

Enhancing educational leadership: A value chain analysis of effective management practices of school heads in basic education

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Abstract

This study examined the educational leadership and management practices of school heads in Kabugao Districts I and II, Division of Apayao, Philippines, through the lens of Value Chain Analysis (VCA). Anchored on the DepEd-Apayao SGOD Enhanced Manual on SIP and AIP Formulation and the DepEd CAR Contextualized School-Based Management Assessment Tool, the research employed a quantitative-descriptive research design integrating quantitative survey data and qualitative grounded theory approaches. Respondents included school heads, teachers, and community stakeholders during the school year 2025–2026. The study sought to determine the current state of leadership and management practices, their implications to the educational value chain components of planning, teacher development, supervision, and school assessment, as well as their perceived strengths, weaknesses, and contributing internal factors. A value chain-based strategic improvement guide was likewise developed to enhance leadership effectiveness. Findings revealed that leadership and management practices were generally evident across all key domains, with collaborative planning and instructional supervision identified as notable strengths. However, gaps were observed in continuous professional development and resource management. Significant differences in leadership practices emerged across select profile variables. Qualitative themes underscored the importance of sustained leadership development, strengthened stakeholder engagement, and systematic monitoring mechanisms. The study concludes that applying VCA to educational leadership offers a structured, evidence-based approach to identifying value-creating and value-limiting practices. It is recommended that capacity-building programs be intensified, value chain-based strategies be institutionalized, and a proposed leadership enhancement program be implemented and evaluated in subsequent research.

Keywords: Educational Leadership; Value Chain Analysis; School Management Practices; Instructional Supervision; School Improvement

1. Introduction

Effective leadership and management are widely recognized as fundamental drivers of organizational success across various sectors, none more critical than education (Bush, 2025). Leadership provides direction, vision, and influence, while management ensures that institutional resources, processes, and systems are efficiently coordinated to achieve organizational goals (Northouse, 2023). In educational settings, these two functions converge to shape school culture, strengthen instructional practices, and position institutions to respond proactively to a rapidly evolving landscape (Leithwood & Sun., 2017). As demands for improved student outcomes, accountability, and academic excellence intensify, school heads are increasingly expected to demonstrate strategic decision-making, collaborative leadership, and sound resource management (OECD, 2023).

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In basic education particularly, school heads carry a dual responsibility, managing institutional operations while simultaneously leading instructional improvement, supporting teacher growth, and cultivating learning environments that advance student achievement and holistic development (UNESCO, 2021). These responsibilities have grown more complex in a global educational landscape shaped by technological advancement, shifting societal expectations, and rising international standards (Leithwood et al., 2020). Effective school leadership is no longer confined to administrative compliance; it demands visionary, strategic, and adaptive capabilities that directly influence the quality of teaching and learning (Bush, 2025).

In the Philippine context, educational reforms such as the K to 12 curriculum, the MATATAG curriculum, and School-Based Management (SBM), alongside the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH), have significantly redefined the scope of school leadership. These reforms require school heads to balance administrative functions with instructional leadership. Nevertheless, national data reveal persistent disparities in leadership capacities, resource allocation, and performance outcomes, particularly in geographically isolated and underserved communities. Kabugao Districts I and II, Division of Apayao, are no exception. Situated in a culturally diverse and resource-constrained environment, school heads in these districts face the compounding challenge of adapting their leadership and management practices to meet current educational demands while navigating complex local realities.

Despite this significance, scholarly attention to leadership and management practices in Kabugao remains limited. Existing literature, while abundant on general leadership models, seldom provides structured analytical frameworks that connect specific leadership functions to measurable school performance outcomes (Harris & Jones, 2018). Fewer still have applied diagnostic tools such as Value Chain Analysis (VCA) to the educational leadership context, a gap that restricts school leaders' ability to systematically identify which practices generate the most institutional value and which require strategic intervention (Leithwood et al., 2020). Originally developed for business management, Value Chain Analysis offers a rigorous diagnostic framework for mapping organizational processes and identifying value-creating and value-limiting activities (Kaplinsky & Morris, 2016). When applied to education, VCA provides a structured lens for examining how leadership functions, particularly in planning, supervision, teacher development, stakeholder involvement, and school assessment, interrelate and contribute to desired educational outcomes (Bush, 2020). This analytical approach bridges the gap between leadership theory and actual practice, enabling school heads to make more informed, evidence-based decisions for school improvement.

Anchored on the DepEd-Apayao SGOD Enhanced Manual on SIP and AIP Formulation (1st Edition, 2025) and the DepEd CAR Contextualized School-Based Management Assessment Tool, this study applies VCA as both a diagnostic and structural framework to assess the current state of educational leadership and management in Kabugao Districts I and II. Through multi-stakeholder data drawn from school heads, teachers, parents, and community members, the study seeks to identify the strengths, weaknesses, and enabling factors of existing leadership practices, and to develop a context-sensitive model that can guide strategic school improvement, inform policy, and strengthen leadership development programs in the district and beyond.

This study investigates the state of educational leadership and management practices in Kabugao Districts I and II, focusing on how value chain analysis can enhance their effectiveness. It explores the fundamental practices currently implemented, their implications for key components of the educational value chain such as planning, teacher development, supervision, and school assessment. The research also examines the perceived strengths and weaknesses of these practices from the perspectives of school heads, teachers, and stakeholders, while identifying internal factors that contribute to effective leadership and management. Ultimately, it highlights how applying value chain analysis can guide strategic improvements in school leadership and management practices.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

This study used a quantitative and qualitative research design to clearly understand the current leadership and management practices in Kabugao Districts I and II. The quantitative part measured and described the level of implementation of leadership and management practices in key school process areas such as school governance and leadership, planning, teachers' development, supervision, schools' assessment, internal and external factors, and value chain-based strategic improvements. The qualitative approach used open-ended questions included in the same instrument to gather respondents' views on the strengths, challenges, and suggested improvements in school leadership and management. Combining both approaches provided a clear and contextualized understanding of leadership practices in the districts.

2.2. Respondents and Sampling Procedure of the Study

The respondents included school heads of public elementary and secondary schools in Kabugao Districts I and II; teachers, representing various grade levels, and subject areas; and stakeholders, such as parents, barangay officials, and community leaders with a total of ninety-three (93) respondents. Purposive sampling was used to ensure participants are directly involved in or affected by school leadership and management activities.

Table 1 Distribution of Respondents

No.	Level of School	School Heads / TICs	Teachers	Stakeholders
1	Elementary Schools	24	24	24
2	Secondary Schools	4	4	4
3	Integrated Schools	3	3	3
Total		31	31	31
Grand Total		93		

2.3. Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in Kabugao Districts I and II, both situated in the Municipality of Kabugao, Province of Apayao. The districts are geographically diverse, covering upland and lowland schools, and are culturally rooted in the Isnag community. This context provided a rich background for understanding how environmental, cultural, and administrative factors form leadership practices.

2.4. Research Instrumentation

A standardized survey questionnaire based on the Value Chain Analysis framework and adopted from two standardized DepEd-based instruments, the DepEd–Apayao SGOD Enhanced Manual on SIP & AIP Formulation - 1st Edition 2025 and DepEd CAR Contextualized School-Based Management Assessment Tool was used. The research instrument used in the study has seven parts. Part I was designed for the profile of the respondents, Part II for Fundamental Leadership and Management Practices, Part III for Implications to the Educational Value Chain Components, Part IV for Strengths and Weaknesses of Leadership and Management Practices, Part V for Internal and External Factors Contributing Effectiveness, Part VI for Value Chain-Based Analysis as guide for Strategic Improvements, and Part VII for the 3-item Open-Ended Questions. The first five parts (excluding the respondent's profile part) have 30-item Likert scale indicators distributed across school processes and a 3-item open-ended questions.

2.5. Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as the use of mean and standard deviation to determine the current level of leadership and management practices. The weighted mean range is adopted from School Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment (SMEA) and School-Based Management (SBM) Quality Standards, and that it represents a standard DepEd rating scale.

Table 2 5-Point Likert Scale

Scale	Mean Range	Description
0	0.00 - 0.74	No evidence
1	0.75 - 1.49	Beginning structures and mechanisms are in place
2	1.50 - 2.49	Planned practices and procedures are fully implemented
3	2.50 - 3.00	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards

The weighted mean of each item was computed and interpreted based on the scale above, where a higher mean score indicates a greater degree of compliance with quality standards. Qualitative data from the open-ended questions were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify common themes related to leadership strengths, challenges, and recommendations, which helped explain and support the quantitative results.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Fundamental Leadership and Management Practices Presently Instigated in Kabugao Districts

Table 3 Fundamental leadership and management practices

Indicators of effective Practices	Mean	S.D.	Descriptive Equivalent
1. The school is organized by a clear structure and work arrangements that promote shared leadership and governance and define the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders.	2.67	0.473	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards
2. The school head provides technical assistance during the IPDP implementation stage using the prescribed TA processes in the TARABAY Manual	2.53	0.628	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards
3. The processes of the Performance Management & Evaluation System (PMES) are observed.	2.68	0.468	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards
4. A clear, transparent, inclusive and responsive accountability system is in place, collaboratively developed by the school community, which monitors performance and acts appropriately on gaps and gains.	2.60	0.493	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards

The descriptive findings presented in Table 3 indicate that fundamental leadership and management practices in Kabugao Districts 1 and 2 generally satisfy quality standards, with mean scores ranging from 2.53 to 2.68. The highest-rated item, observance of the Performance Management and Evaluation System (PMES) at a mean of 2.68, suggests that performance monitoring mechanisms are consistently applied across the districts. This pattern is consistent with the findings indicating that formalized accountability systems tend to anchor school operations and align the work of school heads with institutional expectations (Leithwood & Sun, 2017; Torres, 2024).

The second highest-rated item, the presence of a clear organizational structure that promotes shared leadership (mean=2.67), corresponds with findings reported by Halliday et al., (2023) and Carrington et al., (2024), who describe distributed leadership arrangements as associated with more stable governance and clearer role delineation among school community members. This result suggests that Kabugao school heads may be operating within structures that allow for a degree of shared responsibility, which the literature identifies as a feature of effective school governance rather than of any single leadership model (Leithwood & Sun, 2017).

The item on transparent, inclusive, and responsive accountability (mean=2.60) also had the quality-satisfying rating, though it ranked lower than both PMES observance and organizational structure. This may reflect the difficulty of sustaining authentic collaborative accountability in resource-constrained, geographically isolated areas. Studies conducted in rural Philippine contexts note that while procedural accountability is often achieved, collaborative accountability that genuinely involves community members in monitoring and feedback cycles tends to require more deliberate facilitation (Chua Reyes, 2022).

The item with the lowest mean and highest variability was the provision of technical assistance during IPDP implementation using the TARABAY Manual (mean=2.53, SD=0.628). The elevated standard deviation suggests uneven implementation of this process across schools in the districts. This finding may reflect the resource and capacity constraints that characterize upland and remote school environments, where the application of prescribed technical assistance protocols is shaped by local staffing patterns and access to support structures (Cahapay, 2022). The literature suggests that in such contexts, the translation of centrally designed tools into consistent practice depends substantially on whether school heads have received adequate training and follow-through support (Kilg et al., 2021).

3.2. Implications of the Leadership and Management Practices to the Components of an Educational Value Chain

3.2.1. Planning

Table 4 Implications of the leadership management practices on planning

Indicators of Effective Practice	Mean	S.D.	Descriptive Equivalent
1. In place is a Development Plan developed by the stakeholders of the school community.	2.46	0.609	Planned practices and procedures are fully implemented
2.The development plan (SIP) is regularly reviewed by the school community to keep it responsive and relevant to emerging needs, challenges, and opportunities.	2.56	0.499	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards
3. Regular resource inventory is collaboratively undertaken by learning managers, learning facilitators, and community stakeholders as basis for resource allocation and mobilization.	2.55	0.500	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards
4. The curriculum provides for the development needs of all types of learners in the school community.	2.67	0.497	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards
5. A representative group of school and community stakeholders develop the methods and materials for developing creative thinking and problem solving.	2.41	0.603	Planned practices and procedures are fully implemented

Table 4 shows that planning indicators in Kabugao Districts 1 and 2 generally meet quality standards, with two items falling at the lower descriptive level. The item on stakeholder-developed school development plans (mean=2.46) and the item on developing methods and materials for creative thinking through a representative stakeholder group (mean=2.41) registered the lowest means among all planning indicators. Both items depend on sustained community participation, which tends to be among the more variable dimensions of school planning practice.

These results are consistent with the research that participatory, data-informed planning yields stronger alignment between school goals and resource use, but that its implementation is more demanding than procedural compliance (Javier, 2025). Bolli et al., (2020) describe planning as the critical entry point of the educational value chain, with the quality of that process shaping downstream activities including supervision, teacher development, and assessment. The below-average ratings on the two participation-dependent planning indicators suggest that while procedural planning is functioning, the collaborative dimension may not be uniformly realized across all schools in the districts.

The higher-rated items, curriculum responsiveness (mean=2.67) and regular resource inventory (mean = 2.55), indicate that more structured and administratively manageable planning tasks are implemented with greater consistency. This pattern is noted in the literature on planning in under-resourced settings, where formalized tasks tied to compliance requirements tend to be executed more reliably than those requiring broad stakeholder coordination (Navarro & Palangeo, 2022).

3.2.2. Teachers' Development

Table 5 presents teacher development indicators, where three of four items reached the quality-satisfying level. Opportunities for ongoing, job-embedded learning (mean=2.62) and regular workshops, seminars, coaching, and mentoring (mean=2.54) both indicate that mechanisms for professional development are operational. This finding aligns with evidence that sustained, job-embedded professional development is more effective in improving instructional practice than isolated training events (Maher & Prescott, 2017), and that in rural contexts, communities of practice and blended approaches may help address geographic limitations on access to development resources (Eady & Rao, 2024).

Table 5 Implications of the leadership management practices on teachers' development

Indicators of Effective Practice	Mean	S.D.	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Teachers teach their area of specialization.	2.49	0.718	Planned practices and procedures are fully implemented
2. Opportunities for ongoing, job- embedded learning that is directly relevant to teachers' needs and focused on improving student outcomes are provided to teachers.	2.62	0.511	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards
3. Learning managers and facilitators (Teachers, administrators and community members) nurture values and environments that are protective of all children and demonstrates behaviours consistent to the organization's VMG.	2.60	0.493	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards
4. Regular workshops and seminars, coaching and mentoring, and collaboration and forum for sharing of best practices are provided for teachers.	2.54	0.547	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards

The item on teachers teaching within their area of specialization recorded the lowest mean (2.49) and the highest standard deviation (SD=0.718) among all value chain indicators in this component. The elevated variability suggests that subject-area deployment is inconsistent across schools. This is a well-documented challenge in small, multi-grade, or remote schools, where limited staffing necessitates teachers covering subjects outside their training. The literature identifies teacher specialization as a prerequisite for effective instructional delivery and a factor influencing the depth to which professional development can translate into improved classroom practice (Villamarzo, 2024). Where teachers are routinely assigned outside their specialization, professional learning interventions may address only a portion of the instructional needs present in the classroom.

3.2.3. Supervision

Table 6 Implications of the leadership management practices on supervision

Indicators of Effective Practice	Mean	S.D.	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Classroom observation using the prescribed processes and tools is conducted.	2.79	0.439	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards
2. The implementation of school projects is monitored and evaluated.	2.66	0.524	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards
3. Participatory assessment of performance is done regularly with the community. Assessment results and lessons learned serve as basis for feedback, technical assistance, recognition and plan adjustment.	2.56	0.566	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards
4. Supervision of instruction for purposes of providing TA on instructional delivery is conducted.	2.66	0.501	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards

Table 6 presents supervision indicators, which recorded the highest means among all four value chain components. Classroom observation using prescribed processes and tools obtained the highest mean in the entire study at 2.79 (SD=0.439), indicating both strong implementation and high agreement among respondents. Supervision of instruction for technical assistance purposes (mean =2.66) and monitoring and evaluation of school projects (mean = 2.66) also performed well.

These results suggest that supervisory practices are a relative strength in the Kabugao Districts' educational value chain. This finding is consistent with the broader literature positioning formative and structured classroom observation as a mechanism through which school heads can directly influence instructional quality (Chaula, 2023; Ramos & Villamarzo, 2024). Bual et al., (2021) and Maisyaroh et al., (2021) reported that supervision oriented toward feedback and

instructional improvement tends to produce greater teacher reflection than inspectional or compliance-oriented models.

Participatory assessment of performance with the community registered a comparatively lower mean (2.56) within this component. The relative gap between classroom-level supervisory practices and community-involved participatory assessment may indicate that supervision in these districts is primarily directed inward toward instructional delivery rather than outward toward stakeholder feedback loops. The literature suggests that integrating community participation into supervision and assessment cycles strengthens accountability and increases the likelihood that school improvement efforts are responsive to local needs (Tiongzon et al., 2022).

3.2.4. Schools' Assessment

Table 7 Implications of the leadership management practices on schools' assessment

Indicators of Effective Practice	Mean	S.D.	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Monitoring & evaluation to determine progress and for corrective or adjustment measures is conducted.	2.60	0.516	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards
2. Progress on project implementation is documented.	2.72	0.453	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards
3. Assessment results and lessons learned serve as basis for feedback, technical assistance, recognition and plan adjustment.	2.69	0.464	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards
4. Data are used as bases in lesson planning, project development, and other school improvement planning activities.	2.68	0.493	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards

All indicators in Table 7 reached the quality-satisfying level, with the narrowest standard deviations across all value chain components (ranging from 0.453 to 0.516). This consistency suggests a high degree of uniformity in assessment practices across schools in both districts. Documentation of project implementation progress registered the highest mean (2.72), followed by the use of assessment results as a basis for plan adjustment (2.69) and data use in lesson planning and school improvement activities (2.68).

The strong ratings on data use and feedback-oriented assessment items are particularly notable in light of the literature's emphasis that assessment contributes educational value only when its results are systematically applied to planning, instructional adjustment, and professional learning, rather than used solely for reporting compliance (Schildkamp et al., 2019; Maisyaroh, 2021). The finding that Kabugao schools rate assessment-to-planning feedback cycles at a quality-satisfying level suggests that assessment may be functioning as an active, value-creating component of the educational value chain rather than a terminal reporting activity (Donovan et al., 2023). However, it should be noted that these ratings reflect respondent perceptions and do not necessarily capture the technical quality of the assessment tools used or the depth of data analysis undertaken at the school level.

Table 8 Strengths and weaknesses of current leadership and management practices

	Indicators of Effective Practice	Mean	S.D.	Descriptive Equivalent
School Heads	1. Strong school leadership is established.	2.43	0.626	Planned practices and procedures are fully implemented
	2. A leadership network facilitates communication between and among school and community leaders to inform decision-making and solving of school-community wide learning problems.	2.60	0.498	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards
	3. There is a regular dialogue for planning and resource programming that is accessible and inclusive to continuously engage stakeholders.	2.57	0.504	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards
Teachers	1. Strong school leadership is established.	2.72	0.455	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards

	2.A leadership network facilitates communication between and among school and community leaders to inform decision-making and solving of school-community wide learning problems.	2.66	0.484	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards
	3. There is a regular dialogue for planning and resource programming that is accessible and inclusive to continuously engage stakeholders.	2.69	0.471	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards
Stakeholders	1. Strong school leadership is established.	2.59	0.485	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards
	2. A leadership network facilitates communication between and among school and community leaders to inform decision-making and solving of school-community wide learning problems.	2.63	0.485	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards
	3. There is a regular dialogue for planning and resource programming that is accessible and inclusive to continuously engage stakeholders.	2.67	0.485	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards

This divergence is consistent with patterns documented in comparative studies on leadership effectiveness. Torres (2024), and Daria (2025) each report that school heads in various contexts tend to evaluate their own leadership performance more conservatively than teachers or parents, often attributing the gap to differences in self-awareness, proximity to implementation difficulties, and access to information about leadership expectations. Carr et al. (2024) further noted that divergent perceptions across stakeholder groups are most pronounced on indicators directly related to leadership authority and visibility, precisely the items where school heads in this study rated themselves lowest.

The lower self-ratings among school heads may reflect heightened awareness of the gap between ideal leadership practice and actual conditions on the ground, which would suggest a form of informed self-assessment. Alternatively, it may indicate genuine uncertainty about leadership effectiveness in a context where formal leadership training has been inconsistent (Cahapay, 2022; Kilag et al., 2021). The literature advises caution in treating either interpretation as conclusive without triangulating perceptual data with documentary evidence such as supervision logs, training records, and plan implementation reports (Perez, 2023; Maisyaroh, 2021).

Leadership communication networks and stakeholder dialogue for planning received favorable ratings across all three respondent groups, suggesting that these are perceived as consistent strengths. This finding aligns with the literature indicating that transparent communication and inclusive planning dialogue are among the practices most reliably associated with stakeholder trust in school leadership (Afalla et al., 2020). The stakeholder group's notably uniform standard deviations across all three items (SD = 0.485 for each indicator) further suggest that community members hold a stable and consistent view of leadership practices, which may reflect both the regularity of engagement and the limited access to information.

3.3. Internal Factors Contributing to the Effectiveness of Leadership Styles and Management Practices

Table 9 Internal factors

Indicators of Effective Practice	Mean	S.D.	Descriptive Equivalent
Internal Factors			
1. Resources are collectively and judiciously mobilized and managed with transparency, effectiveness, and efficiency.	2.60	0.539	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards
2. Supportive, safe, and respectful environment is created in school.	2.68	0.493	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards

Table 9 presents internal and external factors, all of which reached the quality-satisfying level. Among internal factors, the creation of a supportive, safe, and respectful school environment received the higher mean (2.68), while collective and judicious resource mobilization scored 2.60 with a slightly elevated SD of 0.539. Among external factors, partner engagement (mean =2.56) and family engagement in the educative process (mean=2.54) were rated somewhat lower and with more variability than the internal factors.

The internal factor ratings are consistent with the finding of Villamarzo (2024) that a supportive school culture and positive teacher morale function as mediating conditions between leadership practices and student outcomes. Where school environments are perceived as safe and respectful, teachers tend to be more receptive to supervisory feedback and more engaged in professional learning activities. The slightly lower rating on resource mobilization, combined with its higher variability, likely reflects the uneven resource distribution characteristic of multi-school districts in geographically isolated areas, a pattern documented by Chua Reyes (2022) and Brooks (2024) in similar Philippine upland settings.

The comparatively lower means on external engagement factors suggest that while families and partner organizations are nominally involved, the depth and regularity of that involvement may vary across schools. This is a recurring theme in the Philippine context, where community engagement structures such as Parent-Teacher-Community Association mechanisms exist formally but do not always produce the collaborative participation that maximizes their influence on school planning (Manalang & Buenviaje, 2019; Afalla et al., 2020). The literature further distinguishes between consultative engagement, where stakeholders receive information and are asked for input, and collaborative engagement, where they co-design solutions and share accountability for outcomes (Tumpa et al., 2025). The current ratings suggest that external engagement in Kabugao districts may lean more toward the consultative end, though this cannot be confirmed without qualitative follow-through.

Moreover, Mincu (2022) and Tan et al (2023) noted that in under-resourced rural settings, internal school factors tend to be more within the control of the school head and therefore more uniformly implemented, whereas external factors depend on conditions outside the school's direct influence, including community capacity, livelihood demands, and geographic accessibility. This structural dynamic may partially account for the observed pattern.

3.4. Value Chain Based as Guide in Strategic Improvement

Table 10 Value chain based

Indicators of Effective Practice	Mean	S.D.	Descriptive Equivalent
1. The school efficiently & effectively implements projects/programs to improve learning outcomes and other performance indicators.	2.67	0.473	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards
2. The accountability system that is owned by the community is continuously enhanced to ensure that management structures and mechanisms are responsive to the emerging learning needs and demands of the community.	2.53	0.502	Practices and procedures satisfy quality standards

Table 10 presents two value chain-based indicators at the school level. The efficient and effective implementation of programs to improve learning outcomes had a mean of 2.67 (SD= 0.473), while the community-owned accountability system received a mean of 2.53 (SD= 0.502). Both items reached the quality-satisfying level, suggesting that the broader value-creating functions of leadership and management are generally operational in the districts.

Taken together with the component-level findings from Tables 2a through 2d, these results indicate that the educational value chain in Kabugao Districts 1 and 2 is functional but uneven. Supervision and schools' assessment emerge as the strongest components, with supervision registering the highest mean of any value chain element in the study (2.79 for classroom observation). Planning and teacher development show more variability, particularly on items that depend on community participation and subject-area specialization.

This pattern is consistent with what the findings that identifies a common profile in school-based management contexts in internal procedurally bounded activities such as classroom observation and assessment documentation tend to reach a higher level of consistent implementation, while activities that depend on community co-ownership and targeted resource allocation are more variable (Basilio, 2021; Mincu, 2022). Value Chain Analysis, as applied in educational settings, is designed precisely to reveal such imbalances, identifying which activities create the most educational value and where realignment or resequencing may be warranted (Bolli et al., 2016; Rageth & Bolli, 2020).

The lower mean on the community-owned accountability system (2.53) is worth noting in this context. Effective community accountability requires more than the formal existence of accountability mechanisms; it depends on the

community's genuine ownership of those mechanisms and their capacity to act on the information they generate (Tiongzon et al., 2022; Cahapay, 2022). For Kabugao Districts, where geographic remoteness and socioeconomic constraints may limit consistent community participation, this indicator may point to a structural gap in the value chain that merits targeted development. The literature on VCA in education suggests that interventions addressing the weakest links in the chain yield the greatest marginal improvements in learning outcomes, which in this case may involve strengthening community capacity for participatory accountability alongside the already functional internal supervisory and assessment systems (Mincu, 2022; Carr et al., 2024; Navarro & Palangeo, 2018).

3.5. Thematic Analysis

On the other hand, this presents the thematic responses as regards educational leadership and management practices in their respective schools. The analysis is centered on gaining meaningful insights from participants' answers to the research questions and eventually determining recurring patterns from their responses. The responses were carefully reviewed, coded, and grouped into themes that reflect the collective lived experiences and insights of the participants.

The themes directly taken from the available data emphasize both the positive leadership practices observed and experienced in schools and the contextual limitations that affect efficient conduct and implementation of the different Programs, Projects, and Activities (PPAs).

3.6. Strengths of leadership

This section now presents the *strengths of leadership* as manifested across the participating schools, drawing on the thematic analysis of responses from school heads, teachers, and stakeholders. Grounded in the respondents' verbalizations, the discussion highlights how leadership is both enacted and experienced within the school context. The narratives reveal that these strengths are not merely abstract constructs but are concretely expressed through the participants' lived experiences, as reflected in their statements and descriptions of daily practices. By foregrounding the voices of the respondents, the analysis captures the nuanced ways in which effective leadership is demonstrated.

3.6.1. Theme 1: Strong and Open Communication

The theme that emerged to be leading from the responses of school heads, teachers, and stakeholders is the presence of strong communication practices in the school communities. It was frequently highlighted from the participants' responses that open communication helps ensuring teachers, staff, and community members to stay updated on school activities, plans, and expectations.

A school head underscored this strength by stating, "Effective communication with administration and staff." Similarly, teachers and stakeholders noted that the school heads are generally maintaining open channels of communication through meetings, consultations, and feedback mechanisms. A respondent from the stakeholders' group even expressed that "school heads maintain open and transparent communication with teachers, students and parents."

SH1: *"Effective communication with administration and staff. We sustain open communication by means of conducting meetings, referrals, and feedback giving."*

S4: *"The strength of our school lies in its clear direction, open communication and strong teamwork among teachers and staff, students, and parents."*

Communication is widely acknowledged in educational leadership and management literatures as a fundamental aspect of effective leadership and management. According to Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2020), school leaders who communicate clearly and consistently are better able to align stakeholders toward shared goals and foster organizational trust.

3.6.2. Theme 2: Collaborative Leadership and Shared Governance

Another main strength noted from the responses is collaborative leadership and shared governance. Many of the respondents gave special attention to school heads' encouragement of involvement among teachers during planning processes and school activities. Teachers labelled their participation in Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions, planning meetings, and school improvement initiatives.

One teacher stated, "We plan together and everyone contributes." Another respondent explained that "teachers' voices are heard during planning sessions and LAC sessions ensuring that school plans are a collective effort."

T4: *"Teachers understand school priorities and targets. Teachers concerns and suggestions are being heard. Collaborative decision-making is observed. There is an active participation of stakeholders and PTA in all school projects."*

T16: *"Working and making decisions together as unified team, we make things possible if we cooperate with each other."*

These findings reflect the concept of distributed leadership, which suggests that leadership responsibilities are shared across members of an organization rather than concentrated in a single individual (Spillane, 2006). Through distributed form of leadership teachers are given the opportunity to share their expertise and encourages shared responsibility for general school improvement.

3.6.3. Theme 3: Positive Stakeholder Engagement

The responses also stressed the significance of strong relationships between and among schools and community stakeholders. Respondents frequently mentioned that collaboration with parents, barangay officials, and community members strengthens the implementation of school programs and projects.

One respondent said that "strong stakeholder support serves as the backbone of the school to continuously provide quality education." Another stakeholder shared that "school heads and teachers work closely with parents and community leaders."

SH12: *"Strong stakeholders support is considered the strengths or serve as backbone of school to continuously provide quality education to our learners."*

S28: *"School heads and teachers work closely with parents and community leaders."*

These findings support Epstein's (2011) framework of school-family-community partnerships, which emphasizes that collaboration between schools and communities contributes to improved student outcomes and stronger institutional support.

3.6.4. Theme 4: Supportive and Empowering Leadership

Teachers described school heads as supportive figures who guide and mentor staff members. Respondents indicated further that school heads provide coaching, mentoring, and encouragement for professional development.

A school head described his leadership as "guiding teachers and learners towards common goals and supporting personnel through coaching and mentoring." Teachers also underscored that leaders encourage participation in trainings, seminars, and professional development activities.

SH8: *"Guiding teachers and learners towards common goals and supporting personnel through coaching and mentoring."*

T4: *"The school has a supportive and approachable leadership. School Head encourages teacher training, INSET, LAC Sessions and coaching."*

Fullan (2016) emphasized that successful educational leaders prioritize professional learning and create supportive environment that empowers teachers to improve instructional practices.

3.6.5. Theme 5: Clear Vision and Strategic Direction for the School

Several participants reinforced that effective school heads provide a clear vision and direction for their schools. Respondents described leadership practices that involve goal-setting, strategic planning, and alignment with the mission and vision of the Department of Education.

One teacher noted that "leaders set clear goals aligned with DepEd mission and vision." Another respondent accented the importance of having a "clear vision and direction for the school."

T1: *"Clear vision and mission that inspire teachers and learners."*

T4: *"The school leads with clear vision and direction wherein communication have clear goals aligned with DepEd Mission and Vision."*

Visionary leadership is considered a key characteristic of effective educational leadership. Hallinger (2011) explained that leaders who communicate clear goals help ensure that organizational efforts remain focused on improving teaching and learning.

Theme 6: *Commitment to Learners' Welfare and School Improvement*

Finally, participants consistently pointed out the commitment of school heads to learners' welfare. Respondents observed leadership practices that prioritize student development, safety, and academic achievement.

A teacher explained that leadership "focuses on student success, well-being, and creating an inclusive learning environment." Stakeholders, in general, also acknowledged the dedication of teachers and school leaders in supporting learners' needs.

T8: *"To provide a strong, shared lesson found on academic excellence, student well-being, & continuous improvement. To maintain open & transparent communication w/ PTA. To encourage professional growth through training & mentoring & collaborative planning. They are approachable & responsive when staff need guidance & support."*

S12: *"All teachers are organized. The School Head is visiting, when there is a problem with the learners, they inform parents, & willing to help learners & parents."*

This commitment aligns with the central mission of educational leadership, which is to promote learning and development among students (Bush, 2019).

3.7. Challenges Affecting the Implementation Of School Programs And Projects

The next section examines the *challenges affecting the implementation of school programs and projects*, as derived from the thematic analysis of responses from school heads, teachers, and stakeholders. Anchored in the verbalizations of the respondents, the discussion highlights how these challenges are not only structural and systemic in nature but are also experienced in the day-to-day realities of school operations. The participants' accounts provide concrete illustrations of the constraints they encounter, revealing recurring difficulties related to resources, context, and capacity. By foregrounding these lived experiences and expressed perspectives, the analysis offers a grounded understanding of the factors that impede effective program implementation within the schools.

3.7.1. Theme 1: *Financial Constraints and Limited Resources*

A major challenge identified across participating groups is the limitation of financial resources that are vital to support school programs and projects. Many respondents mentioned that insufficient funding delays the implementation of PPAs and limits the procurement of materials and resources.

One school head explained that "limited funding or late arrival of MOOE can delay the procurement of necessary materials." Teachers also highlighted that "funds are not enough," while stakeholders mentioned financial difficulties affecting school activities.

SH11: *"The challenges affect the implementation of the school programs and projects are in terms of limited funding or late arrival of MOOE can delay the procurement of necessary materials for school improvements or student activities."*

T12: *"Lack of fund. The school has limited fund to materialize school projects and programs."*

T14: *"Financial Constraints. Limitations in finances hinders our school to operate fully."*

T31: *"Funds are not enough. Because funds are not enough, school operation for projects and programs are at times not realized."*

S26: *"Limited budget, lack of resources and materials. There are limitations when it comes to budget, and there is no enough resources and materials."*

Bush (2019) noted that resource availability is a crucial factor influencing the effectiveness of educational leadership and management practices.

3.7.2. Theme 2: Geographic and Infrastructure Barriers

Another challenge frequently mentioned by participants is the geographic location of schools. Many schools are located in remote areas with limited infrastructure, poor road conditions, and transportation challenges.

A teacher explained that “poor road condition and lack of transportation greatly affect the implementation of school programs.” Another respondent mentioned that “distance of the school and lack of electricity limit access to resources.”

T24: *“In my experience the poor road condition and lack of transportation greatly affect the implementation of school programs. The delivery of materials is often delayed, especially during rainy days. Sometimes important supplies and learning resources do not arrive on time which interrupt our plan of activities.”*

SH13: *“No access road to transport the materials easily. The distance of the school. Limited access to resources due to no electricity.”*

UNESCO (2021) reported that schools located in geographically isolated communities often face logistical challenges that affect educational service delivery.

3.7.3. Theme 3: Limited Stakeholder Participation

Participants also highlighted limited participation from parents and community members as a challenge affecting school initiatives. Teachers explained that many parents prioritize their livelihoods, particularly farming activities, which limits their availability to participate in school meetings or projects.

One teacher shared that “most parents prioritize working on their farms rather than attending school activities.” Stakeholders also acknowledged that some parents are unable to participate due to time constraints.

T2: *“Sometimes lack of manpower. The parents of the learners tend to prioritize working on their fields or “koman”, than coming to school and help in the implementation of school projects.”*

S17: *“Some challenges that affects the implementation of school program and projects include limited budget of resources, lack of time, and insufficient manpower. Sometimes low participation from stakeholders and unexpected situations can also affect the successful implementation of school activities.”*

S18: *“Challenges that affect the implementation of school programs and projects include limited resources, time constraints, varying levels of teacher and student participation, external factors like emergencies, and lack of communication with Brgy. Officials as partners.”*

S25: *“Insufficient resources, time limitations, heavy workload, and limited stakeholder involvement.”*

Research by Hill and Tyson (2009) emphasizes that parental involvement plays an important role in improving student learning outcomes and supporting school initiatives.

3.7.4. Theme 4: Heavy Workload and Lack of Manpower

Another challenge mentioned by participants is the heavy workload experienced by teachers and school leaders. Some school heads continue to handle teaching responsibilities while managing administrative duties.

Teachers also reported handling multiple roles and responsibilities due to the limited number of staff members in their schools. Despite these challenges, participants expressed strong commitment to fulfilling their responsibilities and supporting the goals of the school.

SH4: *“Limited budget and resources, **insufficient manpower**, time constraints and **workload of teachers**.”*

SH5: *“The common ones include limited financial resources, **lack of manpower and heavy workload**, time constraints, limited stakeholder support, resistance to change, inadequate facilities and materials, communication gaps, learner-centered concerns and external factors.”*

SH6: *“**Inadequacy of human resources** (teachers to handle their own major), full time guidance counselor, & Department’s policy on addressing ACCESS over quality.”*

SH15: *"A major challenge is balancing teaching responsibilities and administrative duties at the same time. Since I still handle classes, time for monitoring & documentation of program is limited. Lack of additional personnel. Despite of these challenges, we strive to maximize available resources & maintain coordination to ensure that programs are implemented effectively."*

SH18: *"Limited funds, lack of instructional materials, and limited access to technology affect program implementation. Accessibility and transportation issues also impact attendance and participation. **Teachers handle multiple roles due to the small number of its staff.**"*

SH25: *"**Inadequate staffing, shortage of qualified teachers / support staff, increased workload** & reduce the capacity to effectively implement new initiatives. Monitoring & evaluation gaps without proper follow-up & evaluation systems, it becomes difficult to measure programs / make necessary adjustments."*

SH26: *"Limited budget, lack of time, **heavy workload**, and low participation from some stakeholders."*

3.8. Recommendations For Improving Leadership Practices

This last section presents the *recommendations for improving leadership practices*, as derived from the thematic clustering of responses from school heads, teachers, and stakeholders. The analysis organizes the participants' insights into three (3) major themes, reflecting shared perspectives on areas for enhancement in school leadership and management. Grounded in the respondents' verbalizations, these recommendations capture both practical suggestions and reflective insights drawn from their lived experiences in the field. By synthesizing these responses into coherent thematic categories, the discussion highlights strategic directions that may strengthen leadership capacity, foster collaboration, and improve the overall effectiveness of school programs and initiatives.

3.8.1. Theme 1: Continuous Leadership Development and Professional Training

Participants strongly recommended providing continuous leadership training and professional development opportunities for school leaders and teachers. Respondents emphasized that leadership skills should be continuously enhanced through seminars, workshops, and mentoring programs.

One school head suggested "providing regular leadership training for administrators." Teachers also emphasized the importance of capacity building programs to improve leadership competencies.

SH1: *"Provide regular leadership training for administrations. There must also be an evaluation for supervisors. To help supervisor who is consistently harsh, condescending, or unreasonable making work life difficult for employees. Think micromanaging unfair expectations and belittling comments."*

T6: *"The recommendations maybe are strengthening communication capacity building, promote shared leadership, stakeholder engagement."*

Fullan (2016) highlighted that continuous professional learning is essential for educational leaders to adapt to changing educational contexts.

3.8.2. Theme 2: Strengthening Stakeholder Partnerships and Engagement

Participants recommended strengthening collaboration with stakeholders, including parents, barangay officials, and local government units. Stakeholders suggested regular consultations, community meetings, and joint initiatives to improve program implementation.

One stakeholder recommended "boosting collaboration between the barangay and the school." Strong partnerships enable schools to access additional resources and support.

S7: *"Boost collaboration between the barangay and the school. There should be an openness between constituents and the school for sharing of good ideas or suggestions. There should be a regular attendance during barangay sessions that serves as an avenue for raising concerns."*

3.8.3. Theme 3: Improving Planning and Monitoring Systems

Participants also recommended improving planning and monitoring mechanisms within schools. Respondents emphasized the importance of aligning school activities with the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and Annual Implementation Plan (AIP).

Regular evaluation of programs and transparent communication were suggested as strategies to enhance accountability and effectiveness.

SH24: *"Strengthening partnerships with LGU, stakeholders, and external partners is recommended to support infrastructure and resource needs. Continuous leadership development, shared governance, and effective School-Based Management practices will enhance program implementation and stakeholder engagement despite geographical challenges."*

SH28: *"Improve planning and monitoring, strengthen communication with stakeholders."*

T16: *"There should be regular monitoring on the implementation of project based on the SIP/AIP of the school."*

3.9. Value-adding activities

This following section presents the *value-adding activities* derived from the responses of school heads, teachers, and stakeholders. These activities reflect leadership practices, strategies, and initiatives that contribute to improved school effectiveness, stronger stakeholder relationships, and enhanced learner outcomes. Each activity is supported by verbatim responses and anchored in relevant literature.

3.9.1. Theme 1: Implementing Strategic Planning and Goal Alignment

One of the most key value-adding activities identified is the Strategic planning and aligning of school programs with established goals (e.g., SIP and AIP) were identified as important value-adding activities.

- T4: *"The school leads with clear vision and direction wherein communication have clear goals aligned with DepEd Mission and Vision."*
- SH14: *"Using data to inform decisions, supporting teachers professional development. Visionary and strategic planning."*
- T1: *"Clear vision and mission that inspire teachers and learners."*
- These activities ensure that school initiatives are focused, organized, and aligned with institutional priorities, leading to more efficient implementation.
- Hallinger (2011) emphasized that effective school leaders establish clear goals and align organizational practices toward achieving them.

3.9.2. Theme 2: Monitoring Learners' Progress and Ensuring Welfare

A strong emphasis on learner-centered practices was evident, with activities focused on monitoring student performance and ensuring their well-being.

- S12: *"When there is a problem with the learners, they inform parents, & willing to help learners & parents."*
- T26: *"Leadership focuses on student success, well being, and creating an inclusive learning environment."*
- T8: *"To provide a strong... foundation on academic excellence, student well-being, & continuous improvement."*
- These practices directly contribute to improved academic outcomes and holistic learner development.
- Bush (2019) highlighted that promoting student learning and welfare is the primary goal of educational leadership.

3.9.3. Theme 3: Establishing a Positive School Culture and Strong Relationships

Another value-adding activity is the cultivation of a positive school culture characterized by trust, respect, and collaboration.

- T3: *"Good rapport between and among members of the school."*
- S4: *"Strong teamwork among teachers and staff, students, and parents."*
- T24: *"They encourage teamwork and make us feel that we are a part of one goal for the learners."*
- A positive culture enhances motivation, strengthens relationships, and improves overall school performance.

- Deal and Peterson (2016) emphasized that school culture plays a vital role in sustaining school improvement.

3.9.4. Theme 4: Resource Maximization and Adaptive Management Practices

Despite constraints, respondents demonstrated adaptive strategies to maximize available resources and sustain school operations.

- SH15: "We strive to maximize available resources & maintain coordination to ensure that programs are implemented effectively."
- T3: "Availability of funds... helps strengthening the implementation of the planned programs and projects."
- S8: "She is good in financial management."
- These practices reflect resilience and innovation in addressing limitations and ensuring continuity of programs.

Bush (2019) noted that effective resource management is critical for school success, especially in resource-constrained environments.

Now, the thematic analysis of responses from school heads, teachers, and stakeholders reveals a comprehensive picture of educational leadership and management practices across participating schools. Six major strengths emerged, namely: strong and open communication, collaborative leadership and shared governance, positive stakeholder engagement, supportive and empowering leadership, clear vision and strategic direction, and commitment to learners' welfare and school improvement. These themes collectively highlight that effective leadership is deeply rooted in participatory practices, clear direction-setting, and a sustained focus on both teacher development and student outcomes. The findings further affirm that leadership is not merely positional but is actively experienced through daily interactions, shared responsibilities, and inclusive decision-making processes within the school community (Harris, 2014; Tian, Risku, & Collin, 2016; Gumus et al., 2018).

On the other hand, the analysis also identified key challenges that hinder the effective implementation of programs, projects, and activities, including financial constraints and limited resources, geographic and infrastructure barriers, limited stakeholder participation, and heavy workload coupled with lack of manpower. In response to these issues, participants proposed three central recommendations: continuous leadership development and professional training, strengthening stakeholder partnerships and engagement, and improving planning and monitoring systems. The study also has generated key value-adding activities which include Implementing Strategic Planning and Goal Alignment, Monitoring Learners' Progress and Ensuring Welfare, Establishing a Positive School Culture, and Strong Relationships, and Resource Maximization and Adaptive Management Practices. Taken together, these findings underscore the need for a balanced approach that both sustains existing leadership strengths and addresses contextual limitations, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness and responsiveness of educational leadership and management practices.

4. Conclusion

The study concludes that educational leadership and management practices in Kabugao Districts I and II generally meet quality standards, particularly in performance monitoring, organizational structure, and accountability systems, with positive influence on the educational value chain through strong supervision and school assessment. Strengths were found in supervision, communication, and collaborative leadership, while weaknesses emerged in participatory planning, stakeholder engagement, and teacher specialization alignment. Leadership effectiveness is shaped by internal factors such as capacity, culture, and resources, alongside contextual challenges like manpower shortages, geographic isolation, and heavy workloads. Applying Value Chain Analysis highlights uneven functionality, suggesting that improvements in stakeholder participation and planning could enhance overall school performance. Leadership is largely collaborative and participatory, but limited resources, teacher workload, and insufficient training hinder consistency. The findings emphasize the need for capacity building, inclusive practices, and adaptive strategies, with value-adding activities showing that integrated, learner-centered approaches strengthen school leadership and improve educational outcomes.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

Authors have declared that they have no known competing financial interests OR non-financial interests OR personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Statement of ethical approval

The study was conducted with approval and in accordance with the standards of the college. No ethical approval was required, as the research followed all applicable ethical guidelines, ensuring respect for the respondents' privacy and confidentiality

Statement of informed consent

I affirm that the respondents voluntarily agreed to participate after being fully informed about the purpose, nature, and potential implications of the study. Their responses have been collected with utmost respect for their privacy and confidentiality, in accordance with ethical research guidelines.

Disclaimer (artificial intelligence)

I acknowledge that I have not used ChatGPT or Copilot for refining some of the sections in the document.

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