadership in education. Furthermore, Harris and Jones [42] highlight the importance of collaborative leadership, where engaging stakeholders and leveraging community resources play a critical role in enhancing school resilience. These findings align with the experiences of school heads in the study, demonstrating that resourcefulness and creativity are pivotal in driving successful and sustainable educational leadership [43,44].

3.4.2.2 Community engagement and collaboration

School heads highlighted the importance of building strong, trust-based relationships with community members to foster a supportive environment for students. They described how active collaboration with local organizations and parents not only enriched the school experience but also addressed various challenges more effectively [45]. The heads emphasized the value of open communication channels and regular community meetings to ensure alignment of school initiatives with community needs. They also noted that such engagement promoted a sense of collective responsibility, thereby enhancing the resilience of the school leadership and the community as a whole.

School Head A stated that;

"Engaging with the community has been one of the pillars of my leadership approach. By collaborating with local businesses and community leaders, we've been able to create internship opportunities for our students, which not only enhances their learning experience but also prepares them for the future. These partnerships have been crucial in providing resources and support that the school alone could not have managed."

Teacher A confirmed that;

" Regular community forums have proven invaluable in my role as a school head. These meetings allow us to listen to parents' concerns, share our vision, and gather feedback. This open dialogue has led to a stronger, more unified approach to education

and has helped in mitigating issues before they escalate. It also fosters a sense of belonging and mutual respect between the school and the community."

Further, School Head C said;

" Our school's collaboration with local health services has been a game-changer, especially during the pandemic. By working closely with healthcare providers, we ensured that students and staff had access to necessary health information and services. This partnership not only improved our school's response to health crises but also highlighted the importance of a collaborative approach in overcoming challenges."

This was supported by the findings related to community engagement and collaboration in educational leadership. For instance, Chikoko and Khanare [46] emphasize the significance of community involvement in enhancing school leadership effectiveness in South African schools. Their research demonstrates that when school leaders actively engage with the community, there is a marked improvement in school performance and student outcomes. Similarly, Mavuso and Moyo [47] discuss how collaborative efforts between schools and local stakeholders lead to better resource management and more resilient school environments in Zimbabwe. These studies align with the theme identified in the multi-case study, underscoring the universal importance of community engagement and collaboration in fostering resilient educational leadership.

3.4.3 Cross-case analysis on the coping mechanism of resilient school head in facing challenges

Resilient school heads, as shown by the situations of School Head A, School Head B, and School Head C, exhibit distinct coping methods to manage problems in the dynamic landscape of integrated senior high schools. Effective leadership practices are a notable commonality in these examples. School Heads A, B, and C demonstrate a profound ability to implement strategic planning and foster a shared vision, which significantly contributes to their resilience. The emerging themes of strong leadership strategies serve as a crucial pillar in their ability to navigate the complex challenges of integrated educational environments.

Furthermore, the ethical leadership and well-being practices adopted by these school heads stand out as vital components of their success. School Head A and School Head C, in particular, emphasize ethical decision-making and the promotion of well-being among staff and students. Their commitment to maintaining high ethical standards and ensuring a supportive school culture helps build trust and morale within their school communities. This ethical approach not only strengthens their leadership but also ensures a holistic and supportive environment conducive to both academic and personal growth.

3.4.3.1 Effective leadership practices

Effective leadership practices emerged as a significant theme in understanding the coping mechanisms of resilient school heads. These leaders showcased a variety of strategic approaches to manage the diverse challenges they encountered. They emphasized the importance of setting a clear vision and mission for their schools, which provided a guiding framework for decision-making and goal setting. Additionally, they utilized data-driven strategies to monitor progress and make informed adjustments, ensuring that their schools remained on a path of continuous improvement. The ability to foster a collaborative culture among staff and students also stood out, as it cultivated a sense of shared responsibility and collective effort towards achieving school objectives.

School Head A revealed that;

" One of the key strategies I rely on is setting a clear and compelling vision for our school. By articulating our goals and expectations clearly, I ensure that everyone—teachers, students, and parents—is on the same page. This shared understanding helps us to work together more effectively and stay focused on our long-term objectives, even when we face immediate challenges."

This was also supported by School Head B by saying;

" Effective leadership, in my experience, involves a lot of data analysis. We regularly review student performance data, attendance records, and other key indicators to identify areas where we need to improve. This data-driven approach allows us to make

informed decisions and implement strategies that directly address our most pressing issues, ensuring that we are always moving forward."

Similarly, School Head C said;

"Collaboration is at the heart of my leadership style. I believe that by fostering a strong sense of community and teamwork among my staff and students, we can tackle any challenge more effectively. Regular meetings, open communication channels, and collaborative problem-solving sessions are some of the ways I promote this culture, which has proven to be incredibly resilient in the face of adversity."

Anderson and Ackerman-Anderson [48] reinforced the importance of effective leadership practices in fostering resilience among school heads. For instance, Anderson and Ackerman-Anderson [48]. highlighting the role of resilient leadership in navigating complex educational environments. Their research suggests that leaders who set clear visions and foster a collaborative culture are better equipped to handle the dynamic challenges of modern schools.

In addition, Day and Sammons [49] underscored the importance of data-driven decision-making in educational leadership. Their findings indicate that school heads who utilize data to guide their strategies are more successful in achieving sustainable improvements and maintaining resilience. These studies support the theme identified in the multi-case study, demonstrating the universal applicability of effective leadership practices in enhancing the resilience of school heads.

3.4.3.2 Ethical leadership and well-being

The theme of ethical leadership and well-being emerged prominently in understanding the coping mechanisms of resilient school heads. These leaders demonstrated a strong commitment to ethical principles, ensuring that their decisions were transparent and fair, thereby fostering trust within the school community. They also prioritized the well-being of their staff and students, recognizing that a supportive and healthy environment was crucial for effective learning and teaching. Implementing wellness programs and providing mental health resources were some of the ways they addressed the

holistic needs of their school community. The emphasis on ethical leadership and well-being not only helped in navigating challenges but also in building a resilient and cohesive school culture.

School Head A unveiled that;

" Ethical leadership is at the core of my approach. I believe that leading by example and maintaining transparency in all my decisions helps build trust among staff and students. When they see that decisions are made fairly and ethically, it creates a positive atmosphere that is essential for overcoming challenges together."

School Head B said;

"The well-being of my staff and students is a top priority. We have implemented various wellness programs, including mental health workshops and regular check-ins, to ensure that everyone feels supported. A healthy school environment is not just about physical health but also about emotional and mental well-being, which is critical in managing the stresses and demands of school life."

In addition, School Head C uncovered;

"I have found that fostering a culture of ethical behavior and well-being makes a significant difference in how we handle challenges. By promoting values like integrity and empathy, and providing resources for mental health, we create a supportive community that can face adversity with resilience. This holistic approach to leadership ensures that both staff and students are motivated and equipped to tackle any issues that arise."

Shapiro and Stefkovich [50] highlighted the crucial role of ethical decision-making in school leadership, suggesting that leaders who prioritize ethics foster trust and collaboration, which are vital in overcoming challenges. Similarly, Boyatzis and McKee [51] discuss the impact of emotional intelligence and well-being on effective leadership. Their research indicates that leaders who focus on the well-being of their staff and students create more resilient and productive school environments. These findings support the theme identified in the multi-case study, underscoring the significant role of ethical

leadership and well-being in enhancing the resilience of school heads.

3.4.4 Cross-case analysis of the policy recommendations proposed by the school head to institutionalize resilient leadership

In response to the dynamic problems that educational institutions face, School Heads A, B, and C have suggested a set of policy suggestions focusing on two important topics. For starters, there is a communal emphasis on leadership development policies. Recognizing the critical function of continuous professional development, these school leaders stress the importance of robust training programs and mentorship opportunities for both current and aspiring leaders. School Heads A, B, and C advocate for systematic leadership development initiatives as essential to fostering a capable and resilient leadership pipeline, drawing on their unique experiences.

Secondly, the implementation of data-informed policies is highlighted as a key strategy. By utilizing data to drive decisions, these school heads underscore the importance of evidence-based approaches in managing school operations and improving educational outcomes. They emphasize the role of data analytics in identifying trends, assessing performance, and making informed adjustments to policies and practices. School Heads A, B, and C argue that a strong commitment to data-informed decision-making is crucial for the effective and adaptive leadership necessary in today's educational landscape.

3.4.4.1 Leadership development policies

The school heads emphasized the importance of creating structured and ongoing professional development programs to ensure that leaders are well-prepared to handle the complexities of their roles. These programs include mentorship opportunities, leadership workshops, and continuous learning modules tailored to the unique challenges faced by school leaders. Additionally, they highlighted the need for policies that support collaborative leadership, encouraging a culture of shared responsibility and team-based problem-solving. By institutionalizing these leadership development policies, the school heads believe that they can create a sustainable framework for cultivating effective

and resilient leaders within the educational system.

School Head A revealed that;

"One of the key policy recommendations I propose is the establishment of comprehensive leadership development programs. These programs should offer ongoing training and mentorship for both new and experienced leaders. By providing a structured pathway for leadership growth, we can ensure that our school leaders are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate the evolving challenges of our educational landscape."

School Head B stated;

"I strongly advocate for policies that promote collaborative leadership. Creating opportunities for leaders to work together, share insights, and develop collective strategies is crucial. This not only fosters a supportive network among school leaders but also enhances our ability to address issues more effectively through shared expertise and diverse perspectives."

Also, School Head C said;

"Investing in leadership development is essential for building resilience within our schools. We need policies that prioritize continuous professional growth through workshops, seminars, and advanced training sessions. Such initiatives help leaders stay updated with the latest educational trends and innovations, enabling them to lead with confidence and adaptability."

The study of Halsey [52] underscore the importance of leadership development policies in fostering resilient educational leadership. This explores the impact of structured leadership training programs in schools, highlighting their effectiveness in enhancing leadership capabilities and resilience [53,54]. His research shows that ongoing professional development and mentorship are critical components in preparing leaders to meet the demands of their roles [55].

On the other hand, Gurr and Drysdale [56] discuss the benefits of collaborative leadership practices in promoting a culture of shared responsibility and collective problem-solving.

Their findings indicate that when school leaders engage in collaborative efforts, it leads to improved decision-making and stronger support networks. These studies support the theme identified in the multi-case study, reinforcing the importance of institutionalizing leadership development policies to cultivate resilient and effective school leaders.

3.4.4.2 Data-informed policies

The school heads emphasized the importance of utilizing data analytics to drive decision-making processes and improve educational outcomes. By systematically collecting and analyzing data on student performance, attendance, and other critical metrics, leaders can identify trends and areas needing intervention. They highlighted the need for policies that mandate regular data reviews and the integration of data insights into strategic planning. These data-informed policies not only enable more precise and effective responses to challenges but also foster a culture of continuous improvement and accountability within schools.

School Head A revealed that;

“One of the critical policy recommendations I propose is the institutionalization of data-driven decision-making processes. By regularly analyzing data on various aspects of school operations, we can make more informed and effective decisions. This approach helps us identify problems early and implement targeted interventions that improve student outcomes and overall school performance.”

School Head B stated;

“We need policies that support the systematic collection and use of data. For instance, establishing a centralized data management system can help streamline the process and ensure that all stakeholders have access to accurate and timely information. This transparency and accessibility are crucial for fostering trust and collaboration among staff, students, and parents.”

Further, School Head C said;

“Data-informed policies are essential for creating a responsive and adaptive school environment. By integrating data insights into

our strategic planning, we can anticipate challenges and proactively address them. Policies that promote regular data review sessions and training for staff on data utilization are vital for maximizing the benefits of this approach.”

The findings were supported by Goss and Sonnemann [57] who highlighted the impact of data-driven decision-making in improving educational outcomes in schools. Their research indicates that schools that effectively use data to guide their strategies see significant improvements in student performance and overall school effectiveness. Further, Masters [58] discusses the role of data in educational leadership, emphasizing how data analytics can enhance strategic planning and resource allocation [59,60]. His findings suggest that data-informed policies lead to more precise and effective interventions, ultimately contributing to a resilient and adaptive educational environment. These studies support the theme identified in the multi-case study, reinforcing the importance of institutionalizing data-informed policies to cultivate resilient and effective school leaders [61,62,63].

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study has tackled multiple cases of Resilient School Leaders assigned in the Integrated Senior High Schools in Davao De Oro Division. Here, the researcher accounted for the unique identities and characteristics of each case namely: School Head A, School Head B, and School Head C. Researcher believe that these cases represent the picture of other School Heads in the Integrated Senior High Schools of the Region. Another focused on the experiences of a Resilient School Head, their challenges and coping mechanisms, as well as the policy recommendations.

In this study, the researcher analyzed each data through thematic analysis and cross-case analysis. Each case had distinct characteristics and commonalities such as strategic vision and planning, effective communication and collaboration, and resource management and optimization. Their experience had different emerging themes, the only common were resourcefulness and creativity community engagement and collaboration. Their coping mechanisms were effective leadership practices ethical leadership and well-being. Their policy

recommendations were leadership development policies data-informed policies. This suggests that strong leadership skills were key to school heads successfully navigating the challenges of integrated senior high schools. This leadership style, in turn, positively impacted teachers and students who learn by observing their principal's actions. To gain deeper insights in the future, researchers could consider using a different approach, such as a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods.

Building on the insights gained from successful school leaders, we can develop policy recommendations to make resilient leadership the norm across all schools in the region. While existing policies must be followed, additional measures are needed.

CONSENT

As per international standards or university standards, respondents' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

ETHICAL APPROVAL

As per international standards or university standards written ethical approval has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to acknowledge the Institute of Advanced Studies of the Davao del Norte State College, Panabo City, Davao del Norte, Philippines, that funded this research project.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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