

# Reshaping School Culture: Amidst Academic Transition

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**Abstract.** The study unfolded the experiences of the school principals in reshaping positive school culture. This study employed a phenomenological research design to determine the experiences and perceptions of the eight (8) participants. The generated themes on the positive experiences of school principals were the promotion of research activities and teacher participation. On the negative experiences, the generated themes were time constraints and conflicting ideas of the members. Meanwhile, regarding the coping ways, the generated themes influenced unity of purpose, developing collaborative leadership, and shaping learning partners. Lastly, the generated themes on the insights drawn from the experiences of the school principals were developing a growth mindset, applying effective school management, and providing an avenue for capacity building. These implied that reshaping a positive school culture requires competent administration, effective leadership, and sound judgment, agreement, and experience. The most excellent method for reshaping positive school culture in the most effective, efficient, and fruitful way possible is to support improvements.

## KEY WORDS

1. School Culture 2. Educational Leadership 3. Student Achievement

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## 1. Introduction

Understanding How to Build School Culture Is a Key Piece of the Educational Leadership Process. Leaders focus on curating school culture so much because it may be the most significant factor in influencing jobs, and they cannot do it themselves. This is a vital part of the educational leadership process. An extremely dark room with no windows can be changed quickly when a sliver of light filters through a small crack, creating a magnificent illumination. The same can be said when examining school culture and leadership. A teacher's perception may depend on the darkness of the school's culture or how well the leadership illuminates it. Perception is built on prior experiences, and a

leader's words are crucial to understanding. In the global study, Whitaker (2009) asserted that studies have been conducted to determine the secret to improving school culture and leadership. However, few have probed into comparing the two in schools based on poverty levels. Successful leadership requires a leader who can unify, create harmony, and produce effective results. In a school with a culture of unity and a shared vision that produces harmony and effective results, there is beautiful music, and successful leadership of a school requires nothing less (Hallinger Heck, 1996). A principal who can bring the faculty and staff together, articulate a vision, and reinforce that vision until

others are inspired to embrace it achieves leadership success, thereby allowing the students to achieve greater academic fulfillment. A school is perceived to be successful by its teachers and students when the principal is focused on creating a climate conducive to that success. Gülşen and Gülenay (2014) found that because the product of a school is people, the concept of climate has become increasingly integral in education. In Turkey, Gulsen and Gulenay (2014) completed a study in one of the country's common high schools and found a positive correlation between a school's leader and school climate. Furthermore, there is agreement that school climate is one of the factors affecting student success in schools. In London, Mortimore and colleagues (2001) concluded that differences in student achievement between primary schools can be explained by an educational leadership that reflects involvement and commitment, monitoring students' progress, a positive atmosphere backed up by the involvement of school management and parents, and structured and well-regulated teaching. Further, as Wagner (2006) argues, many assessments and studies regarding school culture are conducted in the Philippines, providing compelling evidence to suggest a real connection between school culture and student achievement and learning. Monsanto (2016) has argued that reforms should start within the school's culture to improve the country's educational sector. School culture is recognized as the missing link in the school improvement conundrum. Being a school leader is not the same as in years past (Grobler, 2012). One study highlighted perceived changes in recent years as increased administrative demands, a greater emphasis on performance assessment, and a more significant push toward professional learning communities where the principal leads instruction. Principals are expected to work based on their schools' unique culture and values, which means there is a greater emphasis on building relationships with all school stakeholders. How-

ever, leadership training has not kept up with the changing times. There is a widespread belief that leadership quality significantly affects school and student outcomes, which requires trained, committed, and highly effective principals. Leadership encompasses many elements that are often conflicting or discursive. Principals must be able to balance all those elements while being aware of what impacts the climate of a school in order to meet demands and maximize outcomes (Scheerens & Sleegers, 2012). This study aims to determine what principals do that influences positive school culture and describe the challenges of establishing such culture and its benefits reflected through students' outcomes. Society and stakeholders need to understand the influence of school culture and leadership when deciding how to support education. School administrators must know the connections between school culture and their leadership. As noted earlier, several researchers have explored school culture and leadership. However, with a more in-depth exploration of school culture and leadership in the schools of Babak District, Island Garden City of Samal, the result of this study may help shape future school reform.

*1.1. Purpose of the Study*—This study aimed to investigate how principals influence positive school culture and describe the challenges of establishing it. Educators know that schools are ever-changing with each attempt to reform public schools, affecting school culture and leadership. School administrators know that to maintain a positive perception of a school, there must be a healthy school culture while supporting the faculty with managing student conduct, instructional practices, and strong school leadership. Therefore, faculty and administration must collaborate to identify the most challenging issues regarding cultural change.

*1.2. Research Questions*—The primary research questions of this study were the following:

- (1) What are the experiences of school heads in reshaping school culture?
- (2) How do they cope with the challenges of reshaping a positive school culture?
- (3) What educational management insights are drawn from the study?

This study may be significant to the following key stakeholders: DepEd Officials. The study's findings shed light on policymakers' ability to provide school administrators with updated leadership training relevant to changing times. This will strengthen their structure and process features to successfully translate reform initiatives, resulting in tangible impacts on students' learning and achievements. School Administrators. The study's findings gave them ideas on how to influence teachers to accept change and promote a good school culture. Teachers. The study may be meaningful to them as the findings would motivate them to contribute to shaping a positive school culture for better student outcomes. Future Researchers. The findings generated provided comprehensive data in conducting future research with a similar or relevant scope. The following terms were defined for use in this study: School Culture is the guiding beliefs or ethos, underlying assumptions, expectations, norms, and values that give a school its identity, influence how a school operates, and affect the behavior of principals, teachers, support staff, and learners. Effective Schools, qualified teachers, and administrators conduct an effective school safely. Everyone in education should have goals and high expectations for the school and its students.

*1.3. Review of Significant Literature*—The literature provides assumptions, observations, claims, propositions, and findings by various authorities related to the study's variables.

*1.3.1. Leadership*—Leadership is perceived as a social influence process where an individual intentionally influences others to build activities or relationships in an organization or group (Hoy Miskel, 2010). Effective leaders impact employee morale, foster caring relationships, provide a safe workplace, and build

school-student bonds (Parrett Budge, 2012). Kotter (1990) emphasized creating a sense of urgency and vision for change, while Fullan (2006) highlighted the importance of relationships, morals, and values in leadership. Transformational leaders inspire with charisma and see life-changing events as challenges (Bennis Thomas, 2002; Hoy Miskel, 2008). Key traits of effective leaders include self-confidence, stress tolerance, emotional maturity, integrity, and extroversion (Hoy Miskel, 2008). Leaders must also manage student conduct and facilitate high professional instructional practices and support standards (Hornig Loeb, 2010).

*1.3.2. School Climate*—School climate affects student behavior and academic achievement. A positive climate buffers the adverse effects of self-criticism and is crucial for nurturing a learning-conducive environment (Loukas, Suzuki, Horton, 2006; Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness, 2011). Establishing a common understanding of school climate among staff is vital for fostering a positive atmosphere (Center for Comprehensive School Reform, 2009). Key dimensions of school climate include rules and norms, physical security, social-emotional security, support for learning, respect for diversity, and leadership (National School Climate Council, 2014). Principal leadership significantly impacts school climate, influencing teachers' self-efficacy and job satisfaction (Adeogun Olisaemeka, 2011; Manthey, 2006).

*1.3.3. School Culture and Performance*—Effective schools are characterized by a productive school climate and culture, marked by interpersonal relationships, collaboration, and faculty input in decision-making (Levine Lezotte, 1990; Sammons et al., 1995). School culture includes basic assumptions, values, and artifacts

that shape behavior and expectations (Schein, 1985). Teachers form social groups with their own rules and standards, influencing students' behavior and attitudes (Rutter et al., 1979). Cultural elements in schools, such as respect for others and collaboration, are operationalized into behavioral norms and artifacts that reflect underlying assumptions and values (Stolp Smith, 1995; Van Hoewijk, 1991).

*1.4. Theoretical Lens*—This study was anchored on Brown's Structural-Functionalist Approach (1944). He stated that culture does not serve individual needs but rather an objective entity that goes beyond individuals. In his view, the function of culture refers primarily to integrating social groups. Moreover, Radcliffe-Brown has broadened Malinowski's theory, which focused on functions, by identifying the concept of 'structure.' 'Structure' is as central to his theory as the 'function' of culture. His functionalist theory of human community is grounded by a presupposed analogy between social and organic life, which leads to the notion of society as a system of functions of a social structure. In Radcliffe-Brown's view, social structure is an arrangement of individuals in institutionally controlled or defined relationships. The social structure cannot be further reduced to specific processes or constructs. Radcliffe-Brown, thereby, refers to Durkheim's argument that "social and cultural phenomena can only be explained by social concepts" instead of physiological or psychological concepts. Moreover, this study was anchored on Parsons's (1951) Social Systems Theory. He, therefore, identified four system types: biological organic systems, psychological systems, social systems, and cultural systems. Biological organic systems determine which actions individuals take from a physical perspective. Psychological systems re-

fer to the need and motivational dispositions of social actors. Social systems consist of interdependent roles within collectivities, in which "specific interaction is regulated by norms, that are rooted in values and derived from values." Cultural systems encompass value and meaning bases for action. The cultural system provides meaningful orientation towards the environment, action, physical world, personality, and social systems. In Parsons's view, the personality system is an operating system for individuals' actions. The social system controls the personalities of its members, and the cultural system, in turn, acts on the social system. In addition, the Distributive Leadership Theory of Hutchins (1990) also served as a basis for this study. The distributed leadership theory holds that educational leadership is often not held in one person but is distributed among multiple individuals. A leadership body has multiple individuals with the tools and skills to contribute to the organization's success. Distributive leadership can play a crucial role in school improvement. Distributive leadership diffuses leadership throughout the whole organization, thus making the school or organization less dependent on individual leaders. This type of leadership can be more stable and lead to less attrition because the overall operations are not tied to an individual. Even when the leader leaves the school, leadership stays intact through the various networks. Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the study. Based on the figure, there are two interconnected variables. These variables are the Experiences of school heads in reshaping school culture, coping with the challenges of reshaping positive school culture, and educational management insights drawn from the study.

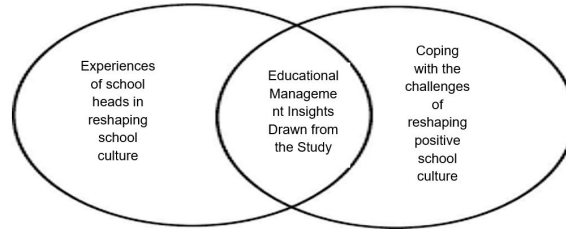


Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

## 2. Methodology

In this chapter, the researcher introduces the philosophical assumptions, qualitative assumptions, research procedures, participants, data collection, and analysis. Artificial intelligence (AI) was used for proofreading, as it is a common ethical practice in many articles today. Exploring facts and knowledge in this study necessitates the consequent design and implementation.

*2.1. Philosophical Assumptions*—The philosophical assumption was a framework used to collect, analyze, and interpret data in a specific field. It established the background for the following conclusions and decisions. Typical philosophical assumptions have different types and are elaborated below. *Ontology*. This part of the research pertains to how the issue relates to the nature of reality. According to Creswell (2012), reality is subjective and multiple, as seen by participants in the study. The ontological issue addresses the nature of reality for the qualitative researcher. The reality was constructed by individuals involved in the research situation. Thus, multiple realities exist, such as the realities of the researcher, those of individuals being investigated, and those of the reader or audiences interpreting the study. This study explored the realities of school principals in reshaping school culture. In this study, the researcher relied on the voices and interpretations of the participants through extensive quotes and themes that reflected their words and provided evidence of different perspectives. The participants' answers in the study were coded and analyzed to build and construct the commonality and discreteness of responses. The participants' responses were carefully coded to ensure the reliability of the result. The researcher upheld

the authenticity of the responses and precluded from making personal bias as the study progressed. *Epistemology*. This is the awareness of how knowledge claims were justified by staying as close to the participants as possible during the study to obtain firsthand information. Guba and Lincoln, as cited by Creswell (2012), stated that, based on the epistemological assumption, the researcher attempted to lessen the distance between himself or herself and the participants. He suggested that, as a researcher, he or she collaborates, spends time in the field with participants, and becomes an 'insider.' This study intended to understand the experiences of school principals in reshaping school culture. I followed the guidelines set by DepEd. It was assured that close interaction was established with the participants to gain direct information that would shed light on the knowledge behind the inquiry. *Axiology*. This was the role of values in research. Creswell (2012) stated that the role of values in a study was significant. Axiology suggested that the researcher openly discussed values that shaped the narrative and included his or her interpretation in conjunction with the participants' interpretation. I ensured the dignity and value of every information obtained from the participants. The researcher understood the personal and value-laden nature of

the information gathered from the study. Therefore, the researcher preserved the merit of the participants' answers and carefully interpreted them in light of their interpretation. Rhetoric. This philosophical assumption stressed that the researcher wrote in a literary, informal style using a personal voice, qualitative terms, and limited definitions. In the study context, the researcher used the first person to understand how stakeholders' partnerships in school-initiated programs were built and maintained between schools and the surrounding community.

*2.2. Qualitative Assumptions*—The methodology is different from the method. The methodology is a creative and responsive approach to understanding questions and subject matter, while the method refers to the exact knowledge and procedure (Gerodias, 2013). In this study, the lived experiences of the school principals in reshaping school culture were explored, particularly those participants from Babak District, Division of Island Garden City of Samal. The researcher learned the deeper meaning of their experiences, which became the basis for qualitative research. It is considered helpful in looking for meanings and motivations that underline cultural symbols, personal experiences, and phenomena. By using phenomenology, this need was hoped to be addressed by bringing the stories of the floating teachers so that, as David (2005) wrote, the themes, symbols, and meaning of the experiences were presented. Phenomenological research was based on two premises. The first was that experience is a valid, rich, and rewarding source of knowledge; this experience is a source of knowledge and shapes one's behavior. From the definition, human experience was viewed as a cornerstone of knowledge about human phenomena and not an unreliable source. The second premise of phenomenological research is that the everyday world is a valuable and productive source of knowledge, that we can learn much about ourselves and reap key insights into the nature

of an event by analyzing how it occurs in our daily lives (Morrissey Higgs, 2006). By using phenomenology, which is concerned with the "what" and the "how" (Moustakas, 1995), the researcher projected that the subjective experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms of the physical education teachers were explored, and insights were drawn as the basis for possible future research and policy analysis about this research.

*2.3. Design and Procedure*—This study employed a qualitative approach to research, specifically a phenomenological research design since it focused on the realities of English teachers in supporting the difficulty and unique needs of learners in a private institution. According to Creswell (2012), phenomenology is an approach to qualitative research that focuses on the commonality of lived experiences within a particular group. The fundamental goal of the approach is to arrive at a description of the nature of the phenomenon. Typically, interviews were conducted with individuals with first-hand knowledge of an event, situation, or experience. Other forms of data, such as documents, observations, and art, were also used. The data were read and reread and were culled for phrases and themes grouped into clusters of meanings. Through this process, the researcher could construct the universal meaning of the event, situation, or experience and arrive at a more profound understanding of the phenomenon. Moreover, Maxwell (2013) added that phenomenology, rooted in philosophy, psychology, and education, attempted to extract the purest, untainted data. In some interpretations of the approach, the researcher used bracketing to document personal experiences with the subject to help remove him or her from the process. One method of bracketing is taking notes. According to Corbetta (2003), the phenomenological research design is a qualitative type of research for which interviews provide an in-depth method that can grant access

to deep knowledge and explanations and help grasp the subjects' perspective. Creswell (2012) also claimed that interviews were primarily used in qualitative research. They occurred when researchers asked one or more participants general, open-ended questions and recorded their answers. Often, audio tapes were utilized to allow more consistent transcription. Interviews were useful for following up with individual respondents after questionnaires, such as further investigating their responses. In this qualitative research, interviews were used to explore the meanings of central themes in the world of their subjects. The main task in conducting interviews was to understand the meaning of what the interviewees would say (McNamara, 1999). Withal, based on Quad's (2016) statements, the researcher transcribed and typed the data into a computer file to analyze it after the interview. Interviews were beneficial for uncovering the story behind a participant's experiences and pursuing in-depth information about a topic. The researcher collected data from individuals who have experienced the phenomenon under investigation, typically via extended interviews. Next, the data analysis involved triangulation, extracting significant statements from the transcribed interviews. The significant statements were transformed into clusters of meanings according to how each statement fell under specific psychological and phenomenological concepts. Moreover, these transformations were tied together to make a general description of the experience, both the textural description of what was experienced and the structural description of how it was experienced. The researcher incorporated his or her meaning of the experiences here. Finally, the report was written so that readers could better understand the essential, invariant structure of the essence of the experience. Conversely, several challenges have been pointed out. The researcher required a solid grounding in the philosophical guidelines of phenomenology. The subjects selected for the

study were individuals who had experienced the phenomenon. The researcher needed to bracket his or her own experiences and observations, which was challenging. The researcher needed to decide how and when his or her observations would be incorporated into the study. Epistemologically, phenomenological approaches were based on the paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity and emphasized the importance of personal perspective and interpretation. As such, they were a powerful tool for understanding subjective experience, gaining insights into people's motivations and actions, and cutting through the cluster of taken-for-granted assumptions and conventional wisdom. Since this study focused on exploring and assessing the experiences of school principals in reshaping school culture, the researcher intended to employ phenomenological qualitative research methods.

*2.4. Ethical Considerations*—Ethical considerations were significant in the design of this research study. The researcher needed to consider several ethical issues regarding the research participant in this fieldwork. Ethical considerations can be specified as one of the most essential parts of the research. The researcher must adhere to the research aims, imparting authentic knowledge, truth, and error prevention. Social Value. Research is essential to the society. In this study, the social value was focused on the experience of teachers. This study was conducted explicitly among the elementary teachers. This study also served as a basis for the higher authorities to create more programs and resolutions from which classroom teachers could benefit. Thus, the social problem that pushes the researcher's interest is the challenges English teachers face in supporting learners' difficulties and particular needs in a private institution. Informed Consent. In the conduct and practice of this study, the Treaty Principle of Participation, as cited by McLeod (2009), was adhered to. The invitation to the participants ensured that their participation in the research

was completely voluntary and based on understanding adequate information. The recruitment and selection of participants are lodged in the appendices of this study. Gaining the trust and support of research participants is critical to informed and ethical academic inquiry and phenomenological research (Walker, 2007, as cited by Pillierin, 2012). All participants were given an informed consent form before scheduling the interviews and participating in the phenomenological research process. Each participant was required to provide a signed personal acknowledgment, consent, and an indication of a willingness to participate in the study release. The purpose of the informed consent letter was to introduce the research effort, provide contact information, articulate the study's intent, request voluntary participation by the recipients, and anticipate the information the informants were expected to provide. All participants were required to sign and return the consent letter to the researcher before participating. Vulnerability of Research Participants. The study participants could answer the research instrument, for they are all professional teachers in public elementary schools. Thus, the researcher assured them that as a researcher, he or she can easily be reached through the contact number and address in case of any clarifications or questions about the study. Privacy and Confidentiality of Information. This study observed the Data Privacy Act of 2002 to ensure that the data cannot be traced back to their real sources to protect participants' identities. Thus, utmost care was taken to ensure the anonymity of the data sources. Hence, any printed output that was carried out from this study was kept in anonymity. Furthermore, all the issues were considered so the researcher and the respondents had no conflicts of interest. Any misleading information and representation of primary data findings in a biased way was avoided. Community Involvement. The researcher respected the respondents' local traditions, culture, and

views in this study. Moreover, this study did not use deceit in any stage of its implementation, specifically in recruiting the participants or data collection methods. Furthermore, the researcher expressed great pleasure in the interviewees' wholehearted participation in the study.

2.5. *Research Participants*—The participants of this study were the eight school principals of Babak District, Island Garden City of Samal. They were chosen based on the following criteria: they must have been in their present position for at least five years, regardless of their age, sex, and marital status, and they must have a very satisfactory rating in their OPCRF. The researcher utilized the purposive sampling design since the participants were chosen based on the criteria or purpose of the study (Creswell, 2014). It was also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling. The selection of the participants was purposefully done to ensure that the findings would be authentic (Marshall, 1996).

2.6. *Research Instrument*—In gathering data, the researcher utilized an in-depth interview questionnaire. The researcher developed the interview questionnaire, which was answered by the participants orally. These researcher-made interview questionnaires were developed upon consultation and validation by the experts and underwent several processes to accommodate their suggestions. The components to be validated include the language and the conceptual levels of questions if suited to the participant's level of understanding, the suitability of the items to the research design in which there should be no leading questions, and the alignment of the interview questions to the objective of the study.

2.7. *Data Collection*—The following was the step-by-step process of gathering the data needed. Asking permission from the Schools Division Superintendent. The researcher asked permission from the Schools Division Superin-



tendent to conduct the study in the identified school. The researcher sent a letter addressed to the Schools Division Superintendent with Chapters 1 and 2 attached, together with the research instrument, which explains the study's objectives and the identification of the participants. The researcher waited for the response of the SDS before conducting the study. Asking permission from the school heads. After securing the approval of the SDS, the researcher sent letters to the principals of the schools explaining the study to be conducted in their schools. Obtaining consent from the participants. The researcher asked permission from the participants and their parents/guardians. They were formally oriented about the study and the process they would undergo as participants. Conducting the interview. The researcher conducted the in-depth interview using the interview questionnaire. The profile of the participants was taken, notes were jotted down, and conversations were recorded using a sound recorder for ease of transcription. The researcher carefully listened and responded actively during the interviews. The researcher precisely transcribed the interviewees' responses by recalling their answers from the sound recorder. Since the participants used their vernacular language, the researcher translated it into English. Data Coding and thematizing. After the transcription, the data were then categorized and coded. Then, themes were extracted, and individual data within the participants were compared. The researcher then conducted a second round of interviews (FGD) to corroborate any data that needed further explanation and input from the participants; additional information gathered was examined thoroughly and integrated into the existing body of data. After this, data were compared between the participants in order to come up with patterns and trends.

2.8. *Data Analysis*—In analyzing the qualitative data, I used discourse analysis and thematic analysis. Discourse analysis focuses on

the language use and patterning of the study's informants, as reflected in the detailed transcripts of recorded speech (Bueno, 2016). I transcribed and analyzed the recorded in-depth interview and focus group discussion. Part of the analysis was to determine the challenges, coping mechanisms, and leadership behavior of female school leaders. Thematic analysis involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within data (Braun Clarke, 2006). It is a widely used method of analysis in qualitative research. In this study, I looked for patterns and themes generated in the transcribed in-depth interview and focus group discussion.

2.9. *Analytical Framework*—The framework analysis of this research was flexible, allowing the researcher to either collect all the data and then analyze it or do data analysis during the collection process. In the analysis stage, the gathered data was sifted, charted, and sorted per key issues and themes. This involves a five-step process: familiarization, identifying a thematic framework, indexing, charting, and mapping and interpretation (Ritchie Spencer, 1994). Familiarization refers to the process during which the researcher becomes familiarized with the transcripts of the data collected in the interview or focus group transcripts, observation, or field notes and gains an overview of the collected data (Ritchie Spencer, 1994). In other words, the researcher became immersed in the data by listening to audiotapes, studying the field, or reading the transcripts. Throughout this process, the researcher became aware of critical ideas and recurrent themes and made a note of them. Due to the sheer volume of data that can be collected in qualitative research, the researcher may be unable to review all the material. Thus, a selection of the data set was utilized. The choice depends on several aspects of the data collection process. For example, the mix of methods used are interviews, documents, and observations. The second stage, identifying a thematic framework, occurs after familiariza-

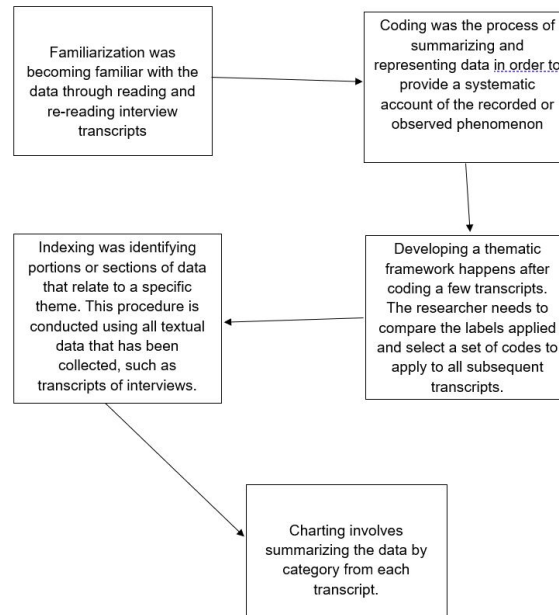


Fig. 2. Analytical Framework of the Study

tion, when the researcher recognizes emerging themes or issues in the data set. These emerging themes or issues may have arisen from a priori themes; however, at this stage, the researcher allowed the data to dictate the themes and issues. The researcher used the notes taken during the familiarization stage to achieve this end. The key issues, concepts, and themes expressed by the participants now form the basis of a thematic framework that can be used to filter and classify the data (Ritchie Spencer, 1994). Indexing means identifying data portions or sections corresponding to a particular theme. This process is applied to all the textual data gathered in the interviews' transcripts. For the sake of convenience, Ritchie and Spencer recommend that a numerical system be used for the indexing references and annotated in the margin beside the

text (1994). Qualitative data analysis tools are ideal for such a task. The final stage, mapping, and interpretation, involved the analysis of the key characteristics as laid out in the charts. This analysis provided a schematic diagram of the event/phenomenon, thus guiding the researcher in their interpretation of the data set. At this point, the researcher was cognizant of the objectives of qualitative analysis: "defining concepts, mapping range and nature of phenomena, creating typologies, finding associations, providing explanations, and developing strategies" (Ritchie Spencer, 1994). Once again, these concepts, technologies, and associations reflected the participant. Therefore, any strategy or recommendations made by the researcher echoed the true attitudes, beliefs, and values of the participants.

### 3. Results and Discussion

This chapter presents and discusses the study's results and its aim. Moreover, it examines the themes that emerged from the data gathered. The results show the description and background of the participants assigned pseudonyms to conceal their identities.

3.1. *Experiences of School Principals in Reshaping School Culture*—School principals encounter both positive and negative experiences in reshaping school culture. These experiences form an essential part of their approach to school development. They may influence subsequent behavior and are especially important when they form the context for situations involving some level of risk or uncertainty.

3.1.1. *Promotion of research activities*—DepEd is mandated to undertake national educational research and studies in the Philippines, which can become part of the basis for necessary reforms and policy inputs (Chapter 1, Section 7(5) of RA 9155). The current administration also recognizes the need for evidence-based policy development by instituting reforms that strengthen transparency and accountability among government entities. Further, it follows that RA 9155 mandates DepEd personnel to engage in research activities for future referrals and modifications. Knowledge of research methods enables administrators and teachers to continue growth and development and bring significant changes in school culture. Bottoms (2000) discussed in his article that competent school administrators and teachers engage in research activities to increase their knowledge and skill in creating school cultures that could improve learning and practice as rejoined by the innovation paper of (Gagabe,2024) where she stated that continuous improvement can be driven by research and the culture that goes with it, hence an avenue to practice a culture of research which was an online research journal was created. Hairon (2014) stated that research aims to produce new knowledge and improve practice while being informed by theory. He further stated that school principals' and teachers' research need not be less rigorous or objective than the academic variety's. Hairon (2014) advises them to follow the research steps like setting the research problem, exploring the literature, and establishing the research ques-

tion as closely as possible. If teachers themselves choose to conduct research, the concept will only be viable. Here, the school principal is crucial in allowing them to do so. Sangre (2011), a researcher in Singapore who focuses on educational leadership, counsels the school principal to increase capability through pertinent professional development. School principals may introduce teachers to external consultants or teachers with research experience to help them through each step of the research process and introduce them to short-term research workshops. This allows them to receive "just-in-time" assistance when required, such as when evaluating the literature or selecting an appropriate research strategy for their topic. The professional development of school principals and teachers advanced through research. It allows them to discern between well-liked and useful methods (Reeves, 2004). Researching requires dedication to one's practice and the field of study (Maclyntyre et al., 1994). It encourages a sense of value in giving back to the professional world (Tucker Stronge, 2005). They have improved their own practices by thinking about the qualities of this learning activity and preparing activities that, considering the data, should be enhanced by conveying the research's findings and conclusions.

3.1.2. *Participation of teachers in decision-making*—Teachers believed that decision-making should be strategic planning that involves a joint and collaborative process between school principals and teachers. A culture and a notion that decision-making is a joint duty of the teachers and school principal continue. In addition, the participants stated that this belief of the teachers is because the teachers themselves have attended participatory decision-making trainings not just trainings which are under the subject of curriculum and teaching pedagogies. Because of this, they frequently state that they feel qualified to make decisions for the school and that they are concerned that their choices

may have a positive effect on the overall performance of the school. Participants also reported that teachers have sufficient decision-making experience. This was primarily attributed to the school's preexisting culture, which held that decision-making was not reserved only for a select group of individuals, including principals, master teachers, and other stakeholders. The result of this is that teachers are not reluctant to speak out and give their thoughts at meetings. In order to support this conclusion, McEwan (2001) claims that teachers experience comfort when sharing decisions since they believe that such confidence is the domain of administrative personnel. These findings agree with those of Mbugua and Rarieya (2014), who conducted a study identifying several factors that facilitate teachers' involvement in planning. One of these factors is sufficient knowledge and expertise about strategic planning, as well as the sufficient vision and presence of shared experiences, individualized approaches, and a focus on the formal aspects of planning. The findings of this study corroborate the findings of Mbugua and Rarieya (2014). Furthermore, some authors have emphasized the significance of making time and opportunity for collaboration, as well as the requirement to involve teachers in collaborative processes and to promote their participation in such processes. Working together is difficult, and as such, it needs to be purposefully encouraged and supported. Participation is extremely important, yet the ways in which it is implemented can look very different from one institution to the next. The teachers are engaged, and they both exhibit a great willingness to participate in the pedagogical and managerial decisions being made. Teachers have the same levels of actual participation in managerial decisions as well as levels of interest or desire to participate in these decisions, according to the findings of a study conducted by Sarafioannidou and Chatziioannidis (2013).

### 3.1.3. *Time constraints within the group—*

The participants think that teachers can achieve much meaningful work in a relatively short time. They instruct many subjects or courses each day, review student work, prepare differentiated lessons to meet the needs of varied learners in their classrooms, and collaborate with parents and specialists to develop strategies for supporting individual students. The teaching experience is one of complete immersion. When teachers are at school, most of their time is spent face-to-face with students, simultaneously playing the roles of instructor, counselor, coach, and nurse. As a result, it is difficult for teachers to balance the time they have available to participate in managerial decisions and the time they have available to participate in instructional decisions.

In addition, it is not only the teachers who have dealt with time restraints; the participants have also shared that they have been in a similar position. They struggle to find a time that works for both them and the teachers, which creates a scheduling issue that makes it difficult for them to hold meetings where administrative decisions are made. There are numerous trainings that teachers and principals need to attend, urgent reports that need to be completed, the provision of technical assistance, the conduct of school activities, school monitoring, and other unforeseen circumstances. Some of the reasons why teachers and principals have a busy calendar are listed above. Principals' responsibilities typically require more time to complete. Issues with attendance, curriculum alignment, curriculum development, professional development, teacher selection, fiscal compliance with state standards, and dealing with disruptive kids are just some of the duties that continue to be placed on the shoulders of today's administrators (Rayfield Diamantes, 2004). The findings of this study were consistent with Murphy's (2013) study, in which he argued that the primary workday is chaotic and loaded with many interruptions and

difficulties that require attention. The findings of this study are in line with those of Murphy (2013). Principals are frequently tasked with either meeting with parents or addressing concerns raised by parents. They devote a significant portion of their day to attending meetings, both scheduled and unscheduled, as well as performing administrative responsibilities. It frequently seems as though the type of events and the pace at which they occur control the principals rather than the other way around. One of the primary problems of leadership for the success of schools is finding time to lead despite the pressures that administrators confront in their jobs.

*3.1.4. Conflicting Ideas of the members—* There is the possibility of a clash of viewpoints occurring during every stage of the decision-making process. When individuals' personalities and outlooks are incompatible with one another, it may be challenging for them to work together on a project. This may be the case when they have divergent interests and values. As a result of this, the participants understood and realized that throughout most of the school planning sessions, attendees of the meetings frequently presented ideas that were in direct opposition to one another. During a meeting or conference on reshaping school culture, the participants' time was taken up by the various ideas and conflicts being discussed. They tend to extend their sessions on occasion to develop beneficial solutions. The participants believed competing ideas inside the school that are not managed appropriately may have a detrimental impact on the overall performance of the institution. They have the potential to lower production while also influencing members' morale and confidence. On the other hand, for them, a

skillfully managed disagreement can assist in explaining concerns since it can produce fresh chances for conversation and develop relationships among members. These findings were consistent with those of Soyalp (2001), who posited that competing ideas are an inherent component of human and social life and cannot be separated from the two. According to the conventional perspective, conflicts are negative occurrences that should be avoided and are, instead, constructive forces that are necessary for organizations to maintain their existence in the modern world. It is not desirable to have conflicts, and failure will result merely from the fact that conflicts are not managed correctly and, as a result, have negative results. Therefore, rather than focusing on how to describe it as a concept, we ought to be concerned with how to effectively manage the process. In other words, the way disputes are resolved, the strategy that should be utilized, and the context in which it should be utilized to manage conflicts are all extremely important. In addition, research has shown that approaches to conflict resolution that focus on problem-solving result in a greater number of agreements, a greater number of outcomes in which both parties come out ahead, and a greater degree of satisfaction with the results, both in the short and long terms and more long-lasting solutions. Research has also shown that employees who work in companies that are cohesive, just, and innovative are more likely to use problem-solving ways. These organizations recognize and reward accomplishments and are receptive to new ideas. When parties are concerned not only for their own well-being but also for the well-being of the other party, problem-solving is more likely to occur (Baron, 2015).

Figure 3 above shows the themes generated by the experiences of school principals in reshaping school culture. Four themes were gen-

erated from the responses of the participants. On the positive experience, the themes were the promotion of research activities and teacher par-

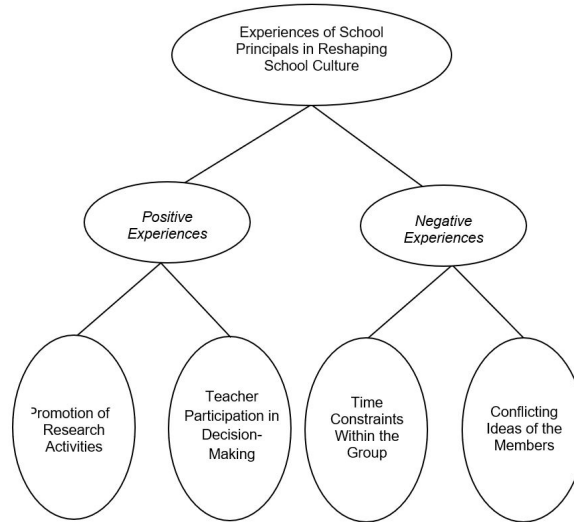


Fig. 3. Generated Themes on the Experiences of School Principals in Reshaping School Culture

participation in decision-making. Meanwhile, on the negative experiences, the themes were time constraints within the group and the conflicting ideas of the members. These themes suggested that school principals have positive and negative experiences in empowering teachers with the responsibility and authority to reshape school culture. School principals consider that they go out of their way to participate, pay attention, and listen to others' views so that all thoughts will be heard. On contentious issues, school principals and teachers should speak up so that they will be aware of everyone else's position. If there are conflicts and constraints, they should arrive at a consensus and deal with the problem healthily, professionally, and productively.

3.2. *Coping ways with the challenges reshaping positive school culture*—Coping skills help school principals tolerate, minimize, and deal with stressful and challenging situations in reshaping a positive school culture. Managing situations effectively can help school principals cope with challenges in the best possible ways.

3.2.1. *Influencing unity of purpose*—It is the degree to which school principals and teachers work toward a joint mission for the school. School principals and teachers who are more committed to the values of an orga-

nization and to its members are more likely to adopt instructional practices recommended by the organization, assist colleagues, and work harder to achieve organizational goals. A well-functioning school is one in which the school leadership under the school head is able to manage the complex network of people focused on a shared mission, whatever it may be. The organizational analysis in the study of Freed (2013) emphasized the importance of the shared purpose to create more empathy and build connections among adults in the school community but also to recognize where systemic issues need to be addressed in order to inform long-lasting personal and organizational change and growth. The participants strongly believed that the unity of purpose is instilled through positive leadership supported by the teachers. Freal (2015) discussed that the unity of purpose can be instilled through effective communication, and it manifests in positive accomplishments through coordinated efforts. As Steve (2011) mentioned, team goals are reached through team efforts. Through unity of purpose, dedication and loyalty are fostered, and success through purposeful action is realized. The participants of the study further discussed that when organizational vision is reached through coordinated

efforts, the purpose becomes much more achievable. The unity of purpose increases the power of contribution exponentially (Rajh, 2010). Everyone who recognizes the shared vision of the organization and strives toward it renders the purpose that much more attainable (Kimbob, 2012). Silvestre (2017) coined that communication and sharing vision are not the only keys to success through unity of purpose but also leadership, coordination, cooperation, and contribution. Leadership establishes direction and coordinates group efforts. School principals need leadership to establish direction and coordinate group efforts. With effective leadership, all team members contributed in a coordinated effort to achieve the organization's vision. Through accomplishing group goals, individuals succeed. In addition, Richmond (2013) coined that organizations with the most unified people boast the greatest prosperity. Teachers and other stakeholders feel unified when school principals create a culture of high purpose, moving everyone toward a noble goal.

*3.2.2. Developing Collaborative leadership*—The degree to which school leaders develop and sustain cooperative connections with teachers is measured by collaborative leadership of the principals' values and teachers' views. Teachers' ideas are fully valued by school principals, who also solicit feedback, include teachers in decision-making, and trust staff members' expert judgment. Cooperative leadership was characterized by Arbabi and Mehdinezhad (2015) as "the involvement of employees at different organizational levels to identify problems, assess solutions, and realize answers so they may support their managers and headquarters in solving problems." In addition to raising teachers' self-efficacy, collaborative leadership has been found to have additional beneficial benefits for schools. Participants emphasized that when school principals and teachers have numerous opportunities to work together, their enthusiasm, originality, effectiveness, and goodwill rise

while their cynicism and defensiveness, which impede change, fall. A fundamental component of a school's collaborative culture is shared leadership with teachers and decision-making. It allows all members of the school community to participate in determining the school's direction and understanding the rationale for change. With shared leadership, many more people than the administrators have access to information and the authority to make choices and implement changes. Teams make decisions by agreement after all members have aired their ideas and support for the change, rather than one or two people making decisions alone. It necessitates an operational structure that allows more people to drive the school's thinking and participate in decision-making at all levels. To develop such practices, a school must organize teams and assign major responsibility to them, plan regular meeting times, improve communication mechanisms, and identify ways to execute shared choices and leadership. Teachers working in teams benefit schools in three ways: they are better able to create shared expectations and high standards for all students; they engage in discourse, which leads to richer and higher-quality learning experiences than those created by teachers working in isolation; and they are more effective in creating the collaborative culture that allows a school to thrive (Rogar, 2007). Collaborative professional leadership should go beyond one-time staff meetings to create a space for teachers to study and share knowledge about current educational concepts, concerns, and best practices. Keeping up to date on educational developments fosters teacher responsibility to further expand their curriculum and professional activities. In your communications, share education-related news with instructors and offer educational resources such as memberships to online journals, guest speakers, and online or in-person courses. Furthermore, it encourages faculty collaboration through mentorships between newer and more experienced

instructors, as well as learning communities where teachers can gather to learn about and implement new projects (Hanover, 2018). Shaping learning partnership. It is said to be the degree to which teachers, parents, and students work together for the common good of the student. An important component of establishing learning partnerships is the formation of a learning unit between school principals and teachers who purposefully assist each other in acquiring the skills, knowledge, and attributes necessary to attain the vision and goals of the school. Kalayka (2013) coined that learning partners actively, yet voluntarily, seek each other to facilitate many aspects of school improvement and development. It was clear that the participants of the study were aware that learning partners provide additional advantages, such as developing a collegial learning environment and knowledge-building community and providing opportunities for peer mentoring and collaboration, activities which may help improve school performance. Omari and Bonk (2016) explained that learning partners also stimulate reflection and attend to needs within the socio-affective domain, such as the sharing and articulation of successes and failures. The participant implied that shaping learning partners can foster high-quality, engaging, and challenging activities, along with promoting staff engagement and development. Miller (2005) explained that learning partners can greatly benefit schools – They can improve school culture and community image. Learning partners are under the Learning Partnerships Model of Magolda (2011). The model is a framework that school principals can use to promote self-authorship in the teachers. It is based on three assumptions (which provide a challenge to teachers’

assumptions about the way how to reshape positive culture) and uses three principles (which offer support to help teachers learn). It claims to help teachers develop an internal belief system, an internal identity/sense of self, and a capacity for mutual, interdependent relationships. Magolda (2011) also explained that school principals use the principles of the Learning Partnerships Model in the implementation of the guided reflection process of the teachers. By partnering with fellow teachers and helping them to create their own goals and paths, school principals allow teachers to be “authors of their own leadership experiences” and develop their own values and identity. Milbar (2012) has shown that the Learning Partnerships Model does move teachers on a path to self-authorship. While the guided reflection process is not always easier than telling teachers directly what to do, it does help them grow and develop professionally. It allows teachers to learn how to take others’ perspectives into account while still listening to their own inner voice. The goal of school principals is the growth and development of the teachers, and through this process, they can help them prepare for leadership roles. Figure 4 shows the generated themes on the coping ways of school principals in reshaping positive school culture. The themes generated were influencing unity of purpose, developing collaborative leadership, and shaping learning partners. The themes signify that agreement and collaboration influence how school principals and teachers consistently cooperate, make decisions, solve issues, communicate, and take ownership of results and actions. School principals who could win teachers’ hearts and minds to support the school’s priorities, processes, and goals will experience a motivated workforce.

3.3. *Educational Management Insights Drawn from the Experiences of the School Heads*—Learning takes place through experience. In

this study, educational management insights are extracted from the experiences of school principals to reshape positive school culture.



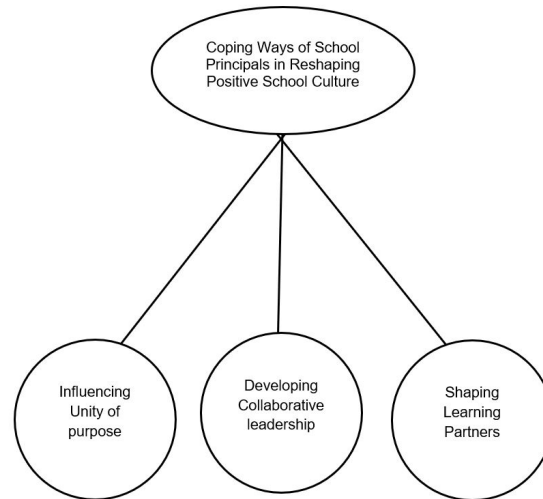


Fig. 4. Generated themes on the Coping Ways of School Principals in Reshaping Positive School Culture

3.3.1. *Developing a growth mindset*—According to Dweck (2012), a growth mindset allows people to feel they can increase their talents; brains and talent are merely the beginning point. This perspective fosters a love of learning and the perseverance required for success in almost any field. School principals asserted that to reshape positive school culture, teachers should develop this mindset for them to view challenges or difficulties as opportunities to improve and learn and that no matter how tough it is to reshape school culture, they should strive for personal fulfillment and the school. Continuous professional development should be treated like a growth mindset: with hard work, a focus on improvement, and accepting failure as an opportunity to learn. Teachers who approach leadership tasks in this manner are considerably more likely to improve than those who perceive professional learning as an impediment to be avoided (Smith, 2019). Hard work, ability, and intelligence are starting points; the mind’s attitude leads to success. Dweck (2012) identified the following characteristics of a growth mindset teacher: they accept responsibility for improving their practice; they view setbacks and feedback as opportunities to learn and grow their skills; they actively

seek learning opportunities and new challenges; they have positive and high expectations; and they use growth mindset language when leading and with themselves. A person with a growth mentality believes that achievement is unassailable despite practical hurdles. In other words, although they are fully aware of current obstacles, their mental approach is persistent and motivated to demonstrate development regardless. When complaints are made, folks with a growth mentality instinctively explore solutions to silence them. The participant affirmed that leadership opportunities are essential for teachers since they broaden knowledge, assure current practices, and build confidence. All these factors contribute to people becoming more efficient and enjoying their work. When people have leadership roles with a fixed perspective, this is sometimes easier said than done. These rigid attitudes oppose change, obsess about the status quo, and are baffled by the difficulties of adopting new approaches. To be clear, an individual’s mindset can only be changed when that individual chooses to do so. Collegial influence can help to develop a growth mentality within leadership roles (Moore, 2019).

3.3.2. *Applying effective school management*—The reshaping of a positive school cul-

ture is made possible with the effective management of the school principals. They are the ones that make everything feasible and delegate the task to the personnel concerned. Proper delegation of tasks is a good way to share responsibility and not have one teacher bombarded with all the workloads. Aside from proper delegation, managing time effectively is also essential, incredibly since reshaping the school culture is demanding. The participants also shared that the technical assistance they provided is a great help for teachers who are confused about reshaping a positive school culture. A participant shared that some tasks are new to the teachers and need to be done on time, so they must be instructed properly on how to do them. The participant claimed that technical support is one of the top considerations for reshaping school culture. Technical support given by school principals can affect the overall operation of schools. When something goes wrong with reshaping a positive school culture, the principal takes the initial action by interacting with the teachers and executing the first-layer solution. Hence, effective management is a must (Hilmon, 2014). One of the features of effective school management is teachers' motivation in the school. It is wrong to expect success from a teacher who is not well-motivated. The main element that provides this motivation is the organization's culture. A study found a positive relationship between organizational culture and motivation. School organizational culture encompasses rules, values, and beliefs (Kubra Acun, 2019). Further, another feature of effective school management is the effective participation of teachers. Valuing the ideas of teachers, fairness, having competent school principals, communication skills, sincerity, and honesty can be listed to ensure effective participation at a high level (Ozan, 2020). Effective school management is about much more than management. An administration that provides well-rounded

development to their teachers is more important.

*3.3.3. Providing Avenue for Capacity Building*—To raise the standard of education, teachers must receive the training they require. The participants said they also offer technical assistance to teachers through INSET or in-service training workshops, LAC sessions, or Learning Action Cells. They think that the execution of a positive culture change will determine how successful it is. Teachers must strengthen and enhance the necessary skills to effectively evaluate concept changes and apply the modified culture to the school's needs, aims, and objectives. They also need to be personally aware of the existing and planned culture. The participants' responses signify that to face the current challenges of assisting teachers in moving towards higher standards of school culture, teachers should be trained and informed. The training program, such as in-service training, should not be run away from the reformation that occurs to build teachers' professionalism status. The participant strongly believed that keeping teachers trained and informed enables them to be more competent and knowledgeable about the tasks given to them. They develop into a resource for industry knowledge that the school's principal may rely on. In-service training must be proactive rather than reactive, and the degree to which it is individualized and built upon constructive principles determines how effective it will be. In this regard, effective leadership is necessary for in-service training in schools. The principal often exercises this leadership. They act as leaders by creating a climate of cooperation and trust, providing rewards and incentives for involvement, and offering ongoing moral and material support. School principals should be role models by actively participating in training exercises (Omar, 2014). Further, the problematic duty of ensuring the professional development of teachers in their schools falls to school principals. This responsibility is assigned to them because they have ready access to data that provides a

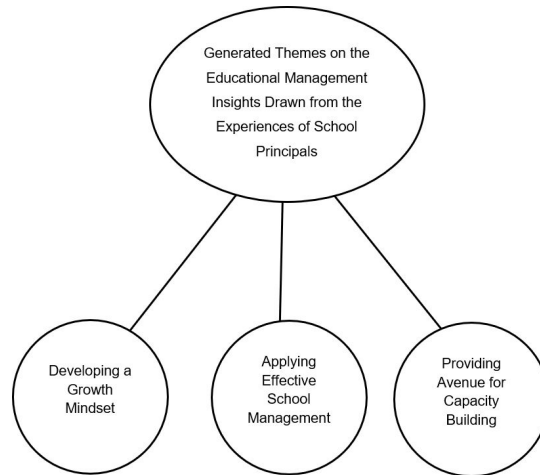


Fig. 5. Generated themes on the Educational Management Insights Drawn from the Experiences of School Principals

clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the individual staff members and the school (Ong, 2003). In this regard, school principals must establish a procedure for incorporating teachers in identifying professional abilities that need to be enhanced and in creating activities and programs to support the development of these skills. The effectiveness of the school, the training program, the evaluation, and the decision-making process are all impacted by

the principal’s leadership style. Steyn (2011) asserts that an administrator’s active participation in the school’s learning and growth processes is a prerequisite for good leadership. Additionally, according to Heaney (2004) and Lee (2005), the headmaster or principal should be dedicated to determining the training requirements for instructors and putting up an appropriate program based on those requirements.

Figure 5 above presents the generated themes on the educational management insights drawn from the experiences of school principals. The themes generated were developing a growth mindset, applying effective school management, and providing avenues for capacity building. The themes implied that there should always be opportunities for growth for school principals and their teachers in reshaping pos-

itive school culture. Restructuring a school is a difficult task. It requires competent administration, effective leadership, sound judgment, agreement, and experience. The most excellent method for school principals to ensure they are reshaping a healthy school culture in the most effective, efficient, and fruitful way possible is to support improvements.

#### 4. Implications and Future Directions

This chapter presents a brief overview of the study and its implications based on its findings. It also discusses future directions in school principals’ experiences.

4.1. *Implications*—This study investigated the school principals’ experiences reshaping a positive school culture. Five themes were gener-

ated from the experiences of the school principals. Promotion of research activities and teacher participation in decision-making were

the positive experiences of the school principal. Meanwhile, the members' time constraints and conflicting ideas were the negative experiences. The themes suggested that school principals have positive and negative experiences in empowering teachers with the responsibility and authority to reshape school culture. School principals consider that they go out of their way to participate, pay attention, and listen to others' views so that all thoughts will be heard. On contentious issues, school principals and teachers should speak up so that they will be aware of everyone else's position. If there are conflicts and constraints, they should arrive at a consensus and deal with the problem healthily, professionally, and productively. Further, three themes were generated regarding how school principals cope: influencing unity of purpose, developing collaborative leadership, and shaping learning partners. The themes signified that agreement and collaboration influence how school principals and teachers consistently cooperate, make decisions, solve issues, communicate, and take ownership of results and actions. School principals who could win teachers' hearts and minds to support the school's priorities, processes, and goals will experience a motivated workforce. Lastly, three themes were generated regarding the educational management insights drawn from their experiences: developing a growth mindset, applying effective school management, and providing avenues for capacity building. The themes implied that there should always be opportunities for growth for school principals and their teachers in reshaping positive school culture. Restructuring a school is a difficult task. It requires competent administration, effective leadership, sound judgment,

agreement, and experience. The most excellent method for school principals to ensure they are reshaping a healthy school culture in the most effective, efficient, and fruitful way possible is to support improvements.

*4.1.1. Future Directions*—The data obtained impacted various stakeholders in education, including DepEd Officials, school administrators, teachers, students, other stakeholders, and future researchers. DepEd officials may give seminars and training to school principals so they can successfully transform or reshape a positive school culture with the help of the teachers. The school principals may provide information on the methods and tactics that they could employ to motivate and inspire stakeholders, particularly teachers, to reshape a positive school culture. The teachers may benchmark joint efforts and think about their leadership to help the school principal effectively aid in changing positive school culture. Other stakeholders may also benchmark joint efforts in reshaping a positive school culture. They may include such initiatives in crafting a School Improvement Plan (SIP) in which stakeholders could participate. Several areas for future studies within this field need to be explored for future researchers. Further development on the similar and different contexts can be done in this study. Considering the challenges school principals encounter in managing change and reshaping a positive school culture is recommended. Indeed, this will yield advantageous findings and implications tailored to strengthening awards and recognition approaches in schools and other hierarchical organizations in the education sector.

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