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INVESTIGATING THE DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR QUALITY EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT: This study examined the different approaches to school administration and supervision and their implications for delivering quality education in selected Basic Education, Technical-Vocational, and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) located in Toledo City, Pinamungajan, and Aloguinsan within the 3rd District of Cebu Province, Philippines. In the context of globalization, technological advancement, and shifting socio-cultural norms, schools face increasing challenges that indicate that they require ethical and responsive leadership to ensure equitable access to education. Anchored on applied educational management and aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), the research explored how various leadership models—ranging from traditional bureaucratic to modern transformational, instructional, and distributed approaches—impact teacher performance, curriculum implementation, student achievement, and the overall school climate. Employing a mixed-methods design, the study collected quantitative data through standardized survey questionnaires from 75 respondents composed of administrators, department heads, and teachers, analyzed using descriptive statistics. Semi-structured interviews with selected school leaders provided complementary qualitative insights, which we analyzed thematically to uncover recurring patterns and deeper perspectives on leadership practices. Results showed that transformational and instructional leadership were the most widely practiced and effective styles, significantly enhancing teacher performance, curriculum delivery, and student engagement. Challenges identified included limited resources, insufficient time for supervision, and lack of continuous professional training. The findings highlight the importance of adaptive, inclusive, and context-sensitive leadership in strengthening school performance and advancing the objectives of SDG 4. The study recommends sustained leadership development initiatives and policy interventions tailored to the specific needs of different educational levels and institutions.

Keywords: Cebu Province, Philippines; SDG 4; educational leadership; school administration; instructional supervision; transformational leadership; distributed leadership; educational management; quality education.

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INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness of school administration and supervision plays a critical role in shaping the overall quality of education within academic institutions (Syarifuddin et al., 2024). With the rapid changes brought about by globalization, technological advancements, and shifting social and cultural contexts, school leaders are increasingly required to adopt a broader set of management and supervisory approaches to maintain organizational efficiency and provide teachers with the necessary support for effective instruction. Grounded in the principles of applied educational management, this study examined various leadership models—ranging from traditional hierarchical approaches to contemporary frameworks such as transformational, instructional, and distributed leadership (Bush, 2020)—and their potential to enhance educational quality.

Aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which emphasizes equitable access to inclusive and high-quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all (Chotikapanich et al., 2022), the study sought to explore how different administrative and supervisory styles influence teacher performance, curriculum implementation, student achievement, and the overall school environment. Understanding the strengths and limitations of each leadership model provides a foundation for developing policies, capacity-building initiatives, and training programs aimed at advancing educational equity and responsiveness (Theoharis, 2024).

This research concentrated on Basic Education, Technical-Vocational, and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Toledo City, Pinamungajan, and Aloguinsan—municipalities within the 3rd District of Cebu Province. The findings generated evidence-based insights for educators, administrators, and policymakers, encouraging the adoption of adaptive and context-specific leadership strategies designed to meet the complex demands of 21st-century education while reinforcing global commitments to sustainable, inclusive, and high-quality learning for all (Romdhani et al., 2024).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify and describe the different approaches to school administration and supervision practiced in Basic Education, Technical-Vocational, and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Toledo City, Pinamungajan, and Aloguinsan, Cebu Province.
2. To assess the impact of these administrative and supervisory strategies on educational quality, particularly in terms of teacher performance, curriculum delivery, student achievement, and the overall school climate.
3. To recommend effective and context-appropriate leadership practices that support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) and promote inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education.

RELATED LITERATURE

Understanding the varied approaches to school leadership and supervision, and their implications for quality education, requires a review of relevant and up-to-date studies that highlight existing practices, theoretical perspectives, and empirical findings (Yilmaz et al., 2022). This body of literature provides valuable insights into the evolving field of educational leadership and its alignment with the objectives of Sustainable Development

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Goal 4 (SDG 4). Recent research from 2025 offers important perspectives on how leadership approaches influence teaching effectiveness, student outcomes, and institutional performance, particularly within the Philippine context (Ferenal et al., 2025).

Delos Santos (2025), in the *Philippine Journal of Educational Leadership*, examined the role of transformational leadership in Philippine secondary schools. The study demonstrated that transformational practices contribute significantly to fostering a positive school culture, motivating teachers, and raising student academic performance. It concluded that leaders who cultivate a shared vision and actively involve stakeholders in school improvement initiatives play a crucial role in enhancing educational quality.

Similarly, Garcia and Villanueva (2025), writing in the *Southeast Asian Education Review*, explored instructional supervision and its role in teacher growth and student success. Their study, conducted in public schools across Cebu Province, revealed that strategies such as mentoring, classroom observations, and structured feedback mechanisms strengthen teacher effectiveness and ensure that instructional practices are aligned with SDG 4 objectives.

At the global level, UNESCO's 2025 report *Insights on Education: Reconsidering School Leadership for Sustainable Development Objectives* underscored the pivotal role of school leaders in advancing SDG 4. The report emphasized the importance of adaptive and flexible leadership approaches, particularly in resource-constrained settings, to ensure equitable, accessible, and high-quality education. It highlighted the need for leadership practices that not only promote lifelong learning but also build institutional resilience in addressing contemporary educational challenges (Kucuksuleymanoglu, 2025).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section presents the methodological framework adopted to analyze the different approaches to school administration and supervision, as well as their impact on the quality of education (Taghizadeh Kerman et al., 2021). It details the research design, study location, participants, sampling techniques, instruments for data collection, and methods of data analysis (Korstjens et al., 2018). The overall goal was to generate reliable and valid findings through a systematic and structured process that could inform the improvement of educational leadership practices, particularly in basic education, technical-vocational, and higher education institutions (HEIs) within the 3rd District of Cebu Province.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study utilized a descriptive-evaluative research design to identify, describe, and assess the various models of school administration and supervision, as well as their implications for educational quality in the participating institutions (Sabban et al., 2021).

RESEARCH LOCALE

The investigation was conducted in selected Basic Education, Technical-Vocational, and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) situated in Toledo City, Pinamungajan, and Aloguinsan, which are municipalities in the 3rd District of Cebu Province, Philippines.

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RESPONDENTS TO THE STUDY

Respondents included school administrators, department heads, and teachers from the selected institutions who have direct involvement in leadership, supervision, and instructional planning (Violet, M. N. (2015).

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

This study applied purposive sampling, selecting participants based on their direct involvement in school leadership, supervision, and instructional planning (Naguit, 2024). As a non-probability sampling method, it ensured that only individuals with the necessary expertise, knowledge, and responsibilities relevant to the study's objectives were included. The respondents consisted of school administrators, department heads, and teachers from Basic Education, Technical-Vocational, and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) located in Toledo City, Pinamungajan, and Aloguinsan in the 3rd District of Cebu Province.

By focusing on participants who held significant roles in school management and instructional oversight, the study ensured that the data gathered was not only reliable and context-specific but also capable of yielding valid findings with meaningful implications for educational leadership practices (Akomodi, 2025).

DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENTS

To obtain comprehensive and relevant data, the study employed both quantitative and qualitative instruments:

Structured Survey Questionnaire. A standardized survey tool was used to collect quantitative data on the different administrative and supervisory practices implemented within the selected institutions (O'Sullivan, 2020). The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended items designed to measure the perceived effectiveness, frequency of use, and impact of leadership styles on teacher performance, curriculum delivery, and student achievement (Gacicio, 2022).

Semi-Structured Interviews. To complement the survey results, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected school leaders, providing qualitative insights into the challenges, strategies, and contextual factors influencing leadership and supervision (Alkaabi, 2025). This approach allowed for the exploration of deeper perspectives, the uncovering of nuanced experiences, and the validation of survey responses (Tracy, 2024).

The use of both tools facilitated triangulation, ensuring a more accurate, credible, and holistic understanding of the connection between leadership practices and educational quality in the study areas (Burton et al., 2017).

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DATA ANALYSIS

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were applied to analyze the collected data:

Quantitative Analysis. Descriptive statistical techniques—including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation—were employed to interpret the survey results (Vetter, 2017). These measures summarized the profiles of the respondents, identified the most common leadership and supervisory styles, and assessed their perceived effectiveness in relation to teaching quality, curriculum implementation, and student outcomes.

Qualitative Analysis. The interview responses were thematically analyzed to identify recurring patterns, contextual issues, and underlying meanings associated with school leadership practices. This enabled a richer interpretation of the data and provided complementary insights to the statistical findings.

QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis was employed to examine the responses obtained from the semi-structured interviews, allowing the identification of meaningful patterns and insights within the qualitative data. The process involved transcribing the interviews, coding the data systematically, and clustering related codes into broader, well-defined themes (Moser, 2019). Through this process, the researcher was able to highlight recurring issues, leadership practices, and challenges encountered by school administrators and leaders in the context of educational management and supervision.

This analysis uncovered deeper insights into the leadership behaviors of participants, offering rich contextual perspectives that reinforced and expanded upon the quantitative survey findings. The results revealed the lived realities of school leadership across various educational settings, drawing attention to both the enabling factors and barriers in implementing effective administrative and supervisory practices.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and interprets the study's findings based on data gathered from school administrators, department heads, and teachers across selected Basic Education, Technical-Vocational, and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Toledo City, Pinamungajan, and Aloguinsan, Cebu Province. The analysis integrates quantitative evidence from structured survey questionnaires with qualitative insights from semi-structured interviews. The discussion is organized around the study's objectives, focusing on school administration and supervisory practices, their effects on educational quality, and strategies for effective, context-responsive leadership aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4).

Figure 1. Employing a **descriptive-qualitative research design** allows the study to provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomena under investigation, capturing rich, detailed perspectives of the participants. The careful **selection of participants** ensures that the data gathered is relevant, representative, and reflective of the population being studied, thereby enhancing the credibility of the findings. The **development of instruments** tailored to the research objectives enables accurate and meaningful data collection, while systematic **data collection** ensures consistency and reliability across participants. Rigorous **processing and analysis** of the data allows emerging patterns, themes, and insights to be identified, providing a structured understanding of complex issues. Finally, the

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interpretation and validation of results ensure that conclusions drawn are accurate, trustworthy, and applicable, offering valuable implications for practice, policy, and further research in the context of the study.

Figure 2. Pinamungajan, Aloguinsan, and Toledo City, located in the 3rd District of Cebu Province, each possess distinct historical and socio-cultural contexts that shape educational leadership and governance. Pinamungajan, historically an agricultural and fishing community, has evolved with gradual urbanization, influencing its schools to adopt adaptive administrative practices responsive to local needs. Aloguinsan, with its mix of rural and semi-urban settings, reflects a community-oriented approach where collaborative and participatory leadership is valued to address resource limitations and promote effective instruction. Toledo City, as a more urbanized and industrial hub, faces complex educational challenges, requiring structured, yet flexible, administrative and supervisory strategies to maintain instructional quality across diverse institutions. The historical and socio-economic backgrounds of these municipalities imply that school leadership must be context-sensitive, balancing transformational, instructional, and distributed approaches to enhance teacher performance, curriculum implementation, and student outcomes, ultimately supporting inclusive, high-quality education aligned with SDG 4.

Figure 3. Investigating the different approaches to school administration and supervision highlights that effective educational leadership is pivotal in enhancing teaching quality, curriculum implementation, student outcomes, and overall school climate. The study's findings imply that adopting context-sensitive, flexible, and participatory leadership strategies—such as transformational, instructional, and distributed approaches—can significantly improve institutional performance across diverse educational settings. Additionally, the research underscores the importance of ongoing professional development, resource allocation, and stakeholder engagement to address challenges like limited supervision time and inadequate tools. These implications point to the need for policies and programs that strengthen school leadership, promote equitable and inclusive education, and align with Sustainable Development Goal 4 to ensure high-quality learning for all students.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents. The respondent profile shows adequate representation of major stakeholders in educational leadership, supervision, and instruction. Teachers comprised 53% of participants, ensuring that perspectives on how administrative and supervisory practices affect classroom instruction were well-documented. Department heads accounted for 27%, contributing valuable insights on subject-area coordination and mid-level management. School administrators made up 20% of respondents, offering perspectives from top-level governance and decision-making. This distribution ensures a balanced perspective across roles and responsibilities, reinforcing the validity of the study. The varied representation enhances the credibility of findings and ensures their relevance in policymaking, leadership training, and school improvement efforts in pursuit of SDG 4.

Table 2. Leadership and Supervisory Approaches. The quantitative analysis revealed that transformational leadership emerged as the most widely practiced and most effective leadership style, with a mean score of 4.45 and a relatively low standard deviation (0.52), indicating strong consistency in responses. Instructional supervision and distributed leadership were also rated highly, demonstrating strong support for collaborative, instructional, and participatory approaches.

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Conversely, bureaucratic administration and laissez-faire leadership styles received lower scores, suggesting limited perceived effectiveness in enhancing educational outcomes. These findings underscore the importance of adaptive, student-centered, and participatory leadership models in raising the quality of teaching and learning.

Table 3. Qualitative Insights. Thematic analysis of interview data supported the quantitative results by emphasizing the effectiveness of transformational and collaborative leadership approaches. Participants highlighted that while these practices foster inclusivity, motivation, and instructional improvement, structural and resource-related challenges—such as limited funding, insufficient training opportunities, and high administrative workloads—hamper consistent implementation of supervisory functions.

Respondents emphasized that flexible, context-sensitive leadership, combined with continuous professional development, is essential for sustaining improvements in educational quality. These findings suggest that policy directions should prioritize leadership training, capacity-building initiatives, and equitable resource allocation to strengthen school management systems across diverse educational contexts in Cebu Province.
Overall, the results reveal that effective school leadership is best achieved through transformative and collaborative practices, which not only complement quantitative evidence but also align with global education priorities under SDG 4.

The data in Table 4 indicate that transformational leadership is the most commonly practiced approach in the studied institutions, highlighting its central role in fostering collaboration, motivation, and instructional effectiveness. Instructional supervision and distributed leadership are also widely implemented, supporting teacher development and shared decision-making, while bureaucratic or traditional models and laissez-faire leadership are less prevalent, suggesting a shift away from rigid, hierarchical, or passive management styles. Overall, these findings imply that contemporary schools in Toledo City, Pinamungajan, and Aloguinsan increasingly prioritize adaptive, participatory, and instructional-focused leadership approaches to enhance educational quality and responsiveness to the needs of teachers and students.

The results in Table 5 suggest that effective leadership approaches significantly enhance key aspects of educational quality. Transformational, instructional, and distributed leadership positively influence teacher performance and the overall school climate, fostering a supportive and collaborative learning environment. These approaches also improve curriculum delivery and student learning outcomes, although the effect on students is slightly less pronounced, indicating areas for further development. Overall, the findings imply that strong, context-sensitive leadership is essential for promoting high-quality education, motivating teachers, and creating a conducive environment for student success.

The findings in Table 6 highlight the critical need for context-responsive leadership in schools to enhance educational quality and align with SDG 4. Prioritizing ongoing professional development ensures that leaders are equipped with current skills and knowledge, while encouraging participatory decision-making fosters collaboration and shared responsibility among stakeholders.

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Integrating local context into leadership practices allows strategies to be tailored to the unique needs of each school, and allocating adequate time and resources for instructional supervision supports effective teaching and learning. Promoting SDG 4 awareness further reinforces the commitment to equitable, inclusive, and high-quality education across all institutional levels.

FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1. Procedure

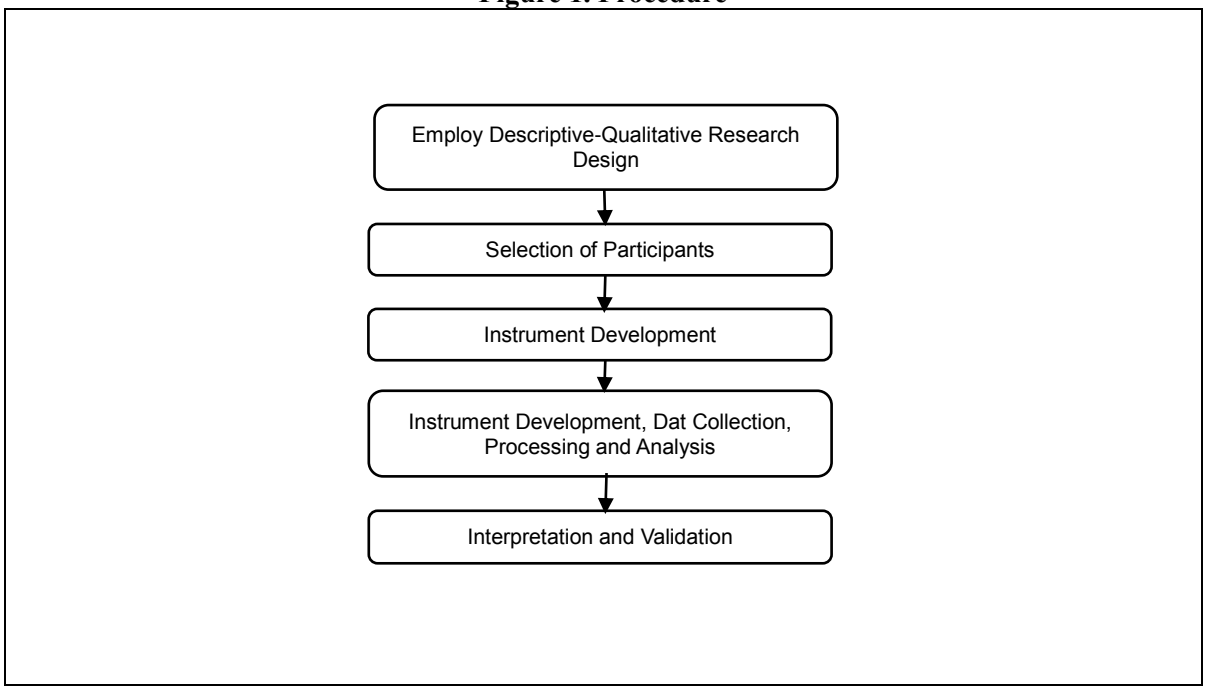

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Figure 2. Map of Cebu Province with Toledo City, Pinamungajan and Aloguinsan

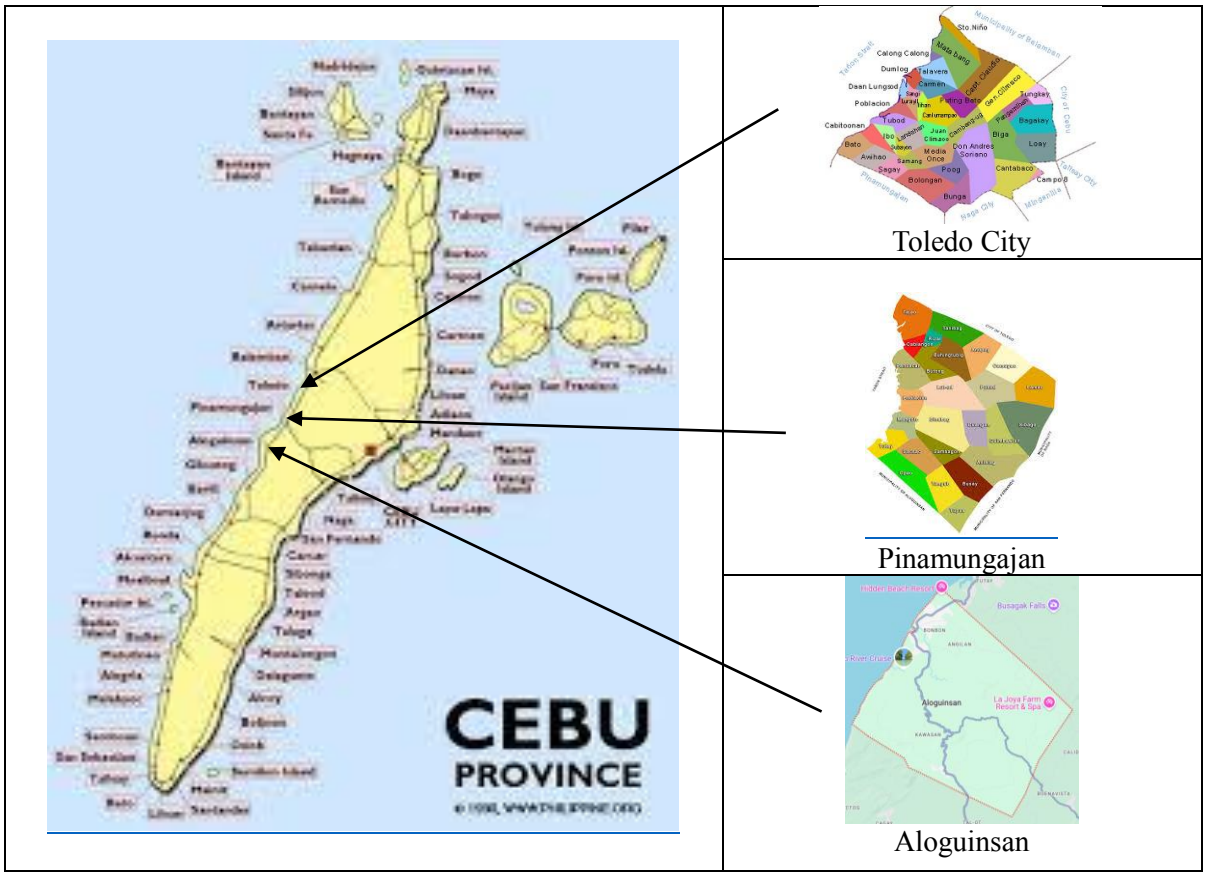

Figure 3. Investigating the different approaches to school administration and supervision

The different approaches to school administration and supervision and administration

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Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Group

Type of Respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Description of Role
School Administrators	15	20%	Principals, assistant principals, or school heads involved in overall management and supervision.
Department Heads	20	27%	Lead teachers or academic coordinators responsible for supervising subject areas or programs.
Teachers	40	53%	Classroom teachers directly involved in instruction and curriculum delivery.
Total	**75**	**100%**	

Table 2. Perceived Effectiveness of Leadership and Supervisory Approaches

Leadership/Supervisory Approach	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Interpretation
Transformational Leadership	60	80%	4.45	0.52	Very Highly Effective
Instructional Supervision	55	73%	4.30	0.60	Highly Effective
Distributed Leadership	50	67%	4.10	0.68	Highly Effective
Bureaucratic/Traditional Administration	30	40%	3.20	0.75	Moderately Effective
Laissez-Faire Leadership	15	20%	2.50	0.85	Less Effective

Table 3. Summary of Emerging Themes from Interview Responses

Theme	Description	Quotes
Theme 1: Transformational Leadership Impact	School heads emphasized the value of inspiring a shared vision, collaboration, and innovation.	"Engaging teachers in decision-making encourages them to take ownership of our programs' success."
Theme 2: Challenges in Instructional Supervision	Participants reported difficulties in monitoring teaching due to workload and limited resources.	"While supervision plays a vital role, we often lack the time and resources needed to carry it out efficiently."
Theme 3: Importance of Professional Development	Consistent need for leadership and teacher training was observed across all institutions.	*"Ongoing professional development is essential, as no leadership approach can be effectively applied without it."*
Theme 4: Need for Context-Sensitive Approaches	School leaders highlighted the need to adapt strategies to local community and school context.	"Since each school context is different, we tailor our strategies to fit the needs of our educators and students."

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Table 4. Approaches to School Administration and Supervision (Objective 1)

Approaches	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Interpretation
Transformational Leadership	60	80%	4.45	0.52	Very Common
Instructional Supervision	55	73%	4.30	0.60	Common
Distributed Leadership	50	67%	4.10	0.68	Moderately Common
Bureaucratic/Traditional Model	30	40%	3.20	0.75	Occasionally Practiced
Laissez-Faire Leadership	15	20%	2.50	0.85	Rarely Practiced

The results indicate that transformational and instructional approaches are the most common types of leadership used in basic education, technical-vocational, and HEIs in the locations studied. These results indicate an increasing transition from conventional bureaucratic frameworks to more collaborative, teacher-centric, and performance-oriented methodologies, in accordance with contemporary trends in educational leadership.

Table 5. Perceived Impacts of Leadership Approaches on Educational Quality (Objective 2)

Educational Aspect	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Interpretation
Teacher Performance	4.35	0.55	Strong Positive Impact
Curriculum Delivery	4.20	0.60	Positive Impact
Student Learning Outcomes	4.10	0.65	Moderate to Strong Impact
School Climate/Environment	4.25	0.58	Strong Positive Impact

Table 6. Recommendations for Context-Responsive Leadership (Objective 3)

Recommendation	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Interpretation
Provide Ongoing Professional Development for Leaders	65	87%	Highly Recommended
Encourage Participatory Decision-Making	60	80%	Strongly Recommended
Integrate Local Context into Leadership Practices	55	73%	Strongly Recommended
Allocate Time/Resources for Instructional Supervision	50	67%	Recommended
Promote SDG 4 Awareness and Alignment	45	60%	Recommended

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Summary

This study investigated various approaches to school administration and supervision and their effects on delivering quality education in Basic Education, Technical-Vocational, and Higher Education Institutions in Toledo City, Pinamungajan, and Aloguinsan, Cebu, Philippines. Using a mixed-methods design, data were gathered from 75 administrators, department heads, and teachers through surveys and interviews. Findings revealed that transformational and instructional leadership were the most effective in improving teacher performance, curriculum implementation, and student engagement, while challenges included limited resources, time constraints, and insufficient professional training. The study underscores the need for adaptive, inclusive, and context-sensitive leadership and recommends sustained leadership development and tailored policy interventions to strengthen school performance and support the goals of SDG 4.

Findings

Most Common Leadership Approaches. Transformational and instructional leadership emerged as the most common and most effective leadership styles across higher education and technical-vocational institutions. Distributed leadership was also applied to a moderate extent, fostering collaboration and shared responsibility among personnel. However, bureaucratic methods were still evident in some basic education schools, particularly in handling administrative processes.

Perceived Effects on Educational Quality.. Respondents perceived leadership and supervisory practices as having substantial effects on teacher performance (M = 4.35), school climate (M = 4.25), and curriculum delivery (M = 4.20). Student outcomes were also positively influenced (M = 4.10), though to a slightly lesser extent, indicating areas for continued improvement.

Challenges Identified.. Participants consistently reported challenges such as limited time for supervision, inadequate tools and monitoring mechanisms, and lack of consistent training opportunities. These constraints hindered the sustained implementation of effective leadership practices, particularly in resource-constrained schools.

Contribution to SDG 4.. The study highlighted the alignment of effective leadership strategies with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which promotes inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all. Respondents emphasized that leadership development, participatory governance, and localized decision-making are essential in building school systems that respond to diverse educational contexts.

Conclusion

The study revealed that competent school administration and supervision play a pivotal role in enhancing the quality of education. Leadership models that prioritize collaboration, instructional support, and shared responsibility—such as transformational and distributed leadership—tend to foster teacher engagement, improve learning environments, and strengthen curriculum implementation.

Nonetheless, the effectiveness of these leadership styles is shaped by contextual factors such as institutional type, resource availability, and access to professional development. Strengthening leadership practices that are responsive, inclusive, and aligned with the principles of SDG 4 is crucial in advancing equitable and learner-centered education in diverse Philippine educational settings.

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Recommendations

1. **Enhance Leadership Training and Professional Development.**
   Provide continuous capacity-building programs for school leaders across all educational levels, emphasizing transformational, instructional, and distributed leadership approaches.
2. **Contextualize Leadership Practices.**
   Adapt supervisory and administrative strategies to suit the unique needs of schools, taking into account local resources, community conditions, and institutional goals.
3. **Allocate Resources for Supervision.**
   Invest in sufficient time, tools, and personnel to ensure consistent and effective instructional supervision, particularly in basic education schools where monitoring mechanisms are often limited.
4. **Integrate SDG 4 into Governance Structures.**
   Encourage schools to embed the principles of inclusivity, equity, and lifelong learning into their policies, leadership frameworks, and decision-making processes.
5. **Strengthen Stakeholder Participation.**
   Promote participatory governance by involving teachers, students, parents, and community members in school planning and decision-making to ensure accountability, responsiveness, and shared ownership of initiatives.

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