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School Heads' Managerial Competencies and Leadership Potential as Predictors of School Resource Management: A Descriptive-Correlational Study in Cotabato, Philippines

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Abstract: ***This study examined the managerial competencies and leadership potential of school heads as predictors of school resource management in selected public schools across the Divisions of Cotabato, Kidapawan City, and South Cotabato, Philippines. Employing a descriptive-correlational design, teacher-respondents evaluated their school heads on five managerial competence domains (interpersonal, social, instructional, educational, and self-management) and seven leadership potential dimensions (innovativeness, communication, adaptability, integrity, transparency, decisiveness, and transformative leadership). Resource management was assessed across human, material, and financial domains. Results revealed an overall managerial competence mean of 3.94 (Competent) and an overall leadership potential mean of 3.84 (Skillful). Resource management was generally strong (M=4.29, Highly Competent), with social competence (M=4.38) and transparency (M=4.43) as the highest-rated dimensions. Critical gaps included parent meeting scheduling (M=2.41, Less Competent), encouraging advanced education (M=2.49, Less Competent), and financial record-keeping (M=3.00, Moderately Competent). Regression analyses confirmed that educational competence negatively predicts human resource management (β=-.238**, p=.000); social competence negatively predicts financial resource management (β=-.322**, p=.000); while communication skills (t=5.608**) and transformative leadership (t=6.025**) are the strongest positive predictors of financial management. These findings underscore the need for competency-targeted leadership development programs and policy reforms anchored in the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH).***

Keywords: managerial competencies, leadership potential, school resource management, PPSSH, school heads, Philippines

I. INTRODUCTION

School heads occupy a pivotal position in the Philippine basic education system, functioning simultaneously as instructional leaders, administrative managers, and community bridge-builders. The quality of their managerial competencies and leadership potential directly determines how effectively schools mobilize and steward human, material, and financial resources — the essential lifeblood of institutional performance and student outcomes. With the Department of Education's increasing emphasis on school-based management under Republic Act 9155 (Governance of Basic Education Act), school heads in the Philippines are expected to exercise greater autonomy and accountability in resource management than ever before.

Global research affirms that school leadership constitutes the second most significant school-level factor — after classroom instruction — in determining student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2020). In the Philippine context, Valenzuela and Buenvinida (2021) established a strong correlation between school heads' management competencies and school performance in Laguna, particularly in financial oversight, staff supervision, and disaster preparedness. Hernandez (2024) further demonstrated that financial competencies — including budgeting, auditing, and inventory control — significantly impact the delivery of basic education services. A phenomenological inquiry by Anino, Ortega, and Ocdenaria (2025) revealed that school heads in Davao employed strategic planning, community engagement, and resource optimization to sustain school operations despite limited funding.

Ambon, Alias, and Mansor (2025) — in a systematic review of 756 publications — highlighted that effective school heads must possess strategic vision, adaptive communication, and continuous professional development orientation.

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Arambala (2025) identified nine core leadership competencies — spanning instructional leadership, emotional intelligence, and crisis resilience — as essential for navigating modern school management complexity. The Cognizance Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies (2025), anchoring its analysis in Transformational Leadership Theory, Mintzberg's Managerial Roles Theory, and the Competency-Based Theory, noted that the PPSSH offers a structured leadership framework, yet its implementation remains inconsistent, especially in geographically challenged and culturally diverse regions. This study examines the predictive relationships between specific managerial competence dimensions, leadership potential factors, and the three distinct domains of school resource management in the Cotabato region.

A. Research Objectives

This study aimed to: (1) determine the extent of school heads' managerial competencies across five domains; (2) assess the extent of leadership potential across seven dimensions; (3) evaluate the level of school resource management across human, material, and financial domains; (4) test the significant relationships between managerial competencies, leadership potential, and resource management; and (5) determine the predictive influence of managerial competencies and leadership potential on each resource management domain.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design and Respondents

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design conducted in selected public schools within the Divisions of Cotabato, Kidapawan City, and South Cotabato — the 2nd Congressional District of Cotabato, Philippines. Teacher-respondents evaluated their respective school heads using a structured questionnaire adapted from Kontautiene and Melnikova (2007), Bhardwaj and Punia (2013), and Victor (2017). Three teachers were randomly selected per school through simple random sampling. The questionnaire comprised five-point Likert scales for managerial competencies (1=Not Competent to 5=Highly Competent), leadership potential (1=Not Skillful to 5=Highly Skillful), and resource management indicators. Face and content validity were established through expert review; reliability was confirmed through Cronbach's Alpha.

B. Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (means) summarized variable levels. Spearman's rho correlation tested significant relationships given the ordinal Likert-scale nature of the data. Multiple regression analysis determined the predictive influence of managerial competencies and leadership potential on human, material, and financial resource management. Statistical significance was set at $\alpha = 0.05$.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Managerial Competencies of School Heads

School heads demonstrated an overall managerial competence mean of 3.94 (Competent). Social competence was highest (M=4.38, Highly Competent), reflecting strong stakeholder relationship management — consistent with Rose-Krasnor's (2023) framing of social competence as the integrated capacity to achieve personal goals through positive social interaction. Self-management (M=4.17), instructional (M=4.16), and educational competence (M=4.10) were within the Competent range. Interpersonal competence was lowest (M=3.88, Competent), with parent meeting scheduling the lowest individual indicator (M=2.41, Less Competent) and encouraging advanced education rated at M=2.49 (Less Competent) — significant human resource development gaps.

Table 1. Level of School Heads' Managerial Competence

Managerial Competence Domain	Weighted Mean	Description
Interpersonal Competence	3.88	Competent
Social Competence	4.38	Highly Competent
Instructional Competence	4.16	Competent
Educational Competence	4.10	Competent
Self-Management Competence	4.17	Competent
Overall Mean	3.94	Competent

B. Leadership Potential of School Heads

The overall leadership potential mean was 3.84 (Skillful). Transparency emerged as the strongest leadership dimension (M=4.43, Highly Skillful), indicating excellence in fostering openness and stakeholder inclusion in decision-making — consistent with Sathyanarayana and Mohanasundaram's (2025) argument that transparency enables peer validation and public accountability. Communication (M=4.01, Skillful) and decisiveness (M=3.82, Skillful) were moderately strong. Innovativeness was the weakest dimension (M=3.42, Skillful), with most innovation-related indicators rated as Moderately Skillful, suggesting that while school heads can manage orderly innovation processes, they struggle in generating new services, programs, and policies.

Leadership Potential Dimension	Weighted Mean	Description
Innovativeness	3.42	Skillful
Communication Skills	4.01	Skillful
Adaptability	3.81	Skillful
Integrity	3.70	Skillful
Transparency	4.43	Highly Skillful
Decisiveness	3.82	Skillful
Transformative Leadership	3.71	Skillful
Overall Mean	3.84	Skillful

Table 2. Level of School Heads' Leadership Potential

C. School Resource Management

School heads achieved an overall resource management mean of 4.29 (Highly Competent). Material resource management was highest (M=4.71, Highly Skillful), with exceptional performance in AIP-aligned procurement, school cleanliness maintenance, e-library provision, and maintenance culture orientation (all M=5.00), though enforcement of policies averaged M=4.12. Financial resource management (M=4.29, Highly Competent) was strong in MOOE prioritization and accountability (both M=5.00), but critically weak in financial record-keeping (M=3.00) — the most significant operational gap. Human resource management (M=4.14, Skillful) showed strength in delegation (M=4.83) but moderate performance across most other HR functions (M=4.01).

Resource Management Domain	Weighted Mean	Description
Human Resource Management	4.14	Skillful
Material Resource Management	4.71	Highly Skillful
Financial Resource Management	4.29	Highly Competent
Overall Mean	4.29	Highly Competent

Table 3. Level of School Heads' Resource Management

D. Relationship Between Managerial Competencies and Resource Management

Spearman's rho correlation analysis revealed nuanced and often counter-directional relationships. Interpersonal competence showed a significant positive correlation with human resource management (r=0.140*, p=.010) but a negative correlation with material resources (r=-.138*, p=.012). Social competence demonstrated a highly significant negative correlation with financial resource management (r=-.263**, p=.000), suggesting that relational strengths do not automatically translate to the technical precision required in financial governance. Self-management competence showed a highly significant negative correlation with material resources (r=-.194**, p=.000). Instructional and educational competence did not yield significant correlations with any resource management domain.

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E. Predictive Influence of Competencies on Resource Management

Regression analyses produced nuanced predictive patterns. For human resource management (R^2=0.056, F=3.908**, p=.002): educational competence was the sole significant negative predictor (β=-.238**, p=.000), suggesting that school heads focused heavily on academic initiatives may deprioritize practical personnel management functions. For material resource management (R^2=0.038, F=2.579*, p=.026): self-management competence was the sole significant negative predictor (t=-1.994*, p=.047), indicating that personal discipline alone is insufficient for systematic physical resource management. For financial resource management (R^2=0.116, F=8.609**, p=.026): social competence was the strongest negative predictor (β=-.322**, p=.000), reinforcing that relationship-building must be complemented by technical financial literacy.

Leadership potential dimensions explained 28.6% of material resource management variance (R^2=0.286, F=21.816**), with innovativeness (t=-4.446**), communication (t=-3.210**), transparency (t=-7.490**), and transformative leadership (t=-5.702**) as significant negative predictors — indicating that visionary leadership traits require complementary systematic physical resource control mechanisms. For financial resource management (R^2=0.248, F=17.930**): communication skills (t=5.608**, p=.000) and transformative leadership (t=6.025**, p=.000) were the strongest positive predictors. For human resource management (R^2=0.197, F=13.333**): transparency showed the strongest negative effect (t=-7.610**, p<.001), suggesting that poorly structured transparency can undermine personnel management.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

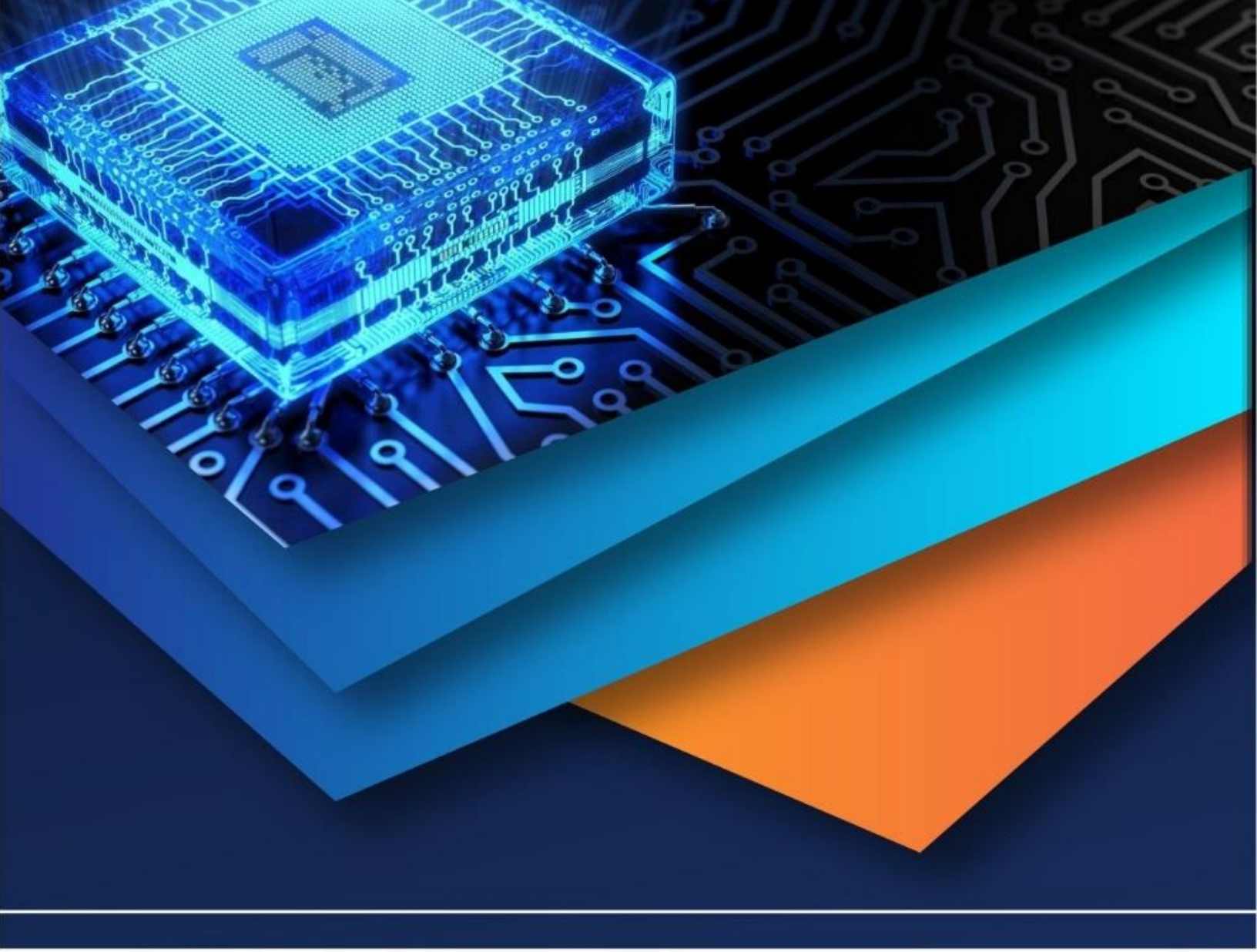
School heads in the Divisions of Cotabato, Kidapawan City, and South Cotabato demonstrate solid overall competence across managerial and leadership domains, with transparency and social competence as consistent strengths. However, critical underdevelopment persists in innovativeness, financial record-keeping, parent engagement scheduling, and encouraging teacher professional advancement. The regression findings reveal that the relationships between leadership competencies and resource management are complex and often counter-directional. Communication skills and transformative leadership are reliable positive predictors of financial resource management, suggesting that leadership development programs should prioritize these dimensions for financial governance improvement. The negative predictive relationships observed across multiple competency dimensions and resource domains underscore the critical need for leadership training that integrates competency development with technical resource management skills. These findings have direct implications for DepEd policy: the PPSSH must be operationalized with specific, measurable competency expectations in financial literacy, stakeholder engagement, and professional growth advocacy, moving beyond generic leadership training toward context-specific, simulation-based development.

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