DOI: https://doi.org/10.56738/issn29603986.geo2026.7.206
ISSN 2960-3986
GEO Academic Journal Vol. 7 No. 3 – 2026 series

School Heads' Decision-Making Practices

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Abstract

Decision-making is a significant and subjective management process that reflects how a school head defines and perceives a problem and chooses an alternative solution to address it in managing school operations. The key purpose of this study is to determine the level of school heads' decision-making practices in a district of a large-sized school division in the Negros Island Region for the school year 2025–2026, as a basis for a sustainability plan. A descriptive research design was employed, and a 32-item researcher-made survey questionnaire was used to gather data from 148 teachers. The results revealed that most of the subject respondents were older, with longer service years and higher educational backgrounds. Overall, the level of school heads' decision-making practices in terms of instructional leadership, student academic discipline and welfare, resource management, and school-community partnership was very high. When grouped according to age, length of experience, and highest educational attainment, the level of school heads' decision-making practices across areas was also very high. Further, no significant difference was found in the level of school heads' decision-making practices in instructional leadership across age groups. These results indicate that school heads' decision-making practices play a vital role in enhancing organizational effectiveness in schools. This call for DepEd officials may prioritize professional development programs aligned with PPSSH domains through NEAP initiatives to bridge perception gaps among school heads. A sustainability plan was developed and proposed based on the study's findings.

Keywords: *Decision-making, instructional leadership, student academic discipline welfare, resource management*

Bio-profile

Jungie Boy C. Cadayday earned his Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Technology and Livelihood Education from Negros Oriental State University and his Master's in Education major in Administration and Supervision from STI West Negros University. He is currently serving as the School Principal of Korean Faithful Christian Pilgrims. Being new to the service, he sought a deeper understanding of school heads' decision-making practices; hence, he conducted this study.

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ISSN 2960-3986
GEO Academic Journal Vol. 7 No. 3 – 2026 series

Introduction

Rationale

Decision-making is a critical aspect of school administration that directly influences both academic performance and operational efficiency (Leithwood et al., 2020). In an era of increasing demands for accountability and effectiveness, school heads must consistently make timely, effective decisions to ensure quality teaching and learning. Among the many responsibilities of school heads are making decisions for instructional improvement, managing resources, ensuring students' discipline and welfare, and partnering with the community to ensure effective school operations (Fernandez, 2026). However, in practice, variations in decision-making among school heads often create challenges in managing school operations, leading to inconsistent educational outcomes and hindering the overall effectiveness of the institution, ultimately affecting students' learning experiences and their ability to achieve educational goals.

School heads' decision-making is pivotal to achieving United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4- Quality Education, which aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." By examining how school heads' decision-making practices shape teachers' behavior and commitment, the study contributes to the global call for effective, inclusive, and accountable education systems.

In the present research venue, the researcher observed that many teachers expressed concerns about limited involvement in school decision-making, leading to feelings of disengagement in student activities and school initiatives. Some school heads employed inconsistent decision-making approaches, which sometimes led to delays in implementing school programs. Some school heads use data and evidence to guide their decisions without consulting teachers and the community, leading to unsuccessful school activities, such as poorly attended events and initiatives that do not meet students' needs. Additionally, the lack of transparent communication between the school head and teaching staff contributed to low morale and diminished collegiality.

Given these pressing issues, the researcher was motivated to conduct a study to investigate the decision-making practices of school heads in their respective schools. The findings of this study will serve as a foundation for developing action plans and best practices to support school heads in effectively managing their schools and improving educational outcomes and institutional performance.

Literature Review

School heads' decision-making practices play a vital role in ensuring effective school leadership and improved educational outcomes. Educational leaders are responsible for making administrative and instructional decisions that influence the learning environment, school climate, and student achievement (Fossland & Sandvoll, 2023). Effective decision-making involves identifying problems, evaluating alternatives, and implementing solutions aligned with school goals and values (Amalia et al., 2020). Leadership and decision-making are closely intertwined, as school leaders use data-driven, collaborative approaches to improve instruction, curriculum implementation, and resource allocation (Chen & Meng, 2025). School heads, as instructional leaders, are tasked with supervising teachers, managing instructional programs, and ensuring quality teaching and learning processes that contribute to school improvement and student success (Nnebedum & Akinfolarin, 2017; Jimenez & Galicia, 2023). Studies further emphasized that democratic leadership, open communication, and collaborative policy-making strengthen instructional leadership and organizational effectiveness (Roque, 2023; Quinal & Dupa, 2024).

Studies on decision-making practices of school heads further emphasized the importance of leadership competence, collaboration, and data-driven approaches in improving school performance. Mat Shoib, Talip, and Sukor (2025) identified leadership skills, crisis adaptability, and inclusive decision-making as essential components of effective educational leadership, noting that data-driven practices significantly improve institutional outcomes. Similarly, Nalova (2024) found that consultation with teachers, delegation of authority, effective communication, and teacher motivation positively influenced school performance. Kamar and Rashid (2020) also revealed that school heads commonly practiced rational decision-making styles regardless of

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gender, with rational approaches being the most preferred. Studies by Leithwood et al. (2020) and Yasin and Mokhtar (2022) further highlighted that evidence-based budgeting and transparent resource utilization contribute to improved student outcomes and stronger stakeholder trust.

Student academic discipline, welfare, and resource management are also essential components of school heads' decision-making practices. School leaders are responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating discipline policies that promote positive behavior, order, and student development (Apriyani & Hadi, 2026). Consistent implementation of school rules, integration of character education, and strong collaboration with parents help foster self-discipline and positive school culture (Sobri et al., 2019). Likewise, school heads are expected to ensure transparency, accountability, and effective utilization of school resources to support teaching and learning. Proper management of financial, human, and material resources contributes to improved academic performance, teacher development, and stakeholder trust (Egwu & Mbonu, 2023; Yasin & Mokhtar, 2022). Resource allocation aligned with school improvement goals has also been found to positively influence students' academic outcomes (Tagoranao, 2024). Moreover, transparency in financial management is reinforced through policies such as Republic Act No. 9485 and Presidential Decree No. 1445, which mandate accountability in the use of public resources (Rico, 2021).

Research also highlighted the role of school heads in managing discipline, resources, and stakeholder involvement. Simeo and Tangi (2022) reported that school heads demonstrated high decision-making practices in student discipline through guidance and counseling, collaboration with parents, and consistent implementation of school rules. Amaba (2024) revealed that stakeholders were highly involved in school-based management and operations, while Kumar (2024) emphasized that stakeholder engagement strengthens collaboration and improves educational systems. However, Yadav (2023) noted that stakeholders sometimes provide limited feedback due to insufficient knowledge and a lack of expertise in monitoring and evaluation. Cabriga and Ching (2024) further stressed that collaboration and communication with stakeholders are necessary to prevent misunderstandings and sustain trust within the school community.

School-community partnership is another important aspect of school heads' decision-making practices, as collaboration among schools, families, and communities contributes to student achievement and school development. Partnerships with parents, community organizations, and external stakeholders help create a supportive learning environment, improve school programs, and strengthen student engagement and attendance (Qaralleh, 2021). School heads are expected to establish effective communication, build collaborative relationships, and involve stakeholders in decision-making processes to ensure shared responsibility and transparency (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2022). Studies also showed that community involvement enhances academic performance, student motivation, and holistic development, particularly when families and community members actively participate in school activities and program planning (Mangagom-Cagurangan, 2022; Paraiso, 2022). However, challenges such as limited participation, insufficient training, and difficulties balancing diverse perspectives may undermine the sustainability of school-community collaboration (Al-Hameed, 2018; Olalowo, 2021).

Local studies also showed that school heads generally exhibit effective decision-making and leadership practices that positively influence school culture and organizational effectiveness. Fernandez (2026) found that school heads demonstrated sound and participative decision-making practices, while Guillergan (2024) reported that decision-making styles and educational leadership significantly influenced school culture. Namoc (2025) revealed that school heads were highly competent in data utilization and policy adaptability, although gaps in stakeholder engagement remained evident. Quinal and Dupa (2024) also established a positive relationship between decision-making skills and leadership effectiveness. Moreover, studies by Maxino (2021), Jamandron (2021), Broce (2020), Songcayawon (2023), and Mangubat (2020) found that experienced, highly educated school heads tend to demonstrate stronger instructional leadership, resource management, and school-community partnership skills. De la Cruz et al. (2025) concluded that effective decision-making among school principals is dynamic and context-driven, requiring evidence-based strategies, collaboration, professional development, and adaptability in addressing school challenges.

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Theoretical Underpinnings

This study anchors its investigation of decision-making practices in Herbert A. Simon's Decision-Making Theory (1997), which emphasizes a rational, step-by-step approach to problem-solving and decision-making.

Simon (1997) conceptualized decision-making as a bounded-rational process, acknowledging that decision-makers operate under constraints on information, time, and cognitive capacity. Simon's decision-making model involves several key stages: intelligence gathering, where a problem is identified; design, where possible solutions are developed; and choice, where the best possible solution is selected and implemented. In the school context, this process manifests when administrators respond to institutional challenges, such as student performance gaps, teacher concerns, or curriculum changes, by collecting relevant data, consulting stakeholders, and selecting appropriate courses of action.

As applied in the present study, the focus is on examining decision-making to enhance academic and operational efficiency in school administration. By understanding the challenges administrators face in utilizing data, schools can develop strategies to improve decision-making processes, ultimately leading to better academic outcomes and more efficient school operations. This study highlights the need for structured data management systems and capacity-building initiatives to equip school leaders with the necessary skills for effective decision-making.

Objectives

This study aimed to determine the level of decision-making practices of school heads in a district of a large-sized division in the Negros Island Region during the school year 2025–2026. Specifically, it sought to determine: 1) the profile of the respondents in terms of age, length of experience, and highest educational attainment; 2) the level of decision-making practices of school heads in the areas of instructional leadership, student academic discipline and welfare, resource management, and school-community partnership; 3) whether a significant difference exists in the level of decision-making practices of school heads when respondents are grouped according to the aforementioned variables.

Methodology

This chapter discusses the research design, the study locale, the respondents, the data-gathering instrument, validity and reliability, the data-gathering procedure, analytical schemes, and statistical tools.

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive research design to determine the level of decision-making practices of school heads in a district of a large-sized division in the Negros Island Region during the school year 2025–2026, as a basis for a sustainability plan.

Creswell and Poth (2019) state that descriptive research identifies, analyzes, and interprets the characteristics of a phenomenon without manipulating variables. This method allows an in-depth understanding of the existing practices and challenges of data-driven decision-making in school administration.

Descriptive research is suited to this study, as it aims to gather information on the current state of decision-making among school heads, thereby aiding the formulation of recommendations for improvement. This approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter, offering valuable insights to inform decision-making. By focusing on specific characteristics and the relationships among variables, the researcher can effectively analyze and interpret the data collected.

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Respondents of the Study

The respondents in the study were 148 of 240 public school teachers in one of the districts in a large school division in Central Philippines. Since the number of respondents is too large to handle, a sample is determined through the Cochran formula.

Cochran's formula is normally used when the population is large or infinite and applies to both proportions and means (Ahmed, 2024). Given that 17 schools are under investigation, the researcher employed stratified sampling. Stratified sampling is used when a population can be divided into distinct subgroups, or strata, such as age group, gender, or level of education (Ahmad, 2024). The sample size for each stratum can be determined using proportional or percentage allocations. To get the percentage, the number of respondents from each school is divided by the total number of respondents and multiplied by the sample size. The researcher finally selected the respondents from each school using the lottery technique.

Data Gathering Instrument

This study used a self-developed questionnaire to collect data from teacher respondents. The instrument consisted of two parts: Part I focused on the respondents' demographic profile in terms of age, length of experience, and highest educational attainment, while Part II contained 32 items measuring school heads' decision-making practices in instructional leadership, student academic discipline, resource management, and school-community partnership using a five-point Likert scale. To ensure validity, the questionnaire underwent face and content validation by three expert validators whose recommendations were incorporated into the final instrument. Using the criteria of Carter V. Good and Douglas E. Scates, the instrument obtained a validity index of 5.00, indicating excellent validity. Reliability was established through a dry-run test involving 30 teachers who were not part of the actual respondents. Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine internal consistency, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.981, interpreted as excellent, thereby confirming that the instrument was reliable and dependable for data gathering.

Data Gathering Procedure

To ensure the smooth conduct of the study, the researcher followed a systematic process. A formal letter of request to conduct the study was submitted to the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent. Upon approval, the researcher sent letters to the school heads of all participating schools, attaching the superintendent's approved letter. Once the school heads granted permission, the researcher facilitated the distribution of the research instrument to the teacher-respondents. Questionnaires were provided both electronically and in printed form to ensure accessibility for all respondents, especially those without internet access. To assist respondents who have difficulty answering the instrument, the researcher included her contact number and Messenger account in the instrument for communication and clarification. The questionnaires were also personally retrieved by the researcher after the allowed time had passed to ensure a 100 percent retrieval of the checklist and questionnaires.

Research Ethics Protocol

The researcher ensured that the study strictly adhered to established ethical research standards, prioritizing voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, and the protection of personal data. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and respondents had the right to withdraw at any time without consequences. Prior to data collection, participants were fully informed about the objectives of the study, the procedures involved, and their rights as participants. To safeguard respondents' privacy, all collected data was treated with strict confidentiality and accessible only to the researcher. The information gathered was used solely for academic purposes and handled in accordance with the provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012. In observing these ethical protocols, the researcher aimed to protect the rights and well-being of all participants, foster trust throughout the data collection process, and uphold the integrity and professionalism of the entire research endeavor.

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Analytical and Statistical Schemes

Objective No. 1 used the descriptive analytical scheme and frequency and percentage to determine the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, length of experience, and highest educational attainment. Objective No. 2 used the descriptive analytical scheme and means to determine the level of decision-making practices of school heads in instructional leadership, student academic discipline and welfare, resource management, and school-community partnerships. Objective No. 3 used the comparative analytical scheme and the Mann-Whitney U test to determine whether there are significant differences in the level of decision-making practices of school heads when grouped and compared according to the aforementioned variables.

Results and Discussion

This section summarizes the study's findings, which come from careful data gathering, in-depth analysis, and thoughtful interpretation. After this, meaningful conclusions were drawn from the initial phase, offering valuable insights.

Level of Decision-Making Practices of School Heads in Instructional Leadership, Student Academic Discipline and Welfare, Resource Management, and School-Community Partnership

Table 1
Level of decision-making practices of school heads in Instructional Leadership

Items	Mean	Interpretation
My school head...		
1. Clearly communicates visions for teaching and learning.	4.64	Very high level
2. uses student performance data when making instructional decisions.	4.64	Very high level
3. ensures collaborative planning and peer observation are decided upon and implemented.	4.64	Very high level
4. prioritizes high-quality professional development based on identified instructional needs.	4.58	Very high level
models effective teaching strategies to guide instructional improvement.	4.58	Very high level
6. promotes a supportive learning environment through intentional leadership decisions.	4.66	Very high level
7. uses teacher feedback as a basis for instructional decision-making.	4.67	Very high level
8. allocates resources effectively based on instructional priorities and data.	4.51	Very high level
Overall Mean	**4.62**	**Very high level**

Table 1 illustrates the level of decision-making practices of school heads in terms of instructional leadership across eight specific indicators. As shown in the table, the respondents' assessment resulted in an overall mean score of 4.62, which is interpreted as a Very High Level.

Upon further investigation, the respondents achieved the highest mean score of 4.67 on item No. 7, which states that using teacher feedback as a basis for instructional decision-making reflects a very high level. The result implies that the school heads exhibit the quality of a good leader. They welcome feedback from teachers before making decisions for instruction improvement. Upon further investigation, the respondents obtained the highest mean score of 4.67 on item No. 7, which states to use teacher feedback as a basis for instructional decision-making, reflecting a very high level. The result implies that the school heads exhibit the

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quality of a competent leader. The school heads welcome feedback from teachers before making decisions to enhance instructional improvement. This practice fosters a collaborative environment and empowers teachers, making them feel valued and heard in the decision-making process. The result agrees with that of Maxino (2021), who reported that school heads' instructional leadership was high. They acknowledge the feedback from teachers and community stakeholders to ensure instructional improvement.

Nonetheless, the lowest mean score of 4.51 was for item No. 8, which pertains to the effective allocation of resources based on instructional priorities and data. While this still indicates a Very High Level, the finding suggests that school heads must remain deliberate in how they distribute limited funds and materials. By prioritizing essential data—such as student achievement scores, classroom inventory needs, and teacher request logs—school heads can ensure that every peso or piece of equipment directly supports their instructional goals. Effectively allocating these resources based on actual classroom evidence helps prevent waste and ensures that support reaches the areas where students need it most. The finding coincides with that of Leithwood et al. (2020), who highlighted that effective school leaders use data to guide budgetary decisions, ensuring that resources are directed to areas with the greatest instructional need. His study showed that when schools base their purchasing and hiring decisions on evidence, there is a higher probability of improving student outcomes, especially in underperforming subjects.

Table 2
Level of decision-making practices of school heads in Student Academic Discipline and Welfare

Items	Mean	Interpretation
My school head...		
1. Promotes academic discipline by setting clear expectations and actions.	4.72	Very high level
2. ensures behavioral concerns are addressed promptly and fairly through well-informed decisions.	4.67	Very high level
3. includes identifying and implementing interventions for at-risk students.	4.61	Very high level
4. actively involves parents in decisions related to student behavior.	4.68	Very high level
5. refers to academic and behavioral data when addressing student needs.	4.68	Very high level
6. ensures discipline policies are applied consistently across grade levels through decision-making oversight.	4.66	Very high level
7. supports implementing programs for student welfare and well-being through data-informed decisions.	4.76	Very high level
8. Reinforces inclusivity and support through deliberate leadership decisions.	4.68	Very high level
Overall Mean	**4.68**	**Very high level**

Table 2 presents the level of decision-making practices of school heads in student academic discipline and welfare. The respondents obtained an overall mean score of 4.68, interpreted as a Very High Level.

Upon further analysis of the results, the respondents obtained the highest mean score of 4.76 on item No. 7, which pertains to supporting the implementation of programs for student welfare and well-being through data-informed decisions. This reflects a very high level and implies that school heads possess excellent decision-making skills in managing student welfare. From the perspective of the teachers, these decisions are visible through the consistent support for school-wide activities such as student health programs, guidance seminars, and mental health awareness initiatives. This demonstrates that school heads prioritize a supportive educational environment that fosters both student well-being and academic performance. The result aligns with the study of Simeo and Tangi (2022), which noted that effective discipline management involves a balance of guidance, counseling, and cooperation between stakeholders.

On the other hand, the lowest mean score of 4.61 was for item No. 3, which involves identifying and implementing interventions for at-risk students. While still interpreted as a Very High Level, this finding highlights the complexity of addressing student diversity. From the perspective of the teachers, identifying at-

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risk students requires constant monitoring of attendance patterns, sudden drops in grades, and changes in classroom behavior. The score suggests that while school heads are decisive, the process of selecting the most suitable intervention—such as remedial sessions or home visits—remains a challenging area of decision-making that demands highly specific data.

The finding suggests that school heads strive to be models of discipline. By maintaining firm and consistent school policies that have been agreed upon by the school body, they provide a structured environment that benefits both the learners and the teaching staff.

Table 3
Level of decision-making practices of school heads in Resource Management

Items	Mean	Interpretation
My school head...		
1. allocates school financial resources based on school priorities and data.	4.50	Very high level
2. ensures transparency and accountability in managing school funds.	4.49	High level
3. provides teachers access to updated technological tools through informed decisions.	4.52	Very high level
4. supports technology integration through strategic decisions.	4.54	Very high level
5. ensures that facilities and equipment are maintained and used based on operational decisions.	4.55	Very high level
6. addresses infrastructure needs based on data-driven assessments.	4.59	Very high level
7. assigns staff based on qualifications and workload considerations.	4.60	Very high level
8. actively supports professional development and staff welfare through planned decision-making.	4.66	Very high level
Overall Mean	**4.56**	**Very high level**

Table 3 discloses the level of decision-making practices of school heads in resource management. The respondents obtained an overall mean score of 4.56, interpreted as a Very High Level.

Examining the table items further, the respondents obtained the highest mean score of 4.66 on item No. 8, which pertains to actively supporting professional development and staff welfare through planned decision-making. This reflects a very high level and implies that school heads prioritize the growth of their personnel. From the perspective of the teachers, this is felt through the approval of attendance in INSET programs and the provision of technical assistance during school hours. This aligns with the findings of Jamandron (2021), who noted that school leaders prioritize professional development initiatives to address the specific training requirements of educators.

Nonetheless, the lowest mean score of 4.49 was for item No. 2, regarding transparency and accountability in managing school funds, which was the only item interpreted as High Level rather than "Very High." The teachers likely rated this item lower because financial liquidations and MOOE (Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses) reports are often technical and primarily handled by the school head and the school bookkeeper. Because these processes occur in the administrative office, teachers may feel less involved or informed about the step-by-step utilization of funds. This result relates to the study of Yasin and Mokhtar (2022), which emphasizes that while trust exists, sharing financial data more openly with stakeholders is essential to building a culture of accountability. Similarly, Pagunsan and Moyani (2024) highlighted that practicing accountability is a core competency for efficient school leaders, directly influencing the effective management of school resources.

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ISSN 2960-3986
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Table 4
Level of decision-making practices of school heads in School-Community Partnership

Items	Mean	Interpretation
My school head...		
1. fosters strong relationships with parents and stakeholders.	4.77	Very high level
2. ensures community members are meaningfully involved in school planning and decisions.	4.70	Very high level
3. prioritizes clear communication of school goals and updates to the community.	4.75	Very high level
4. Establishes partnerships with the community to support student programs and activities.	4.70	Very high level
5. takes community feedback into account in making school decisions.	4.64	Very high level
6. facilitates coordination with external agencies as part of strategic decision-making.	4.68	Very high level
7. Encourages community involvement in school events through inclusive decision-making.	4.68	Very high level
8. upholds transparency and accountability to stakeholders through responsible leadership decisions.	4.69	Very high level
Overall Mean	**4.70**	**Very high level**

Table 4 divulges the level of decision-making practices of school heads in school-community partnerships. The respondents obtained an overall mean score of 4.70, interpreted as a very high level.

Deliberating the table further, the respondents obtained the highest mean score of 4.77 on item No. 1, which states to foster strong relationships with parents and stakeholders, reflecting a very high level. The result implies that the school heads involved parents and stakeholders in decision-making and planning of school activities and projects. They have open communication with parents and stakeholders to ensure that they are aware of and updated on school activities. The finding is supported by Amaba (2024), who reported that the parents and stakeholders are highly involved in decision-making in the different facets of school-based management and operation. Mangagom-Cagurangan (2022) deduced that partnerships that involve families and community organizations in decision-making and program development have been shown to improve students' academic outcomes and social-emotional development.

In contrast, the lowest mean score of 4.64 was for item No. 5, which states to take community feedback into account in making school decisions, interpreted as a high level. The finding implies that the school heads need to encourage community stakeholders to participate not only in decision-making but also to provide feedback and recommendations to ensure better decision-making processes for school activities. This situation usually happens because there are community stakeholders who do not have knowledge of the school activities; thus, most of them leave the decision-making to school authorities and primary implementers of the school activities. This suggests that fostering collaboration with the community can lead to more informed and effective decisions, ultimately benefiting the school's initiatives. Engaging stakeholders may enhance trust and transparency in the decision-making process. The finding is supported by Yadav (2023), who reported that stakeholders seldom provide feedback on school programs due to the lack of knowledge of the programs and the lack of expertise in participatory monitoring and evaluation. Likewise, Olalowo (2021) mentioned that community members have been hesitant to participate in some of the school's expedited innovations since their skills were not being used in the areas in which they excel.

Comparative Analysis in the Level of Decision-Making Practices of School Heads in Instructional Leadership, Student Academic Discipline and Welfare, Resource Management, and School-Community Partnership when grouped and compared according to Age, Length of Experience, and Highest Educational Attainment

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Table 5
Differences in the level of decision-making practices of school heads in Instructional Leadership, when grouped and compared according to the variables

Variables	Categories	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U-test	Sig. Level	*p*-value	Interpretation
Age	Younger	69	82.71	2159.00		0.023	Significant
	Older	79	67.33				
Length of Service	Shorter	71	79.51	2377.50	0.05	0.153	Not Significant
	Longer	77	69.88				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	69	73.47	2654.50		0.775	Not Significant
	Higher	79	75.40				

Table 5 reviews the difference in the level of decision-making practices of school heads in instructional leadership when compared according to age, length of service, and highest educational attainment.

For the variables length of service and highest educational attainment, the calculated p-values of 0.153 and 0.775 are higher than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypotheses stating that there is no significant difference in the decision-making practices of school heads when grouped by these two variables are accepted. This suggests that regardless of how long a teacher has served or their level of graduate studies, their perception of the school head's leadership remains statistically similar.

However, for the variable age, the computed p-value is 0.023, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance and is thus interpreted as significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis for this variable is rejected. The finding implies that the perceived level of school heads' instructional leadership varies significantly depending on the age of the teacher. Specifically, younger respondents (Mean Rank = 82.71) perceived higher instructional leadership compared to their older counterparts (Mean Rank = 67.38). This suggests that age is a critical factor in how leadership is interpreted; younger teachers may rely more heavily on the school head's active guidance as they navigate their early career, whereas older, more autonomous teachers may view the same leadership practices through a more critical or independent lens.

This finding aligns with the research of Amancio (2025), who noted that age plays a significant role in leadership perception, as it reflects the differing professional needs and expectations of teachers at various stages of their personal and professional development.

Table 6
Differences in the level of decision-making practices of school heads in Student Academic Discipline and Welfare, when grouped and compared according to Variables

Variables	Categories	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U-test	Sig. Level	*p*-value	Interpretation
Age	Younger	69	77.83	2495.50		0.353	Not Significant
	Older	79	71.59				
Length of Service	Shorter	71	76.15	2626.00	0.05	0.636	Not Significant
	Longer	77	72.97				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	69	71.28	2503.50		0.370	Not Significant
	Higher	79	77.31				

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Table 6 summarizes the difference in the level of decision-making practices of school heads in student academic discipline and welfare when compared according to age, length of experience, and highest educational attainment. As shown in the table, the computed p-values for the variables age (0.353), length of experience (0.636), and highest educational attainment (0.370) are all greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypotheses stating that there are no significant differences in the decision-making practices of school heads in these areas are accepted. The finding implies that the implementation of student discipline and welfare programs is perceived with high consistency across the entire teaching staff. This suggests that school heads have established universal and standardized disciplinary policies that are applied regardless of a teacher's background or tenure. From the perspective of the school environment, this uniformity is a strength; it indicates that the rules, expectations, and welfare initiatives are clear and well-integrated into the school culture. Because these practices are so deeply rooted in the school's daily operations, the demographic differences of the teachers do not alter how they observe or experience the school head's leadership in this domain. This consistency supports the idea that school heads serve as a model of discipline. By maintaining firm and objective policies that have been agreed upon by the school body, they ensure a stable and predictable environment for both students and faculty. This result aligns with the principle that effective discipline management relies on shared standards and collaborative oversight, ensuring that every stakeholder is aligned with the school's goals for student well-being.

Table 7
Differences in the level of decision-making practices of school heads in Resource Management when grouped and compared according to Variables

Variables	Categories	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U-test	Sig. Level	*p*-value	Interpretation
Age	Younger	69	76.30	2601.00		0.616	Not Significant
	Older	79	72.92				
Length of Service	Shorter	71	75.17	2686.00	0.05	0.849	Not Significant
	Longer	77	73.88				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	69	73.80	2677.50		0.847	Not Significant
	Higher	79	75.11				

Table 7 discloses the difference in the level of decision-making practices of school heads in resource management when compared according to age, length of experience, and highest educational attainment.

As disclosed, the computed p-values for the variables age (0.616), length of experience (0.849), and highest educational attainment (0.847) are all significantly greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Consequently, the null hypotheses for all three variables are accepted, indicating no significant difference in how these groups perceive resource management practices.

The finding implies that school heads exercise a standardized approach to resource allocation that is transparent and visible to all faculty members, regardless of their professional profile. This suggests that the management of school funds, facilities, and personnel is governed by established Department of Education (DepEd) guidelines and school-based management (SBM) protocols, which leave little room for subjective interpretation or demographic bias. Because these resource decisions—such as the distribution of technological tools or infrastructure repairs—are based on objective, data-driven assessments, the entire teaching staff observes a high degree of consistency and fairness. This uniformity fosters a sense of equity within the institution, as teachers across all ages and experience levels feel that resources are managed according to the actual needs of the school rather than individual teacher characteristics.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.56738/issn29603986.geo2026.7.206
ISSN 2960-3986
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This result corresponds with the findings of Yasin and Mokhtar (2022), who highlighted that when school principals are consistent and objective in the utilization of school resources, it builds a foundation of trust and transparency among all key stakeholders.

Table 8
Differences in the level of decision-making practices of school heads in School-Community Partnership when grouped and compared according to the variables

Variables	Categories	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U-test	Sig. Level	*p*-value	Interpretation
Age	Younger	69	78.63	2440.50		0.217	Not Significant
	Older	79	70.89				
Length of Service	Shorter	71	76.36	2601.50	0.05	0.568	Not Significant
	Longer	77	72.79				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	69	72.51	2588.50		0.553	Not Significant
	Higher	79	76.23				

Table 8 explains the difference in the level of decision-making practices of school heads in school-community partnership when grouped and compared according to age, length of experience, and highest educational attainment. As reflected in the table, the computed p-values are 0.217, 0.568, and 0.553, respectively, which are all greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference is accepted.

The result implies that the effectiveness of school heads in cultivating school-community partnerships is perceived with high consistency across all teacher demographics. This suggests that engaging stakeholders—such as parents, local leaders, and alumni—is a universal expectation of school leadership that transcends the individual age or tenure of the teaching staff. From a contextual perspective, this uniformity may stem from the fact that community engagement is a mandated core competency in the Department of Education's leadership framework. Because these partnership activities (like Brigada Eskwela or PTA meetings) follow a structured school calendar and established institutional protocols, they are observed and felt similarly by all teachers. This indicates that school heads are successful in maintaining a cohesive approach to community relations, ensuring that the school's external support system remains stable regardless of internal demographic variations.

This finding is supported by Jamandron (2020), who reported that school heads' leadership skills in school-community partnerships do not vary regardless of their age, length of service, and educational attainment, highlighting the importance of standardized leadership competencies in fostering institutional trust.

Conclusion

The study found that most respondents were 39 years old and above, had more than 10 years of teaching experience, and held master's degrees, indicating a highly experienced and well-qualified teaching workforce. Overall, school heads' decision-making practices in instructional leadership, student academic discipline and welfare, resource management, and school-community partnership were rated as very high, reflecting strong competence in both administrative and instructional functions. When grouped according to profile variables, perceptions remained consistently very high, although a significant difference was noted in instructional leadership based on age, with younger teachers viewing leadership support more positively than older teachers. Based on these findings, it is concluded that school heads demonstrate standardized and consistently effective leadership practices regardless of teacher profile, contributing to institutional stability and trust. However, age-related differences suggest the need for more targeted instructional support, particularly balancing mentorship for younger teachers while maintaining professional autonomy for more experienced staff. It is also concluded

DOI: https://doi.org/10.56738/issn29603986.geo2026.7.206
ISSN 2960-3986
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that while overall practices are strong, areas such as resource management and student support require continued transparency and careful attention to sustain high levels of trust and effectiveness.

Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, it is recommended that the Division Training Development team conduct need-based seminars focusing on instructional mentorship strategies to address perception gaps between younger and more experienced teachers. School heads are also encouraged to collaborate with teachers in establishing a formal registry of at-risk students to ensure that interventions are systematically and consistently implemented. To strengthen transparency in resource management, schools should adopt digital platforms or transparency boards that provide stakeholders with accessible information on financial decisions and expenditures. Furthermore, school heads should implement formal recognition programs for community partners during PTA meetings to enhance engagement, strengthen relationships, and sustain effective school-community partnerships.

Acknowledgment

The researcher sincerely expresses profound gratitude to all individuals who contributed to the completion of this study. Deep appreciation is extended to the adviser for the guidance, patience, support, and expert assistance provided throughout the research process, as well as to the panel members for their valuable criticisms, insights, suggestions, and recommendations that greatly improved the study. Gratitude is also given to the respondents for their time, cooperation, and honest participation in answering the research instrument. Likewise, heartfelt appreciation is extended to everyone who, in one way or another, contributed to the realization of this work. Above all, the researcher offers utmost thanks to the Almighty Father for the strength, wisdom, guidance, grace, and love that made the completion of this study possible.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares the absence of any conflict of interest that could have influenced the content or conclusions of this paper. They affirm that no financial, personal, or professional relationships with other individuals or organizations have compromised the objectivity, integrity, or impartiality of the research work. As a final point, no external parties influenced the study design, data collection, analysis, or interpretation.

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