

DEALING WITH TRANSITIONS: EXPERIENCES OF NEW EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to explore and understand the lived experiences, challenges, strategies, and aspirations of new educational leaders in public schools at Monkayo East District, Davao de Oro during their leadership transitions. Using a phenomenological approach, in-depth interviews were conducted with selected school heads to examine their journey in relation to authority-building, resource management, relational adjustments, emotional struggles, resilience, and leadership development. Findings revealed that while new leaders encountered various challenges such as establishing authority, managing limited resources, and facing emotional and relational tensions, they also discovered their strengths, developed fresh perspectives, and adapted through reflective and collaborative practices. Participants employed strategies including community engagement, mentoring, peer support, and shared decision-making to address problems and foster inclusive school environments. Despite systemic gaps in onboarding and institutional backing, new leaders remained committed to cultivating supportive and inspiring school cultures and promoting equity through communication, purpose, and distributed leadership. Their aspirations called for structured support systems, sustained capacity-building, equitable resource allocation, and policy reforms that empower school leadership. The study highlighted the importance of relational awareness, resilience, and collective leadership in navigating transitions effectively. Recommendations focused on strengthening institutional onboarding, mentoring programs, and stakeholder collaboration to support new educational leaders in creating responsive, inclusive, and learner-centered schools.

Keywords: *educational administration, new educational leaders, experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, insights, phenomenological study.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The transition into educational leadership roles marks a critical phase in shaping the quality of learning experiences, fostering a positive school culture, and driving institutional improvements. Newly appointed school heads, department coordinators, and supervisors are not only expected to ensure effective teaching and learning but must also quickly adapt to complex responsibilities such as administrative management, policy implementation, and stakeholder collaboration. However, this transition is often accompanied by significant challenges including role adjustment, identity shifts, and increased accountability that can affect their leadership effectiveness and personal well-being (Castañeros et al., 2023).

Internationally, novice educational leaders encounter difficulties such as managing instructional leadership alongside administrative responsibilities, adapting to organizational expectations, and handling staff relations (Smith & Johnson, 2021). Research in the United States highlights that new school leaders often struggle with decision-making, conflict resolution, and sustaining teacher motivation amid systemic pressures. Similarly, in Australia,

beginning school heads experience stress related to workload management, accountability measures, and leadership skill development (Anderson & Clark, 2022).

In the Philippine context, educational leaders, particularly in Batangas, face unique challenges stemming from resource limitations, bureaucratic constraints, and community expectations. According to the study of Santos and Medina (2023), newly appointed school heads in rural areas grapple with balancing instructional leadership with administrative duties, often without sufficient mentoring or professional development. Similarly, Bautista (2024) highlighted that novice school administrators must quickly adapt to policy implementation, stakeholder collaboration, and teacher supervision while addressing the learning needs of students.

In Monkayo, Davao de Oro, new educational leaders navigated a complex educational landscape characterized by limited resources, high student populations, and evolving curriculum reforms. While they were expected to lead with vision and effectiveness, many experienced difficulties in asserting authority, implementing change, and sustaining teacher and student engagement. Furthermore, the transition from teaching to leadership roles required a shift in mindset, skill set, and decision-making approaches, which was often overwhelming without adequate training and support.

Although studies had examined educational leadership and school management, there remained a gap in understanding the lived experiences of newly appointed educational leaders, particularly in rural settings like Monkayo, Davao de Oro. This study aimed to explore the challenges, strategies, and insights of novice educational leaders, with the goal of providing recommendations for leadership development programs, policy enhancements, and institutional support mechanisms to ensure their success in the field of educational leadership.

1.1 Research Questions

This study investigated the experiences of new educational leaders within the Department of Education, focusing on the challenges they faced and the strategies they employed to navigate these difficulties. The research was guided by the following questions;

1. What are the experiences of the new educational leaders on dealing with transitions?
2. What are the challenges encountered by the new educational leaders on dealing with transitions?
3. What are the coping mechanisms employed by the new educational leaders on dealing with transitions?
4. What are the insights gained of the new educational leaders on dealing with transitions?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviewed relevant literature and topics related to the concept under investigation, aiming to provide readers with a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by new educational leaders within the Department of Education. The findings from previous studies similar to this one was discussed to offer deeper insights and to inform the focus of this qualitative research. The sources included manuals, academic journals, websites, and other pertinent reading materials.

Educational Leadership. Educational leadership plays a fundamental role in ensuring the smooth operation and success of academic institutions. New educational leaders often face significant challenges as they transition into administrative roles, requiring them to navigate legal, ethical, and managerial responsibilities. According to Hallinger and Wang (2020), effective educational leadership is characterized by strategic decision-making, adherence to legal policies, and a commitment to fostering a positive learning environment. Legal considerations are crucial in guiding school administrators, ensuring that institutional policies align with national education laws and regulations.

One key legal aspect that new educational leaders must understand is school governance and administrative responsibilities. In the Philippines, the Education Act of 1982 outlines the powers and duties of school heads, including financial management, curriculum supervision, and faculty coordination. Also, Guzman and Reyes (2021) emphasize that new administrators must be well-versed in these laws to avoid mismanagement and ensure compliance with government standards. Understanding legal frameworks helps school leaders make informed decisions that protect both the institution and its stakeholders.

Another essential legal concern in educational leadership is employment law and teacher rights. Moreover, Anderson and Thompson (2022) highlight that school administrators must be aware of labor laws, particularly those related to employment contracts, professional development, and disciplinary actions. The Philippine Magna Carta for Public School Teachers (RA 4670) provides guidelines on working conditions, salaries, and benefits, ensuring that educators receive fair treatment. Failure to comply with these laws can result in legal disputes that may disrupt school operations and damage institutional credibility.

Experiences of New Educational Leaders on Dealing with Transitions. Stepping into an educational leadership role is often perceived as daunting, yet many new leaders find moments of triumph, growth, and fulfillment along the way. One of the most significant positive experiences they encounter is professional growth and skill development. Moreover, Harris and Jones (2021) found that novice school leaders in the United Kingdom gained confidence as they improved their decision-making, instructional leadership, and conflict resolution skills. The process of adapting to leadership responsibilities allowed them to become more resourceful and resilient, equipping them with the ability to navigate complex school dynamics effectively. Similarly, Nguyen (2022) discovered that new principals in Vietnam found great satisfaction in their ability to foster a positive school culture and mentor teachers. Their roles provided them with a sense of purpose, reinforcing their commitment to educational leadership.

Another uplifting aspect of being a new educational leader is the opportunity to build meaningful relationships with teachers, students, and the wider school community. In the study of Anderson and Clark (2023), they highlighted that novice school leaders in the United States thrived when they established strong connections with their staff and stakeholders. These relationships served as a source of emotional support, helping them navigate the pressures of leadership while also fostering a collaborative and inclusive school environment. Many new leaders found that working closely with their teams not only enhanced school operations but also deepened their sense of belonging and motivation. Strong relationships with colleagues and students created a more supportive and effective learning environment.

Challenges Encountered by the New Educational Leaders on Dealing with Transitions. One of the most immediate struggles is the overwhelming administrative workload. Moreover, Smith and Johnson (2021) found that novice school leaders in the United States often find themselves buried under policy implementation, budgeting, and regulatory compliance, leaving little time for instructional leadership. Similarly, Roberts and Williams (2022) highlighted that Australian school heads experience high levels of stress due to accountability measures, performance evaluations, and paperwork-heavy reporting requirements. Many new leaders feel torn between their desire to drive meaningful change and the rigid bureaucratic demands that consume their time and energy. The challenge of balancing administrative responsibilities with instructional priorities remains a pressing concern for many school heads worldwide.

Beyond paperwork, managing relationships within the school is another significant hurdle. In addition, Anderson and Clark (2023) found that new principals often struggle with resistance from veteran teachers who are reluctant to embrace new policies or instructional strategies. In the Philippines, Lopez and Martinez (2021) observed that new school heads must work hard to gain the trust of their teaching staff, especially in institutions with deep-rooted traditions. Tensions can arise as leaders attempt to introduce reforms while maintaining harmony within the school environment. Striking a balance between asserting authority and fostering collaboration is a challenge that requires patience, diplomacy, and strong interpersonal skills.

Coping Mechanisms Employed by the New Educational Leaders on Dealing with Transitions. One of the most significant coping strategies employed by new educational leaders is seeking mentorship and peer support. According to Dela Cruz (2021), newly appointed school heads in urban and rural schools rely on experienced administrators for guidance and insights. By forming strong professional networks, they gain practical knowledge on policy implementation, staff management, and school improvement strategies. Similarly, Mendoza and Santos (2022) found that joining leadership associations and engaging in informal peer mentoring helped novice school leaders navigate their responsibilities with greater confidence. This support system allows them to share challenges, exchange best practices, and receive emotional reinforcement.

Another essential coping mechanism is continuous professional development. In consonance, Bautista (2023) emphasized that new school heads in the Philippines actively participate in training programs, workshops,

and graduate studies to enhance their leadership skills. Many enroll in educational management courses or attend Department of Education (DepEd) training sessions to deepen their understanding of school governance, instructional leadership, and conflict resolution. This proactive approach enables them to stay updated with the latest educational policies and effectively address school-related concerns. Continuous learning empowers them to make informed decisions and adapt to evolving educational landscapes.

Insights of the New Educational Leaders on Dealing with Transitions. One key insight gained by new educational leaders is the importance of adaptability in leadership. According to Dela Cruz (2021), novice school heads in the Philippines quickly realize that leadership requires flexibility in decision-making, problem-solving, and communication. They learn to adjust their strategies based on the needs of their teachers, students, and the school community. Similarly, Santos and Bautista (2022) found that first-time principals often revise their leadership approaches as they encounter unexpected challenges, such as limited resources, teacher resistance, and shifting educational policies. This adaptability allows them to remain effective despite changing circumstances.

Another critical realization among new school leaders is the importance of building strong relationships with stakeholders. According to Mendoza and Reyes (2023), newly appointed principals recognize that fostering collaboration with teachers, parents, and local officials is essential for school improvement. Many acknowledge that leadership is not about working alone but about mobilizing people toward a common goal. In consonance, Lopez and Garcia (2021) further emphasized that school heads who actively engage with their school communities gain higher trust and support, making it easier to implement policies and programs that benefit students. Strong relationships create a foundation for more sustainable and meaningful school reforms.

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the methods and procedures used in the study. It included the research design, locale, participants, and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

This research adopted a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore the personal experiences, challenges, and strategies of novice school leaders as they navigated their transition into leadership positions. As noted by Creswell (2014), phenomenology provided a framework for understanding individuals' personal perceptions and the meanings they attributed to their experiences, thus offering deeper insight into their professional paths. The focus was on how new educational leaders interacted with teachers, students, school administrators, and the wider community, aiming to shed light on the complexities of their roles and the influence of their leadership on school management and instructional growth. In-depth interviews were used to examine how these leaders perceived and handled the demands of their leadership responsibilities. This approach helped identify recurring themes such as strategies for leadership development, the challenges of managing both administrative and instructional duties, and the institutional support (or lack thereof) that affected their success.

Moreover, the flexibility of the phenomenological approach allowed new themes to emerge during the data collection process, providing insights into aspects of the leadership experience that were not immediately obvious. Alase (2021) highlighted how phenomenology could uncover layered understandings of leadership identity formation and adaptation, particularly in complex educational settings. Through this study, both the successes and challenges that new educational leaders faced were revealed. The findings offered valuable contributions to the broader field of leadership development in education, with practical implications for professional training, policy development, and institutional support systems aimed at improving the effectiveness of new school leaders (Nguyen & Slade, 2020).

3.2 Research Locale

The research took place in Monkayo East District, within the Davao de Oro Division, encompassing schools such as Depot Elementary School, Olaycon Integrated School, Sugod Elementary School, Boay Elementary School, Pasian National High School and Union National High School.

3.3 Research Participants

This study had six participants, which was deemed sufficient to saturate the information gathered from the study group using in-depth interviews (IDI). The participants were identified using the purposive sampling method.

Furthermore, the inclusion criteria for selecting participants were as follows: a public elementary or secondary school head in the School Year 2024–2025 at Monkayo District, Monkayo, Davao de Oro, who had at least two years of experience as a school head. On the other hand, the exclusion criteria included school heads who were newly appointed with less than two years of experience in their position, those who were on leave or seconded to another office during the conduct of the study, and those who declined to provide informed consent.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis was considered the most intricate stage of this qualitative research, often still underexplored in recent academic discussions (Nowell et al., 2022). The primary aim of analysis was to help the researcher gain an overarching understanding of the data and reflect on its overall significance. This study involved several steps, including transcription, coding, thematic analysis, and the identification of key themes and central ideas.

Coding involved organizing the raw data into relevant sections. The researcher condensed the raw data to focus on the most pertinent information aligned with the research questions, breaking it into manageable segments that revealed emerging themes (Roberts et al., 2021). In this study, the researcher highlighted recurring themes using colored pens, assigning the same color to similar concepts. Themes were then grouped according to these colors and labeled using concise words or phrases. Frequent colors that appeared across the data were considered potential themes.

Thematic analysis was employed to examine and report the patterns or themes present in the participants' responses (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Transcribed responses were sorted into categories, forming the foundation for subsequent discussions and recommendations.

In this research, thematic analysis began once initial codes were identified. Responses were analyzed from broad to specific, grouping similar core ideas into unified themes. Each theme was validated by ensuring it contained at least five core ideas. To protect participant privacy, code names were used for each individual. Transcription, the process of converting audio recordings into written text assisted in organizing and clarifying the data obtained from the interviews and discussions (Guest et al., 2020).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 What are the experiences of the new educational leaders on dealing with transitions?

This section presents the results to the first major research question; 'What are the experiences of the new educational leaders on dealing with transitions?' Three specific research questions were used to gather data and information for this major research question. The questions were intended to gather information on the understanding of the research participants regarding the experiences of new educational leaders on dealing with transitions.

4.1.1 Experiences as New Educational Leader on Dealing with Transitions

The themes in this section were coming from the specific research question 1.1 'What were your experiences as new educational leader on dealing with transitions?' The responses generated the themes: challenging and adaptability.

Challenging. The participants shared that stepping into leadership roles during transitional periods was filled with uncertainty, pressure, and a steep learning curve. They encountered significant challenges such as adapting to new policies, managing resistance to change, and balancing multiple responsibilities, which often left them feeling overwhelmed and underprepared. Informant 1 shared that;

My experience as a new educational leader in dealing with transition. It was challenging for me because I was serving my previous school, my first station, for almost nine years. Six years as school head. Then I would need to transfer to a medium school. Handling many teachers than the usual that I am handling is quite a challenge. And also dealing with the community. I have been familiarizing for nine years the community that I would have been to. Then transfer to the new station. I need to adjust to the community, the students, and what are the traditions and norms that the school has. Unlike my previous school, I was the pioneer school head and teacher. So, it was up to us to what will be the character or the situation or scenario that we would like to have. So, in dealing with transition as a new school head, it will take time for you to adjust to everything and anything under the sun during your transition period.

Expanding on this reflection, Informant 2 stated that;

Actually, daghan kaayo kog experience ani as a new educational leader in dealing with transitions. Naay positive ug naay negative experiences pud. Sa positive side, it made me stronger sa pag-face sa transitions and sa mga changes. Nakatabang siya nako to become more resilient and mas dali ko maka-adapt sa changes. It also made me more resourceful kay kinahanglan gyud ka mangita og ways or resources to meet the demands during transitions. One of the positive experiences pud kay I came to realize kung kinsa ang mga teachers nga hardworking and kabalo mo-adapt sa changes. Kay let's face it, change is the only constant thing gyud.

(Actually, I have so many experiences as this as new educational leader in dealing with transitions. There are positive experiences and negative experiences as well. As to positive experiences, it made me stronger in facing transitions, in facing changes. It made me resilient to adapt to changes and it made me more resourceful in trying to look for resources to meet the demands in transitions. Also, one of my positive experiences, I made or I came to a point to know who are teachers that are hard-working and can adapt to changes as well. Because the only constant is change.)

Meanwhile, Informant 4 reflected that;

It was a huge shift in mindset and responsibility. There were moments when stepping into leadership felt like being thrown into a deep ocean with no life vest, no map and the waves of responsibilities coming all at once. I was navigating unfamiliar waters, often relying on instinct and courage more than experience.

Adaptability. The participants revealed that adaptability played a crucial role in navigating the demands of their new leadership positions, especially during sudden changes in school operations and policies. They shared how learning to adjust their leadership styles, communication approaches, and decision-making strategies enabled them to respond effectively to evolving expectations and unforeseen challenges. Informant 3 shared that;

Pag navigate, pag bag-ong papel, pagtukod ug pagsalig sa pakig tambayayong sa kausaban.

(Navigating a new role involves building trust and fostering collaboration in the midst of change.)

Following this, Informant 5 added their perspective that;

Adjusting teaching plans. I guided teachers in revising their daily lesson logs in line with the curriculum standard. Monitoring and support. I regularly checked on teaching practices and gave feedback to ensure smooth implementation.

Moreover, Informant 6 emphasized a key challenge they encountered during the transition that;

For me, the biggest challenge in transition is kanang mga bag-o nasad ang kinaiya sa teachers, non-teaching personnel and the parents and stakeholders, and new school cultures nga I handle nako.

(For me, the biggest challenge in transition are the unfamiliar behaviors and attitudes of teachers, non-teaching personnel, parents, and stakeholders, along with the new school cultures that I now have to manage.)

4.1.2 Advantages in Handling School as New Educational Leader on Dealing with Transitions

This section presents the results to the specific research question 1.2 ‘What are the advantages in handling school as new educational leader on dealing with transitions?’ The following themes served as results, which were: knowing one’s strength and develop new perspective.

Knowing One’s Strength. The participants emphasized that recognizing their own strengths, such as effective communication, problem-solving, and decision-making, helped them navigate transitional challenges with greater confidence. By drawing on their personal competencies, they were able to lead their schools with a clearer vision and a stronger sense of purpose despite the uncertainties of their new roles. Informant 1 shared several insights on the advantages of handling school transitions as a new educational leader that;

Daghan kaayo og advantages ang pag-handle og school as a new educational leader, especially when it comes to dealing with transitions. Number one, ma-realize nimo ang imong strengths. You will really discover kung unsa ang imong capabilities as a school leader. You will also meet new people nga makatabang nimo along the way. Plus, you will encounter stakeholders nga adunay heart to support and help you shine sa field sa education.

(There are lots of advantages in handling school as new educational leader on dealing with transitions. Number one is, you will know your strengths. You will know what your capabilities as school leader. You will know new people that will help you along the way. And you will be meeting new stakeholders that has the heart in helping you to shine in education.)

Following this, Informant 2 reflected on the unique benefits of transferring to a different school setting that;

What makes it advantageous is that the teachers that you are going to land on when you transfer, you don't know them well. Unlike with my previous school, from being a pioneer teacher to being a school head, familiarity was already there. So, it is hard for you to establish leadership respect. Your co-teachers will just treat you as a co-teacher. While when you transfer to other school, it was a different scenario. Even though they are older than you, granting that you are the leader, so they will give you the respect that you have need because of the position that you have. So, that's one of the advantages.

Additionally, Informant 5 emphasized key benefits brought about by transition that;

A stronger teamwork, the transition helped build closer teamwork among teachers and staff. Fresh perspective, I brought new ideas and energy to improve teaching and learning.

Develop New Perspective. The participants shared that transitioning into leadership roles allowed them to develop new perspectives on school management, teaching practices, and stakeholder engagement. This broadened outlook enabled them to approach challenges with a more strategic mindset and to implement changes that aligned with both institutional goals and the evolving needs of their school communities. Informant 3 highlighted key motivational and cultural shifts brought by transition that;

Ang bag-ong panan-aw pagka abli sa kausaban, kusog nga motibasyon, panaghiusa, kabag-ohan, inspirasyon sa kausaban.

(A new outlook opened the door for change, strong motivation, unity, innovation, and inspiration for transformation.)

Building upon this, Informant 4 pointed out one major advantage drawn from prior classroom experience that;

One major advantage is that I carried into my role as a school leader was my first-hand experience in the classroom. Having served as a teacher for seven years, I deeply understood the real day-to-day struggles and triumphs that the teacher has faced. From chasing lesson deadlines, managing large classes, addressing behavioral issues and preparing for classroom observations. These lived experiences gave me a lens of empathy. I did not lead based on theory alone. I led with an understanding of the grind, the pressure and the emotional labor that comes

from teaching. It helped me gain the trust of my teachers more quickly because they knew I understood where they were coming from.

Lastly, Informant 6 emphasized the strategic opportunities that come with being new in school leadership during transitions that;

Being a new leader during transitions in a school dunay advantages. Naka kuha ko ug fresh perspective.

(Being a new leader during school transitions has advantages. I gained a fresh perspective.)

4.1.3 Reflection of One's Leadership Development as New Educational Leader on Dealing with Transitions

This section presents the results to the specific research question 1.3 'How do you reflect on your leadership development through your experiences as new educational leader on dealing with transitions?' The theme which served as result was to embrace challenges.

Embrace Challenges. The participants reflected that embracing challenges was a vital part of their growth as new educational leaders, as it pushed them to step out of their comfort zones and build resilience. They viewed each difficulty not as a setback but as an opportunity to learn, improve their leadership capacity, and strengthen their commitment to school improvement. Informant 1 shared a personal reflection on transitioning between schools as an opportunity for growth that;

As a leader, I have reflected and developed. It was for the first time that I was transferred from nine years to the new station. I felt very nervous and afraid of being thrown out to another station. But as the journey went on, it made me fueled up to transfer from one school to another because I have seen that being in another school, you can create another legacy and you will grow as a leader, with new challenges. I have embraced the challenges as I reflected on my leadership development and growth. So, transition for me now, from the three stations that I have been to, became much easier and much happier. When you transfer, you will tend to meet another challenge and another set of people.

Following this, Informant 2 highlighted the collective effort needed to make education meaningful and transformative that;

This will be my guide to do more in order for me to help our learners, our teachers, our parents, and other stakeholders. This also made me realize that education will be more attainable if everybody will take part in it. Not only the teachers, not only the school head, but also the school community as well, because it takes a village to train a child. Everybody must take part in it so that our learners will be literate, not only in reading and numeracy, but functionally literate. That everything that they will be learning in the school will be of use, a tool for them to make a living outside school. So that is it.

Meanwhile, Informant 3 pointed out a valuable personal transformation gained during the transition that;

Nakat-on ko sa pagka malahutayon, pag kugi ug pagdala sa epektibo nga liderato.

(I have learned perseverance, diligence, and how to practice effective leadership.)

Building on the theme of reflection, Informant 4 emphasized the transformative nature of leadership development that;

My leadership journey has been one of ongoing self-reflection, learning, and transformation. Every challenge I encountered revealed something not only about the demands of leadership, but also about my own character and values. I have learned to listen with intention, respond with thoughtfulness, and plan with foresight.

Additionally, Informant 5 expressed how the transition enhanced leadership capabilities and interpersonal understanding that;

I have learned to listen more and to understand the needs sa akong mga teachers ug students. I have become more confident sa paghimo og decisions ug sa pag-solve sa problems during the transition. These experiences have helped me to grow into a better and stronger school leader.

(I have learned to listen more and understand the needs of my teachers and students. I have become more confident in making decisions and solving problems during the transition. These experiences helped me grow into a better and stronger school leader.)

Further, informant 6 shared that;

My first year as a new educational leader is difficult. I need to adapt sa mga bag-o nga culture. I had to get creative, finding alternative funding sources and prioritizing programs. Communication is also important especially sa mga teachers ug parents. I also learned the importance of emotional intelligence minsan kailangan din ng puso ang pag lead sa isang school lalo na sa mga teachers that we need to consider din. Mahirap siya sa umpisa, but incredibly rewarding.

(My first year as a new educational leader was difficult. I needed to adapt to the new cultures. I had to get creative, finding alternative funding sources and prioritizing programs. Communication was also important, especially with teachers and parents. I also learned the importance of emotional intelligence, sometimes leading a school also requires heart, especially when it comes to teachers whom we also need to consider. It was difficult at the beginning, but incredibly rewarding.)

4.2 What are the challenges encountered by the new educational leaders on dealing with transitions?

This section presents the results to the second major research question ‘What are the challenges encountered by the new educational leaders on dealing with transitions?’ Three specific research questions were used to collect data for this question highlighting the challenges encountered by the participants as new educational leaders on dealing with transitions.

4.2.1 Challenges Encountered as New Educational Leader on Dealing with Transitions

The themes derived from the responses of the research informants to the specific research question 2.1 ‘What challenges did you encounter as new educational leader on dealing with transitions?’ are presented in this section. The themes generated were establishing authority and limited resources.

Establishing Authority. The participants shared that establishing authority as new leaders was one of the most difficult aspects of their transition, especially when gaining the trust and respect of seasoned teachers and staff. They faced initial resistance and skepticism, which required them to assert their leadership through consistent actions, clear communication, and fair decision-making. Informant 1 shared the difficulty of establishing authority in a familiar community setting, explaining that;

So, the challenges that I have encountered as a new education leader in dealing with transition is that the first station that I have been to is my barrio. So, I am familiar with my kaba-barrio as well as the teachers, most of the teachers, I am familiar with them. So that unprofessional familiarity that you need to turn into professional work relationship from your neighbor, friend, classmate to become your co-workers. So that is quite a challenge for me because I am not really a bossy type of leader. So, I need to deal with it to make it work. And also, I am too familiar with the people. So, it is also quite hard for you to be so familiar. Sometimes respect and boundaries will be not maintained all the time. So that is one of the challenges I have encountered in dealing with transition. But in my next station, I have learned from those challenges and make a new start.

Meanwhile, Informant 3 pointed out key personal and organizational difficulties by stating that;

Kakulangan sa kasinatian, resistensya sa kausaban ug kakulangan sa suporta ug panahon.

(Lack of experience, resistance to change, and lack of support and time.)

In addition, Informant 4 emphasized the difficulty of gaining recognition and respect as a new leader, particularly when promoted from within, stating that;

The first challenge was establishing authority and trust. Some staff still saw me as a teacher, or a junior, since I was promoted from within the same district. Gaining their confidence and respect as a leader took time. Another challenge was managing the immense administrative workload. School forms, reports, financial documentations, and compliance with DepEd orders, many of which I had limited exposure to as a headteacher or even a teacher before. It was like a crash course in school governance, and I had to learn quickly and open on my own.

Limited Resources. The participants revealed that limited resources, such as insufficient funding, inadequate facilities, and lack of instructional materials, posed significant obstacles in implementing school programs and initiatives. These constraints forced them to become resourceful and innovative, often seeking external support and maximizing available assets to sustain school operations and meet stakeholder needs. Informant 2 shared that multiple challenges arose during the transition, stating that;

Challenges are many. Number one of it is in the financial aspect, because everything that you will be doing for the school entails a lot of budget. Example, in the advent of the revised K-12 curriculum, you need to print instructional materials such as lesson exemplars, self-learning modules, activity sheets, worksheets, and all. Money matters, or budget is really one of the problems that you have to address too, so that our teachers will have printing materials such as couponbans, and ink.

Similarly, Informant 5 briefly pointed out the challenge of resource scarcity, stating that;

Limited resources, we lacked books and materials aligned with the new lessons.

Furthermore, Informant 6 emphasized the stress brought by both budget limitations and emotional demands of leadership, sharing that;

One huge challenge is figuring out kung unsaon pag-budget sa MOOE bisan gamay ra ang funding, which was incredibly stressful. Another challenge kay ang uban nga teachers were resistant to change, and keeping my confidence up was a constant battle. Making tough decisions, sama sa pag-let go sa personal relationships tungod sa trabaho, it was emotionally draining, even if those decisions were necessary.

(One huge challenge is figuring out how to budget the MOOE with less funding was incredibly stressful. Another was some teachers were resistant to change, and keeping my confidence up was a constant battle. Making tough decisions, like letting go of personal relationship because of work, it was emotionally draining, even when those decisions were necessary.)

4.2.2 Most Difficult Part as New Educational Leader on Dealing with Transitions

This section presents the results to the specific question 2.2 ‘What was the most difficult part as new educational leader on dealing with transitions?’ After subjecting the responses to content analysis, the theme generated was emotional and relational challenges during leadership transitions.

Emotional and Relational Challenges During Leadership Transitions. The participants disclosed that navigating emotional stress and managing relationships with teachers, parents, and stakeholders were among the most difficult aspects of their leadership transition. Feelings of self-doubt, isolation, and the pressure to prove themselves often strained their ability to build trust and establish harmonious working relationships in the early stages of their leadership journey.

Informant 1 shared the emotional weight of leaving a long-standing post and familiar environment, expressing that;

One of the most difficult part for me is the separation anxiety nga imong ma-feel kung too familiar na kaayo ka sa place. I have been spending nine years sa Depot Ancestral Domain, from its beginning until na-

nationalize siya. So ang pag-separate from that comfort zone nga akong na-build for nine years, mao gyud to ang greatest ug pinaka lisod nga part sa transition nga akong na-experience. And also, gikan sa Depot padulong sa Union, sa Union I only spent two and a half years. And Union was one of the schools nga very emotional para nako because ang location or yuta was donated by my great-grandfather. Mao nga it made it even harder for me to detach because daghan kaayo kog plans para didto. Pero it was still good kay I have accomplished forty percent sa goals nga akong gi-set. So lisod gihapon siya buwagan, pero you need to move on. When you are a leader, transition is unchangeable and always present.

(One of the most difficult part as for me is the separation anxiety that you will feel when you are too familiar with the place. I have spending time nine years from the Depot Ancestral Domain from its start until it was being nationalized. So, the separation from that comfort zone that I have built for nine years, that was the greatest, the most difficult part of the transition that I have experienced. And also, from Depot to Union, Union I only spent two and a half years. And Union was one of the schools that has a very, I have been emotional because the location or the land was donated by my great-grandfather. So, it was made it harder for me to detach because I have so many plans ahead. But it was still good because I have accomplished 40% of the goals that I have set. So still difficult to separate, but you need to move on. When you are a leader, transition is unchangeable and always there.)

Similarly, Informant 2 emphasized the emotional toll of repeated reassignments, sharing that;

I think the most difficult part is the acceptance. It is because just like us, we stay in a school for a maximum of five years, and sometimes we just stay there around two, three, or four years then you will be transferred again. That is one, the acceptance that you will be transferred. Number two is your adjustment on the new system, on a new place, on a new group of teachers, on a new group of non-teaching personnel, on a new group of parents, on a new group of local officials. That is also difficult because you will be adjusting to a new character, to a pool of people. Number three is the difficult part for me.

Additionally, Informant 3 highlighted the struggle of gaining trust from new colleagues and the community, briefly stating;

Ang labing lisod nga bahin mao ang pag angkon ug pagsalig sa mga kauban ug komunidad.

(The most difficult part is gaining the trust and confidence of co-workers and the community.)

Likewise, Informant 4 reflected on the strain of enforcing policies that risk damaging relationships, stating that;

The most difficult part was handling conflicts and disappointments. Especially when they involved people I used to work closely with. There were instances when I had to call out lapses in performance or enforce policies that were not popular. It is never easy when relationships are at stake. There are also the burdens of accountability. When something goes wrong in school, it ultimately reflects on my leadership.

Meanwhile, Informant 5 shared the stress of balancing preparation and performance under pressure, noting that;

Ensuring readiness, making sure everyone was prepared for the new curriculum was challenging. Managing stress, balancing many tasks and meeting expectations was stressful.

Lastly, Informant 6 pointed out the complexity of navigating long-standing dynamics, stating that;

The hardest part of transitioning is the established relationships and practices. It was not just about implementing new strategies. It is about building trust and pag sabot with teachers or parents who had their own ways of doing things.

(The hardest part of transitioning is the established relationships and practices. It was not just about implementing new strategies. It is about building trust and Understanding and coming to terms with teachers or parents).

4.2.3 Disadvantages as New Educational Leader on Dealing with Transitions

This section presents the results to the specific question 2.3 ‘What are the disadvantages as new educational leader on dealing with transitions?’ After subjecting the responses to content analysis, the theme drawn was barriers to adjustment during leadership transitions.

Barriers to Adjustment During Leadership Transitions. The participants shared that various barriers, such as unfamiliar school environments, unclear expectations, and lack of mentorship, hindered their smooth adjustment into leadership roles. These obstacles often led to delays in decision-making and uncertainty in fulfilling administrative responsibilities, making the transition period more overwhelming and difficult to navigate. Informant 1 pointed out that personal attachment and failure to reflect from past transitions could hinder one’s adaptability, stating that:

The disadvantages are that when you do not learn from the previous transition, it will be a disadvantage for you. If you will not change as a leader because you need to adapt to the scenario of the new school that you will landed to. In transition, you need to be observant. So, one of the disadvantages is that if you put too much love or you will be so much connected to the first station, it is hard for you to move on when you are going to be transitioned to another school or transferred to another school. So, as a leader, you must learn in dealing with that kind of disadvantages. So, it is up to yourself.

In a similar vein, Informant 2 enumerated several barriers in managing transitions, explaining that;

Daghan kaayo og advantages when dealing with transitions. Number one is acceptance. Usahay, maglisod ta og accept sa change, mao na. Naay resistance sa mga teachers, resistance sa mga parents, ug resistance pud sa mga learners. Number two is the budget. Mao na gyud ni, kay kung naay new system, it really entails money. Kinahanglan nimo butangan og budget. Number three is the workload. Kung naay new system or transition, mas mo-heavy gyud ang workload. Dili malikayan nga daghan kaayo og buhaton

(Advantages, or there are a lot of advantages on dealing with transitions. Number one is acceptance. Sometimes, because we are, we will resist on change, so that is it. Resistance of the teachers, resistance of the parents, resistance of the learners. Number two is the budget. This is it, because if there is a new system, it entails money. You have to put money on it. Number three is the workload. If there is a new system, if there is a transition, the workload will be heavier.)

4.3 What are the coping mechanisms employed by the new educational leaders on dealing with transitions?

This section presents the results on the viewpoints of the research participants of the coping mechanisms employed by the new educational leaders on dealing with transitions. This was the gist of the third major research question, ‘What are the coping mechanisms employed by the new educational leaders on dealing with transitions?’ Three specific research questions were utilized to gather data and information.

4.3.1 Strategies Used in Dealing with Challenges as New Educational Leader on Dealing with Transitions

In this section, the themes created were from the responses to specific research question 3.1, ‘What strategies did you use in dealing with the challenges as new educational leader on dealing with transitions?’ The themes were cultivating relational awareness and acceptance in transition and establishing a collaborative and responsive leadership approach.

Cultivating Relational Awareness and Acceptance in Transition. The participants emphasized the importance of building strong interpersonal relationships and understanding the dynamics of the school community to effectively navigate leadership transitions. By cultivating relational awareness and embracing acceptance, they were able to foster trust, ease resistance, and create a smoother path for collaborative change. Informant 1 highlighted a subtle yet strategic approach in navigating leadership transitions, stating that;

Ang strategy nga akoang ginagamit for a long time na is to be observant ug dili dayon magpa-notice inig abot nimo sa new station. Sa sugod pa lang, kinahanglan nga mag-“pakahoy-kahoy” lang sa meaning, chill lang ka, mura kag walay alam pero ga-observe na diay ka sa mga tao ug unsay mga karakter sa palibot. So ang akoang style kay more on being observant, being flexible sa environment, ug paghatag ug value sa relationships. Dili lang kay trabaho imong sabton from your teachers or sa community, pero kinahanglan makaila ka nila personally. Kay kung leader ka, importante nga makasabot ka sa both personal ug professional sides sa imong mga kauban para kabalo ka unsaon pag-navigate sa sitwasyon ug magamit nimo na nga insights para mas ma-improve ilang trabaho ug makaplano ka og maayo sa imong mga strategies.

(The strategy that I have been using for quite a long time now is to be observant and not to be noticed once you step into the new station. First, you need to be just like the Bisaya expression “Pakahoy-kahoy lang sa,” which means pretending to be unaware or idle in order to observe properly the characters within the community you have entered. Therefore, my strategy revolves around being observant, adaptable, and valuing human relationships. It is not only the work-related aspects that you need to understand from your teachers and the community, but you also need to know them personally. This personal and professional awareness will help you, as a leader, to navigate effectively and utilize those insights to make others more effective in their work and to properly plan the strategies you will implement.)

Meanwhile, Informant 2 emphasized the importance of internal and interpersonal adjustments during leadership transitions, sharing that;

My first strategy is acceptance, acceptance of change. Because if you accept it, everything will be okay, the flow will be smooth, and everything will go well. Secondly, I used to read a lot. I would read and read to familiarize myself with the environment, the people, and the place.

Establishing a Collaborative and Responsive Leadership Approach. The participants emphasized the significance of fostering collaboration and responsiveness as key strategies in addressing the challenges of leadership transitions. By engaging with teachers, parents, and community stakeholders, they were able to build trust, promote shared decision-making, and adapt leadership practices to meet the unique needs of their new school environments. Informant 3 emphasized the importance of authentic and relational leadership in addressing transitional challenges, expressing that;

I utilized open dialogue, active listening, collaboration, continuous learning, and the demonstration of sincere leadership. These strategies helped me build trust and rapport within the school community, making it easier to implement necessary changes and lead effectively.

On the other hand, Informant 4 underscored the significance of establishing a strong support system and shared governance, stating that:

I focused on building a support system. Specifically, I reached out to co-principals or school heads in the district, joined principal group chats, and regularly consulted with the district head. Furthermore, I intentionally created a culture of shared leadership within the school by involving parents and teachers in decision-making through committees and consultations. As a result, I was able to concentrate on more strategic concerns while ensuring that the teachers felt recognized and appreciated in the process.

Meanwhile, Informant 5 adopted a responsive and team-based approach, explaining that:

I listened attentively to my teachers and their expressed needs. I gave clear instructions and shared useful reference materials. Additionally, I worked closely with my team so that we could address issues promptly and find immediate solutions together.

Lastly, Informant 6 highlighted the value of participatory leadership and community understanding, noting that:

I prioritized open communication and collaboration. Rather than simply enforcing my ideas, I conducted faculty meetings to actively seek out the opinions and suggestions of teachers. I also spent informal time getting to

know the faculty and the school's surrounding community in order to fully understand their perspectives and priorities. In doing so, I ensured that my leadership decisions were contextually aligned and more readily accepted by the stakeholders.

4.3.2 Ways in Fostering Resilience as New Educational Leader on Dealing with Transitions

Presented in this section are the themes drawn from the responses to the specific question 3.2, 'How did you foster resilience as new educational leader on dealing with transitions?' The themes created were building resilience through relationships, purpose, and support systems and fostering inner strength and positive mindset in transition.

Building Resilience Through Relationships, Purpose, and Support Systems. The participants shared that resilience was strengthened through meaningful relationships, a clear sense of purpose, and reliable support systems during their leadership transitions. These elements provided emotional stability, motivation, and practical guidance, enabling them to overcome challenges and sustain their commitment to educational leadership.

Informant 1 emphasized the value of personal relationships in cultivating resilience as a leader during transitions, stating that:

Para maka-develop og resilience, ga-rely ko sa akoang pagka-resilient nga na-develop tungod sa akong experience sa previous station, nga lisod gyud kaayo mag-establish og eskwelahan didto. Usa sa akoang pinaka-strengths kay ang akoang personal relationship skills or PR. Kung maayo ka og PR, mahimo ka nga resilient. Kabalo ka mo-bounce back bisan kulang ang resources or walay klarong sistema sa eskwelahan nga imong gi-take over, ug kabalo ka mangita og solusyon or laing paagi para ma-address ang mga challenges.

(To foster resilience, I rely on my resilient nature, which was developed through my experience in my previous station where it was very difficult to establish a school. One of my greatest strengths is my personal relationship skills or PR. When you have good PR, you become resilient. You know how to bounce back from the lack of resources or systems in the school you inherit, and you learn how to find solutions or alternative ways to address these challenges.)

Meanwhile, Informant 2 outlined a structured and values-driven approach to fostering resilience, explaining that:

There are several strategies I used to foster resilience as a new educational leader during transitions. Firstly, I acknowledged and accepted the present reality. Acceptance is key because it allows your work to become easier and helps you carry it out smoothly. Secondly, I identified my support group. This group, composed of both teaching and non-teaching personnel, helped me implement the system and complete tasks)

Fostering Inner Strength and Positive Mindset in Transition. The participants revealed that cultivating inner strength and maintaining a positive mindset were essential in overcoming the emotional and professional hurdles of leadership transitions. Through self-encouragement, confidence, and a belief in their capabilities, they were able to stay focused, optimistic, and resilient amidst uncertainties and change.

Informant 3 emphasized the strengthening of self-belief and a positive mindset as essential to building resilience during leadership transitions, stating that:

Akoang confidence na-strengthen kay nagsalig ko sa akong kaugalingong kakayahan, nagtuo ko sa akong team, ug nag-maintain ko og positive nga mindset toward sa mga changes. Kini nga klase nga huna-huna nagtugot nako nga maka-atubang sa transitions nga klaro og lig-on ang baruganan, kay kabalo ko nga ang resilience magsugod gyud gikan sa sulod sa imong kaugalingon.

(I strengthened my confidence by trusting in my own capabilities, believing in my team, and maintaining a positive perspective toward change. This mindset allowed me to face transitions with clarity and conviction, knowing that resilience starts from within.)

Further, Informant 5 focused on emotional steadiness and motivation as key strategies, explaining that:

I stayed calm and focused even during challenging times. I consistently encouraged my teachers to persevere and reminded them that change is a process that requires patience and teamwork. Furthermore, I provided support and gave praise when needed, which helped boost their confidence and morale.

On the other hand, Informant 6 highlighted the importance of seeking guidance and reframing challenges, sharing that:

When facing setbacks, I actively sought advice from my mentors and colleagues. I treated challenges as opportunities for growth and leadership development. Moreover, I celebrated small victories along the way, even if they seemed minor, as these moments helped me maintain a positive outlook and reinforced my commitment to the transition process.

4.3.3 Solutions Employed on the Challenges Encountered as New Educational Leader on Dealing with Transitions

Presented in this section are the themes drawn from the responses to the specific question 3.3, ‘What solutions did you employ on the challenges you encountered as new educational leader on dealing with transitions?’ the themes generated were leveraging community and institutional support for problem-solving and promoting leadership through communication, learning, and shared responsibility.

Leveraging Community and Institutional Support for Problem-Solving. The participants highlighted the value of engaging both community members and institutional networks in addressing challenges encountered during leadership transitions. By seeking support from local stakeholders, fellow educators, and higher authorities, they were able to collaboratively generate solutions, access resources, and implement effective strategies tailored to their school’s needs. Informant 1 emphasized the importance of understanding the school context and drawing from collective leadership experience when addressing problems, stating that;

Para maka-develop og effective nga solutions, importante gyud nga sabton una ang station. Nag-salig pud ko og dako sa support sa previous school heads ug sa akong mga co-school heads, labi na kung naay mga situations nga bag-o para nako. Akoang strategy kay kanunay ko mag-consult sa uban nga leaders, mangutana ko unsaon nila pag-handle og similar nga sitwasyon, ug mag-interview pud ko sa former school head para masabtan unsaon niya pag-atubang atong mga challenges. Tungod sa kana nga background knowledge, mas sayon para nako maghimo og kaugalingong solutions. Sa katapusan, bisan og importante ang trabaho, mas importante gihapon ang mga tao nga kauban nimo sa trabaho.

(To develop effective solutions, it is important to first understand the station. I also relied heavily on the support of previous school heads and my co-school heads, especially when dealing with situations that were new to me. My strategy involved regularly consulting with fellow leaders to ask how they managed similar circumstances and interviewing the former school head to learn how he or she handled those challenges. This background knowledge made it easier for me to craft solutions on my own. Ultimately, while work is important, it is the people you work with who matter most.)

In addition, Informant 2 shared a powerful experience of managing limited resources and institutional support, explaining that;

In my first station, New Kapatagan then an extension of Monkayo National High School it did not yet have MOOE (Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses) because it was not yet legislated as a national school. As a result, the school was dependent solely on PTA (Parent-Teacher Association) funds. Considering that the community fell under the low poverty line, financial resources were extremely limited. Our primary solution was to seek assistance from local government officials, particularly at the barangay level, through solicitations. Imagine running a school with more than 200 learners and no MOOE.

Further, informant 5, on the other hand, highlighted the value of collaborative communication and institutional outreach, stating that;

I maintained open communication with all stakeholders so we could collaboratively solve problems. Whenever the need arose, I did not hesitate to seek assistance from higher authorities, such as district or division personnel, ensuring that our challenges were addressed in a timely and coordinated manner.

Promoting Leadership Through Communication, Learning, and Shared Responsibility. The participants emphasized that effective leadership during transitions was achieved through open communication, continuous learning, and the promotion of shared responsibility among stakeholders. By fostering dialogue, engaging in professional development, and involving the school community in decision-making, they were able to build a supportive and collaborative leadership environment.

Informant 3 emphasized the importance of mutual understanding and capability-building in addressing school-level challenges, expressing that;

I resolved the issues I encountered by fostering mutual understanding, promoting collaboration, conducting regular capacity-building efforts, and maintaining effective communication. These combined strategies allowed me to unite the stakeholders and pursue collective solutions for the school's benefit.

In a similar vein, Informant 4 underscored the value of continuous learning and empowering others, stating that;

Para ma-overcome ang mga challenges, ako gyud mismo ang ni-take og initiative nga mag-learn proactively. Ako gi-studyhan in detail ang mga Department of Education (DepEd) orders ug memoranda, ni-apil ko og official webinars, ug nagtan-aw pud ko og online tutorials aron mas masabtan nako ang mga school forms. Dugang pa, akoang gi-adopt ang distributed leadership model, gihatagan nako og leadership roles ang mga teacher-leaders ug gihatagan pud sila og autonomy sa pag-lead sa ilang mga projects. Dili lang kini naka-tabang og reduce sa akong workload, pero naka-open pud kini og opportunity para ma-develop ang future leaders sulod sa institution.

(To overcome challenges, I took the initiative to learn proactively. I studied Department of Education (DepEd) orders and memoranda in detail, participated in official webinars, and even watched online tutorials to better understand various school forms. Additionally, I adopted a distributed leadership model by assigning leadership responsibilities to teacher-leaders and granting them the autonomy to lead projects. Not only did this lighten my workload, but it also paved the way for developing future leaders within the institution.)

4.4 What are the insights gained of the new educational leaders on dealing with transitions?

This section presents the results on the viewpoints of the research participants of their insights gained of the participants as new educational leaders on dealing with transitions. This was the gist of the fourth major research question, 'What are the insights gained of the new educational leaders on dealing with transitions?' Three specific research questions were utilized to gather data and information.

4.4.1 Things Learned as New Educational Leader on Dealing with Transitions

In this section, the themes created were from the responses to specific research question 4.1, 'What were the things you have learned as new educational leader on dealing with transitions?' The generated themes were embracing change and diversity as catalysts for growth and leading through relationships, communication, and collaboration.

Embracing Change and Diversity as Catalysts for Growth. The participants shared that embracing change and recognizing diversity within the school community served as powerful catalysts for their personal and professional growth. Through openness to new perspectives and adaptive leadership, they learned to navigate transitions more effectively and foster inclusive, dynamic school environments. Informant 1 reflected on the dynamic and service-oriented nature of leadership, noting that;

Ang learning kay continuous gyud nga process. Sa akoang pag-transition sa tulo ka lain-laing schools, daghan kog na-experience nga bagong lessons, labi na sa pag-manage sa increasing number of teachers gikan sa

walo, nahimo og baynte kwatro, ug karon baynte sais. Nagkalain-lain pud ang support structures gikan sa walay non-teaching staff hangtod nadugangan og upat. Kini nga mga experiences nag-expose nako sa lain-laing communities, estudyante, ug school cultures, nga matag-usa nagpresent og unique nga mga challenges.

(Learning is a continuous process. As I transitioned through three different schools, I encountered new lessons in managing an increasing number of teachers from eight, then twenty-four, and now twenty-six as well as varying support structures, from having no non-teaching staff to eventually having four. These experiences exposed me to diverse communities, student populations, and school cultures, each presenting unique challenges.)

In contrast, Informant 2 offered a deeply reflective view on personal growth and humility, explaining that;

Firstly, I learned that change is the only constant in this world. Nothing remains permanent, and we must adapt to every shift as it comes. Secondly, I learned to embrace new realities, because acceptance allows you to move forward and perform your duties excellently. Thirdly, I discovered that humility is essential for a leader. When placed in a position of authority, one must remain humble, for that role may be given to someone else at any moment. As the saying goes, "In humility, you shall be lifted up."

Meanwhile, Informant 5 emphasized adaptability and collaboration as key takeaways, stating that;

One must remain flexible, as plans often change. Being able to adjust calmly is vital. I also learned that teamwork is essential working together makes transitions easier and more manageable for everyone involved.

Leading Through Relationships, Communication, and Collaboration. The participants discovered that strong relationships, clear communication, and collaborative efforts are vital in leading effectively during times of transition. These elements not only helped them gain trust and support from stakeholders but also enabled them to create a unified and purpose-driven school culture. Moreover, informant 3 highlighted key personal and interpersonal skills developed during the transition period, stating that;

Nakakat-on ko og valuable lessons sa leadership, patience, communication, ug pag-build og trust. Ang mga experiences nagtudlo nako unsaon pag-guide sa uban in a more effective way, pagpabilin nga kalmado bisan naa sa kalisod, pag-express sa ideas nga klaro, ug unsaon pagdaug sa kumpiyansa sa mga tao nga akong gialagaran.

(I learned valuable lessons in leadership, patience, communication, and building trust. These experiences taught me how to guide others effectively, remain composed amidst challenges, express ideas clearly, and win the confidence of those I serve.)

In a more reflective tone, Informant 4 shared insights on the evolving nature of leadership, expressing that;

I have come to understand that leadership is a journey, not a destination. It is not the title that defines a leader, but their actions. I learned the importance of nurturing relationships, building trust, and practicing honest communication.

4.4.2 Suggestions for DepEd Officials Concerning the Responsibilities as new Educational Leader on Dealing with Transitions

The theme created in this section was from the responses to the specific research question 4.2, 'What suggestions you can give to DepEd officials concerning the responsibilities as new educational leader on dealing with transitions?' The theme was strengthening onboarding and capacity-building for new school leaders.

Strengthening Onboarding and Capacity-Building for New School Leaders. The participants suggested that the Department of Education should strengthen onboarding processes and capacity-building programs to better prepare new school leaders for transitional challenges. They emphasized that structured guidance, mentoring, and continuous professional development would equip leaders with the necessary skills, confidence, and clarity in fulfilling their roles effectively. Informant 1 emphasized the need for consistent orientation and upper-level support, stating that:

Ang onboarding, training, o refresher courses para sa mga school leaders bahin sa ilang roles ug responsibilities kay usa sa pinaka-significant nga contributions nga mahatag sa Department of Education (DepEd). Kini nga mga initiatives makatabang gyud sa mga newly assigned leaders nga magpabilin nga motivated ug anchored sa ilang purpose. Sa DepEd, ang support very essential ug kung naa ang support gikan sa mga naa sa taas nga posisyon, mas mahimong manageable ang tanan nga butang.

(Onboarding, training, or refresher courses for school leaders regarding their roles and responsibilities are among the most significant contributions the Department of Education (DepEd) can offer. Such initiatives help newly assigned leaders remain motivated and grounded in their purpose. In DepEd, support is essential and when support is present from those in higher positions, everything else becomes manageable.)

Similarly, Informant 4 proposed a more structured and sustained mentorship system, suggesting that:

DepEd should consider developing a well-organized onboarding program for new school leaders, ideally incorporating a six-month coaching period where a seasoned school head mentors a newly appointed one. In addition, a comprehensive transition toolkit covering essential areas such as school management, MOOE

(Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses) liquidation, School-Based Management (SBM), and documentation requirements like IPCRF or OPCRF would be highly beneficial.

4.4.3 Hopes and Aspirations as New Educational Leader in the Department of Education on Dealing with Transitions

The theme created in this section was from the responses to the specific research question 4.3, ‘What are your hopes and aspirations as educator as new educational leader in the Department of Education on dealing with transitions?’ The themes were- fostering a supportive and inspiring school culture and aspiring for equity and resources to empower education.

Fostering a Supportive and Inspiring School Culture. The participants expressed their hope to cultivate a supportive and inspiring school culture that empowers both teachers and learners during periods of transition. They aspired to create an environment rooted in mutual respect, motivation, and shared vision, where every member of the school community feels valued and driven to succeed. Informant 1 articulated a strong desire to be a lasting force for good within the school community, stating that:

Ang akoang hope ug aspiration kay ang mahimong haligi sa leadership usa ka leader nga nagadala og meaningful solutions sa mga problema sa eskwelahan, ug mabiyaan og legacy nga dili lang mahinumduman sa mga teachers, kundi apil pud sa mga estudyante ug sa mas lapad nga komunidad.

(My hope and aspiration are to always be a pillar of leadership, someone who brings meaningful solutions to school problems and leaves behind a legacy that is cherished not only by the teachers but also by the students and the wider community.)

In a similar spirit, Informant 4 expressed a heartfelt vision for servant leadership, sharing that:

I hope to become a leader who inspires not through perfection, but through presence, compassion, and commitment.

Meanwhile, Informant 5 emphasized practical aspirations rooted in integrity and empowerment, explaining that:

Naglaum ko nga akong pag-lead sa akong eskwelahan magpabilin nga matinud-anon ug tinuoray nga adunay kasingkasing. Gusto ko nga masuportahan ang mga teachers sa ilang professional growth ug matabangan sila nga ma-perform ang ilang best. Labaw sa tanan, nagtinguha ko nga mahatagan ang mga estudyante og quality education, bisan pa man sa panahon sa transition.

(I hope to lead my school with honesty and genuine concern. I aim to support teachers in their professional growth and to help them perform at their best. Moreover, I aspire to provide students with a quality education, even amidst times of transition.)

Further, Informant 6 focused on inclusivity and emotional well-being as central hopes, stating that:

My greatest hope is to make transitions smoother and more manageable for everyone, teachers, non-teaching personnel, students, and even parents.

Aspiring for Equity and Resources to Empower Education. The participants voiced their aspiration for greater equity and access to resources to ensure that all schools, regardless of location or circumstance, are empowered to provide quality education. They hoped that with adequate support and fair distribution of opportunities, every learner and educator could thrive and reach their full potential.

Moreover, informant 2 shared practical and systemic aspirations rooted in resource sufficiency and learner success, stating that:

As an educator and newly appointed educational leader, my primary hope is to have adequate teaching and non-teaching personnel to effectively manage school responsibilities.

In a more concise yet heartfelt response, Informant 3 expressed a dream centered on inspiration and impact, sharing that:

I hope to become an inspiration to others, to be a successful leader who can contribute meaningfully to improving the quality of education. My dream is to uplift both learners and educators by guiding with purpose and compassion.

5. CONCLUSION

The findings from this study revealed the complex and evolving experiences of new educational leaders as they navigate the multifaceted demands of leadership transitions. From confronting emotional and relational challenges to discovering their inner strengths and embracing collaborative strategies, these leaders demonstrate adaptability, courage, and a growing sense of purpose in leading their schools. Central to their journey is the desire to foster a positive school culture, promote equity, and ensure that all learners are supported and empowered.

Equally significant, the study emphasized the urgent need to strengthen institutional mechanisms that support leadership development. Structured onboarding, access to mentoring, and sustained capacity-building are essential in enabling school leaders to adjust effectively, build confidence, and perform their responsibilities with competence. By investing in these areas, DepEd can nurture a generation of school leaders who are not only equipped to manage transitions but are also capable of transforming schools into inclusive, learner-centered environments.

Moreover, the study underscored the importance of communication, shared responsibility, and community engagement in shaping effective leadership. As new school heads learn to build trust, foster collaboration, and respond to diverse stakeholder needs, they become catalysts for school improvement and innovation. Their experiences affirm that successful leadership during transition is not achieved in isolation but through collective effort and mutual support within and beyond the school.

Ultimately, the study highlights the critical role of new educational leaders in sustaining the goals of Philippine basic education. Rather than viewing leadership transition as a period of uncertainty, it must be seen as a strategic opportunity for growth, transformation, and empowerment. Through consistent support, inclusive leadership practices, and policy reforms aligned with real school contexts, DepEd and its stakeholders can ensure that new school leaders thrive—and lead with purpose, resilience, and vision.

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