

The school culture and leadership practices in Malilipot district

CHERYLL D. CAÑARES *

Master of Arts in Education Major in Administration and Supervision, Daniel B. Pena Memorial College Foundation, Inc.

International Journal of Science and Research Archive, 2026, 19(01), 1031-1033

Publication history: Received on 15 March 2026; revised on 22 April 2026; accepted on 24 April 2026

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/ijrsra.2026.19.1.0889>

Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between school culture and leadership practices in selected elementary schools within Malilipot District, Albay. Anchored on ASEAN's Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint and DepEd's contextualized learning policies, the research highlights how leadership and culture intertwine to shape educational outcomes. School culture—defined by norms, values, and traditions—serves as the foundation for collaborative practices, while leadership provides direction, nurtures people, manages systems, and engages stakeholders. The study focuses on San Isidro West and San Jose Elementary Schools, both recognized for exemplary performance in Brigada Eskwela and co-curricular achievements. Through structured observations, interviews, and surveys, the research examines the extent of school culture and the level of leadership practices across five domains. Findings aim to identify challenges, propose intervention plans, and inform DepEd, Schools Division Offices, and stakeholders about effective strategies for sustaining positive school culture and leadership. Ultimately, the study underscores the importance of policy-literate and culturally fluent leadership in fostering inclusive, resilient, and high-performing schools.

Keywords: School Culture; Leadership Practices; Malilipot District; Educational Leadership

1. Introduction

Education in Southeast Asia is guided by ASEAN's vision of inclusive, equitable, and quality learning, as articulated in the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint. This framework emphasizes universal access to primary education, eradication of illiteracy, and gender equality, while promoting culturally grounded approaches. In the Philippines, the Department of Education operationalizes this vision through policies such as DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2016 (Daily Lesson Preparation) and DepEd Order No. 21, s. 2019 (School Safety Framework), which highlight learner-centered and community-integrated practices. Leadership, therefore, becomes a critical factor in translating these policies into meaningful school practices.

In Malilipot, Albay, school leadership is deeply intertwined with local culture, reflecting values of bayanihan, ecological stewardship, and historical consciousness. Effective leaders act not only as administrators but as cultural stewards, ensuring that national mandates resonate with community realities. School culture—comprising traditions, values, and beliefs—shapes how learning is experienced and how change is perceived. A strong, collaborative culture empowers teachers, enhances instructional strategies, and ultimately improves student achievement.

This study focuses on San Isidro West and San Jose Elementary Schools, both recognized for their exemplary performance and positive school culture. By examining the extent of school culture and leadership practices across domains such as direction-setting, systems management, instructional support, people development, and stakeholder engagement, the research seeks to identify strengths, challenges, and actionable insights. The findings aim to contribute to DepEd's mission of fostering quality, culture-based education while offering localized strategies for sustainable school improvement.

* Corresponding author: CHERYLL D. CAÑARES

2. Materials

The study utilized both **primary and secondary sources of data** to ensure validity and comprehensiveness. Primary data were gathered through a researcher-constructed questionnaire-checklist administered to 30 respondents, composed of one school head and 29 teachers from two selected elementary schools in Malilipot District. The instrument was divided into four parts: (1) practiced school culture, (2) observed leadership practices, (3) level of leadership practices using a five-point Likert scale, and (4) problems encountered in leadership. Secondary data included published and unpublished materials such as books, journals, magazines, and DepEd issuances, which provided theoretical grounding and contextual support. Validation of the instrument was conducted by experts including an Education Program Supervisor, a Public Schools District Supervisor, and the researcher's adviser. Their feedback ensured clarity, coherence, and reliability of the tool. Confidentiality of responses was strictly observed, and all data were compiled for systematic analysis.

3. Methods

The study employed a **quantitative research design** complemented by a **phenomenological approach** to capture both measurable data and lived experiences. Quantitative methods focused on statistical analysis of survey responses, while phenomenology explored the essence of teachers' and school heads' experiences regarding school culture and leadership practices. Respondents were selected through **simple random sampling**, ensuring fairness and representation across the two schools. Data collection involved survey questionnaires and interviews, with participants providing informed consent. Letters of permission were secured from the Schools Division Superintendent and Public Schools District Supervisor to conduct the study. The researcher scheduled data-gathering sessions based on respondents' availability, ensuring minimal disruption to school activities. Confidentiality was emphasized throughout the process. This dual-method approach allowed the study to quantify leadership practices while also contextualizing them within the cultural realities of the schools.

4. Results

The data revealed distinct patterns in **school culture and leadership practices** across the two selected schools. Frequency counts and percentages showed that collaborative and supportive cultures were most commonly practiced, with teachers reporting high levels of collegiality and shared responsibility. Weighted mean analysis indicated that leadership practices such as **setting directions, managing systems, promoting teaching and learning, nurturing people, and engaging stakeholders** were generally rated "often" to "always" by respondents, reflecting consistent implementation. Ranking of problems encountered highlighted issues such as limited resources, communication gaps, and challenges in sustaining stakeholder engagement. Despite these challenges, both schools demonstrated strong alignment between leadership practices and positive school culture, contributing to their recognized performance in Brigada Eskwela and co-curricular achievements. The results suggest that effective leadership fosters a collaborative environment, which in turn enhances school performance and teacher motivation.

5. Discussion

The findings affirm that **school culture and leadership practices are interdependent**, shaping both teacher performance and student outcomes. The prevalence of collaborative culture underscores the importance of teamwork and shared values in sustaining effective schools. Leadership practices rated highly by respondents reflect the capacity of school heads to translate DepEd policies into localized strategies that resonate with community needs. However, the identified problems—particularly resource constraints and communication gaps—highlight areas requiring targeted interventions. These challenges suggest that while leadership is strong, systemic support and stakeholder collaboration must be reinforced. The study aligns with ASEAN and DepEd frameworks emphasizing culturally grounded and learner-centered education. By integrating quantitative measures with phenomenological insights, the research demonstrates that leadership effectiveness is not only about administrative competence but also about cultural fluency and responsiveness. Strengthening these dimensions can further enhance school culture and ensure sustainable educational improvement.

6. Conclusion

The study underscores the vital connection between school culture and leadership practices in shaping educational outcomes. In Malilipot District, the success of San Isidro West and San Jose Elementary Schools demonstrates how positive culture and effective leadership create environments conducive to learning, collaboration, and community

engagement. Leadership practices—spanning direction-setting, systems management, instructional support, people nurturing, and stakeholder engagement—are most effective when grounded in the values and traditions of the local community. Similarly, school culture thrives when leaders foster collaboration, recognize traditions, and empower teachers to innovate.

Findings highlight that challenges in leadership and culture can hinder school performance, but targeted interventions and action plans can address these gaps. By aligning ASEAN's regional vision with DepEd's national mandates and Malilipot's local identity, schools can become engines of transformation. The study contributes to broader educational discourse by emphasizing that leadership must be both policy-literate and culturally fluent, capable of bridging national goals with community realities. Ultimately, cultivating strong school culture and responsive leadership ensures that learners not only achieve academically but also grow as resilient, engaged citizens prepared for the future.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest should be disclosed.

References

- [1] ASEAN Secretariat (2022). ASEAN Socio-cultural Community Blueprint 2025 Baseline Study: Brief Report. Jakarta: ASEAN Secretariat.
- [2] Department of Education Order no. 42, s. 2016 – Policy Guidelines on Daily Lesson Preparation for the K to 12 Basic Education Program.
- [3] Department of Education Order no. 21, s. 2019 (Policy Guidelines on the Comprehensive School Safety Framework)
- [4] J. Bautista, (2016). *Instructional Leadership of School Principals vis-à-vis School Culture among Public Elementary Schools in Western Part of Region III*. Bataan Peninsula State University - Dinalupihan Campus.
- [5] Deal and Kennedy, (2008). School Culture. DOI:10.18296/set.0805. University College London
- [6] C.D. Glickman, (2002). Leadership for Learning: How To Help Teachers Succeed. *Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1703 North Beauregard Street, Alexandria, VA 22311-1714 (product no. 101031:*
- [7] J. J. Marino, (2007). A new paradigm for organizational change: Involving customers and stakeholders in the improvement process. *Journal for Quality & Participation*, 30(1), 10-12. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org>
- [8] Michael Fullan, (2006). Change theory A force for school improvement Center
- [9] for Strategic Education Seminar Series Paper no. 157, November 2006, Mercer House, 82 Jolimont Street, Jolimont VIC 3002
- [10] S. Stolp, (2004). *All These Things I Never Knew: Native Americans and United States History*. Northern Rocky Mountain Educational Research Association (NRMERA) "Promoting Pedagogy" conference, Sylvan Lake Resort, Custer, South Dakota, October 2004.
- [11] Republic Act 9155, (2001) Governance of Basic Education Act. An Act Instituting a Framework of Governance for Basic Education, Establishing Authority and Accountability, Renaming the Department of Education, Culture and Sports as the Department of Education, and for Other Purpose
- [12] Department of Education Order No. 024, s.2020 entitled National Adoption and Implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH)
- [13] J. A. Smith, & M. B. Johnson, (2023). *Cultivating School Culture: The Role of Leadership*. Springer Nature.
- [14] P. Northouse, (2016). Leadership Theory and Practice. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- [15] Philippe & Mandin, Sonia & Zampa, Virginie. (2008). What is teaching? Cognitive-based tutoring principles for the design of a learning environment. *Common innovation in e-learning, machine learning and humanoid (ICHSL.6)* (pp. 49-55).