

Navigating the Unknown: A Qualitative Exploration of Teachers' Experiences on Leadership Rotation in Public Schools

Melanie G. Borlaza*, Zandro P. Ibañez

Institute of Graduate Studies and Professional Education, Davao del Sur State College,
Matti, Digos City, Davao del Sur, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: melanie.borlaza@deped.gov.ph

Date received: August 5, 2025

Date revised: September 20, 2025

Date accepted: October 1, 2025

Originality: 90%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 10%

Recommended citation:

Borlaza, M., & Ibañez, Z. (2025). Navigating the unknown: A qualitative exploration of teachers' experiences on leadership rotation in public schools. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(10), 547-558. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.620>

Abstract. This study investigated the lived experiences and perceptions of elementary school teachers regarding leadership rotation in public schools. This study explored teachers' perspectives on leadership rotation in Digos City public schools, focusing on its effects on school stability, teacher morale, and instructional continuity. Utilizing a qualitative phenomenological research design, the study involved ten elementary school teachers from Digos City. Data gathered through in-depth interviews revealed three essential themes on teachers' experiences with leadership rotation: instructional and policy changes, professional and emotional responses, and job stability and growth. In terms of coping mechanisms to ensure professional competencies under changing leadership, the identified themes included ensuring teaching stability, adapting to leadership transitions, and building peer support systems. Furthermore, teachers' insights regarding the effects of leadership rotation on school management highlighted three key themes: strengthening school culture through leadership stability, mitigating the adverse impacts of leadership rotation, and adapting teaching practices to leadership changes. The findings emphasize the complexities and adaptive strategies teachers employ in response to leadership transitions. It is recommended that education stakeholders develop structured support programs to help teachers maintain professional stability and instructional quality during periods of leadership rotation.

Keywords: Coping mechanisms; Leadership rotation; Professional competency; School management; Teachers' lived experiences.

1.0 Introduction

Public school leadership rotation presents significant problems that might impact teacher morale and school stability, but it is also typically utilized to promote professional development and institutional reform. Frequent leadership changes can cause inconsistent decision-making, disrupt long-term strategic planning, and erode the established school culture. Teachers, whose guidance and survival rely on strong and capable leadership, become confused, put in more effort, and see inconsistent policies and programs. Leadership rotation in public schools is a debated practice globally, with both pros and cons. In Finland, schools often employ a distributed leadership model, where staff share administrative responsibilities. While this approach uses teachers' skills, it can lead to inconsistent decisions and a weak school culture (Lahtero et al., 2017). Similarly, in Australia, school leaders face challenges in managing their leadership duties, which may impact their performance (Gurr &

Drysdale, 2012). These examples illustrate the complexity of leadership rotation and the need for policies that strike a balance between stability and innovation.

To enhance administrative effectiveness and promote the professional development of school leaders, the Department of Education in the Philippines has continued to implement leadership rotation policies. Under updated guidelines such as DepEd Order No. 32, series of 2017, school heads, including principals and district supervisors, are reassigned within the divisions based on organizational needs. This approach aims to maximize leadership potential and ensure equitable distribution of experienced administrators across schools (Department of Education, 2017)

To strengthen school administration and bring in fresh leadership perspectives, this policy required school administrators to be transferred or reassigned every five years. However, frequent leadership changes can disrupt policy continuity, compromise school stability, and render teachers' work unpredictable. According to Macasinag (2024), leadership transitions in the Philippine education sector often lead to inconsistent policy implementation, which can lower teacher morale and diminish the effectiveness of educational programs. These challenges highlight the importance of striking a balance between leadership renewal and governance stability to ensure administrative efficiency and a supportive environment for educators and learners.

In the Davao Region, although the goal of leadership rotation in public schools is to increase administrative proficiency, it frequently undermines teacher morale and school stability. According to Loyola (2024), the leadership ability of school heads has a significant impact on the school environment in Davao City. Consistent leadership is necessary to maintain a positive learning environment. Rotation brings fresh perspectives, but stability must be balanced with rotation to maintain teacher satisfaction and school performance.

In Digos City, public school leadership rotation policies aim to enhance administrative efficiency and provide professional development opportunities for school administrators. However, constant leadership changes can destabilize schools, impact policy continuity, and create uncertainty among teachers. Although research has been conducted on the effect of transformational leadership on teacher efficacy in Digos City, there has been limited research on the impact of leadership rotation on teacher morale and student performance in this area. The morale of teachers is also profoundly affected by leadership changes. Kraft et al. (2016) found that administrative instability is associated with lower teacher satisfaction, diminished trust in school leadership, and increased burnout. Teachers often perceive changes in leadership as a threat to the autonomy and the consistency of instructional expectations. These adverse effects can cascade into increased teacher turnover, especially when the new leadership fails to establish supportive and communicative relationships with faculty members quickly.

Research by Bartanen et al. (2024) further supports the connection between leadership and workforce stability, emphasizing that effective principals significantly improve teacher retention and student performance. When principals are replaced frequently, the resulting disruption affects staff collaboration and instructional consistency. Similarly, Nguyen et al. (2023) emphasize that transitions in school leadership often correlate with short-term declines in school climate, professional development engagement, and organizational coherence, all of which have a direct impact on teacher morale. That is why it is essential to fill this gap to understand the larger implications of leadership change on educational outcomes in Digos City. Moreover, the findings of this research hold practical significance, as they may inform educational policies and practices by guiding school leaders and administrators in designing more effective leadership rotation strategies. In doing so, the study not only builds on existing literature but also offers implications that can enhance decision-making, professional growth, and the overall quality of education in public schools.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This research utilized a qualitative phenomenological research design to investigate teachers' lived experiences and perceptions of leadership rotation in public schools. This method was employed to condense individual experiences into a universal essence, facilitating a deeper understanding of the phenomenon (van Manen, 2023). Phenomenology aimed to capture the meaning of the lived experience relating to a particular concept, with a focus on how people understood, interpreted, and reacted to a given occurrence or practice (Smith et al., 2022).

According to McGregor (2020), phenomenology illuminated human structures of consciousness through the study of behavior, emotion, and attitudes that constituted the experiences of individuals. It was an effective tool for revealing real-life situations, raising awareness, and making sense of the phenomenon being studied (Fernández Velasco, 2022). Using phenomenology, this study aimed to gain an understanding from teachers of how leadership rotation affected their professional tasks, teaching practices, job satisfaction, and school culture. As frontline practitioners, teachers felt the brunt of leadership changes in the form of shifts in administrative agendas, communication patterns, and decision-making processes. What they had to say provided critical information for determining the success of leadership rotation policies and their effects on teacher commitment, cooperation, and the overall working environment.

2.2 Research Locale

This study was conducted in public elementary schools within the Digos City Division during the first quarter of 2025, involving ten participants. Digos City, situated in southeastern Mindanao, was a key educational hub in the province, home to a diverse student and teacher population. Its multicultural environment provided a rich context for exploring the research focus, offering valuable insights into how educators from varied backgrounds managed professional demands amid shifting leadership dynamics. By examining the lived experiences, the study aimed to highlight both the challenges and adaptive strategies teachers employed in response to leadership transitions.

2.3 Research Participants

The participants of the present study were the 10 public elementary school teachers from Digos City Division, who had rendered at least ten (10) years of teaching experience and were chosen because of their actual experiences with leadership rotation in public schools. The sample was informed by Lewis and Creswell (2015), who stressed that gathering data from 8 to 15 participants provided the maximum possible amount of validity and reliability in qualitative research. This interval corresponded to the concept of data saturation (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022; Moura et al., 2021), where additional data collection no longer yielded new themes, insights, or properties pertinent to the central theoretical categories. To ensure the participants were qualified for this research, they had to meet the following qualifications: The teachers had to be public school teachers working under DepEd Digos City, serving as elementary school teachers, with at least ten (10) years of teaching experience in a public-school environment. Additionally, participants must have worked under various school leaders due to leadership rotation, making them suitable informants for this study.

2.4 Research Instrument

The researcher used an In-Depth Interview (IDI) with the 10 identified public school teachers, using a Key Informant Interview (KII) to gain insight into the lived experiences of leadership rotation in public schools. The interview questions centered on the problems faced by the teachers, how they coped, the support systems in place, and suggestions on how to enhance leadership turnover in the schools. The development of the interview questions was guided by the research objectives and review of related literature to ensure alignment and relevance of the content to the study's aims. A semi-structured interview style was employed to enable flexibility in responses and facilitate follow-up questioning, thereby ascertaining richer details about participants' experiences. The semi-structured format allows participants to share their reflections openly while maintaining control over keeping the discussion relevant to the study's purpose. Immediately following each interview, the researcher transcribed verbatim the audio-recorded responses to avoid accuracy errors and protect the integrity of the data obtained.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher obtained an endorsement letter from the Dean of the Graduate School of Davao del Sur State College and gained ethical clearance prior to conducting the study. Permission was also requested from the Schools Division Superintendent of DepEd Digos City Division Office. A copy of the endorsement letter was then submitted to the School Heads of the identified public schools for their support and cooperation upon approval. Once the school administration gave its approval, the researcher officially invited the participants and informed them about the schedule. To support compliance with ethics and demonstrate willingness to participate, participants were required to provide written permission indicating their consent to participate in the study. Participants were encouraged to express their thoughts freely without fear or coercion. The interviews were anticipated to take 30 minutes to an hour each. For distant participants, the in-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted via an online platform, maximizing accessibility and ease. Clear explanations were provided to avoid

any misunderstanding during the interview.

The interviews were audio-recorded with participants' permission and stored safely. The researcher transcribed the recorded answers and had participants review the transcript for accuracy. According to the permission form, all information, including audio recordings and transcripts, was maintained confidentially in a locked filing cabinet for security purposes. Upon completion of the data collection, participants were invited for a follow-up interview to validate the study's findings and ensure that the results accurately reflected their experiences and perceptions. This procedure guaranteed the reliability of the survey and reaffirmed the commitment to ethical research practice.

2.6 Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, this research adhered to the structured qualitative data analysis process outlined by Creswell (2013) to ensure a systematic and rigorous approach. The analysis entailed the following significant steps: (1) organizing and preparing the data for analysis, (2) examining the data to determine overall patterns and insights, (3) coding the data to determine emerging themes and categories, (4) categorizing codes into higher-order themes, (5) interpreting the themes and synthesizing them into a meaningful and coherent narrative, and (6) verifying the findings through member checking or triangulation. These steps guaranteed that the data analysis was comprehensive, accurate, and representative of the participants' views on leadership rotation in public schools. The final report of the research was presented in a manner that effectively conveyed the crucial and consistent elements of teachers' lived experiences, specifically the problems they encountered, the coping strategies employed, and the type of support required. Through a systematic methodology, the research provided a richer understanding of the effects of leadership rotation on teachers' professional roles, school culture, and overall work dynamics.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

Due to the significance of ethical concerns, numerous professional organizations and institutions have implemented regulations and criteria that delineate ethical conduct and provide guidance to researchers (Friedrich-Nel & Ramlaul, 2020). These are the ethical concerns that were adhered to in this study: anonymity and confidentiality, informed consent, privacy and confidentiality of information, social value, risk, benefits, and safety, physical risk, transparency, and qualification of the researcher. Written consent was obtained from the participants for this study. The participants of the study received a consent letter as part of the research. The consent form contained information about the benefits, risks, and details of the research, ensuring that participants were well-informed and knowledgeable about the study. The participants were not coerced into sharing their personal experiences with the researcher; instead, they were given the option to withdraw at any stage of the research process if they felt uncomfortable. The information gathered from the participants was coded and kept private. During the interview, the researcher ensured that participants were codenamed throughout the recorded interviews, and these codenames were used consistently throughout the research. The participants' records were safely stored, ensuring that no one had access to them. When the participants felt uncomfortable during the interview, the researcher adjusted the interview to ensure their comfort. The researcher also established a supportive, sensitive, and respectful relationship with the participants, as the study involved real-life experiences that were sensitive to them. To protect private data, the researcher took all required measures.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Teachers' Experiences on Leadership Rotation

The description of the teachers' experiences on leadership rotation is presented in Table 1. Teachers' experiences with leadership rotation in public schools revealed both challenges and adaptations. Many felt unstable due to changes in leadership styles and priorities, which impacted teaching practices; however, some teachers adapted by building strong relationships with the new leaders and seeking support from colleagues. Despite the stress, leadership rotation offered opportunities for growth through exposure to different leadership approaches. The experiences highlighted the need for clear communication and support during transitions to maintain stability.

Out of the responses from the participants of the study, three essential themes were drawn from the transcripts, as follows: 1) instructional changes; 2) professional and emotional responses; and 3) job stability and growth.

Table 1. *Description of the Teachers' Experiences on Leadership Rotation*

Instructional Changes	Shifting Practices	New leadership brings both innovation and disruption. Leadership changes can shift teaching philosophies, classroom practices, and evaluation methods.
	Instructional Disruption	A mismatch between teacher specialization and subject assignment leads to frustration. Leadership changes can interrupt programs and teaching flow. Instruction improves or suffers based on the leader's approach and experience. Lack of consultation during leadership changes disrupts teamwork and planning.
	Continuity Strategy	Teachers rely on peer support and shared practices to maintain continuity. Clear communication and gradual changes help ease transitions. The adjustment period varies depending on communication and collaboration.
Professional and Emotional Responses	Mixed Reactions	Teachers feel excited, anxious, or cautious when leaders change. The leader's communication and fairness shape first impressions. Emotional responses depend on past experiences.
	Fairness Issue	Favoritism affects access to development and recognition. Perceived bias lowers morale and trust in leadership. Teachers value involvement in decision-making and respect for their expertise.
	Adaptive Mindset	Teachers often accept turnover as usual. Professionalism helps during adjustment. Neutrality and patience are common coping strategies
Job Stability and Growth	Job Security	Leadership shifts cause role uncertainty and stress. Stability improves with structured leadership. Tenured teachers feel more secure, yet they are still affected.
	Growth Opportunities	Supportive leaders provide training and advancement. Development depends on the leader's priorities and recognition. Proactive leaders foster continuous teacher learning.
	Motivation	Motivation rises with support and recognition. Lack of trust and opportunity demotivates teachers. Leaders impact morale through their inclusiveness and consistency.

Instructional Changes

Teachers faced inconsistencies in policies, shifts in instructional strategies, and misalignment with long-term goals. As shared by the participants:

"Leadership rotation – whether it is a change in school principals, department heads, or district-level leaders – often leads to noticeable shifts in school policies and teaching practices. Here are some common changes observed: Policy Revisions, Teaching Practices, School Culture & Communication, Staff Morale & Collaboration, Parent & Community Engagement, Resource Allocation." (P5)

"Changes in school leadership often lead to noticeable shifts in policies and teaching practices. When a new principal or head takes over, they typically bring their own vision and approach. This can affect everything from classroom rules and discipline to how lessons are taught." (P10)

This claim was also supported by another participant, who expressed the same sentiments:

"Yes, I have observed that every new leader brings with them new priorities and methodologies, which frequently result in changes to school rules and instructional strategies that we must promptly adjust to." (P3)

Additionally, another participant experienced the same and shared:

"Every principal has their own set of priorities. One focused heavily on reading programs, then the next shifted to ICT. It makes planning difficult because we have to keep changing targets and indicators." (P9)

Each new leader brought different priorities and strategies, which sometimes disrupted established teaching methods and school routines. Teachers had to quickly adapt to new expectations and administrative decisions, which could lead to feelings of uncertainty. Despite these challenges, some teachers found the changes to be opportunities for innovation and improvement in their teaching practices. For instance, teachers experimented with new pedagogical approaches, such as differentiated instruction, technology-integrated lessons, and student-centered learning strategies, which were introduced by incoming leaders. Others developed improved assessment methods or adopted more collaborative planning practices. However, the constant shifts in leadership made it difficult to sustain these innovations and maintain consistency in classroom routines.

In the Department of Education (DepEd), a common and recurring situation involves the shifting process within schools, which pertains to the ongoing adjustments that teachers must make in response to frequent changes in leadership. These leadership transitions—often involving the rotation or reassignment of principals, department heads, or district-level supervisors—introduce new educational priorities, management styles, and administrative directives. Each incoming leader typically brings a unique set of expectations, philosophies, and strategies that influence school operations and instructional practices (Ainin et al., 2025).

Professional and Emotional Responses

Participants reported stress, mistrust, and adaptation fatigue, alongside resilience and occasional optimism. According to the participants:

"Leadership changes have had mixed effects. In some cases, a new leader prioritized professional development." (P4)

"I felt more motivated when one leader supported my training opportunities. With others, I felt overlooked." (P6)

This sentiment aligns with findings by Leithwood, K. (2019), who noted that leadership transitions can positively influence teachers' professional development when new leaders focus on growth opportunities.

The following participants shared that:

"I sometimes feel uncertain because priorities change, but it also opened up opportunities for training I would not have had otherwise." (P)

"I usually feel unsure at first. It is not always stable. I hope they will be kind and understand our school." (P7)

This claim was also supported by another participant, who expressed the same sentiments:

"We feel curious but also worried. We hope the new leader will listen and work with us." (P9)

According to Lu et al. (2024), individuals who approach challenges with an adaptive mindset are more likely to develop problem-solving strategies that help teachers adjust effectively, which is crucial for maintaining professional standards and fostering a sense of stability. Many expressed feelings of stress and frustration as teachers adjusted to different leadership styles, which sometimes resulted in a lack of clarity regarding school goals and expectations. The frequent changes also created emotional strain. However, some teachers reported feeling empowered and motivated when the new leaders introduced positive changes or supported their professional growth. Overall, the emotional toll of leadership rotation often depended on the level of support and communication from the new leaders.

Job Stability and Growth

Teachers who feel secure in their positions, whether permanent, temporary, or transferred, are more likely to stay motivated, focus on professional growth, and adapt positively to new leadership styles. As shared by the participants:

"Job security is not a problem for me when there was a change in leadership, since I had a plantilla position. However, professional growth may become a problem if I am not a "pet" of the new school head. It cannot be denied that school heads do have favorite "flavors". If you are a pet then most of the "good food" will be yours (i.g. trainings and seminars) but if not then you will lag." (P8)

"Leadership changes have had mixed effects. In some cases, a new leader prioritized professional development." (P4)

According to Collie (2021), school leadership plays a crucial role in creating conditions of stability, where clear communication and supportive leadership practices can buffer the adverse effects of organizational change. Teachers' perceptions of job stability and growth were significantly impacted by leadership rotation. Some teachers felt uncertain about the long-term job security, especially when leadership changes led to shifts in school priorities or staff restructuring. However, others saw leadership rotation as an opportunity for personal

and professional growth, as new leaders often brought fresh perspectives and development programs. While job stability was a concern for some, the potential for growth through new leadership strategies and initiatives helped some teachers remain optimistic about their career progression.

3.2 Coping Mechanisms to Ensure Professional Competencies under Changing Leadership

Under changing leadership, teachers develop coping mechanisms to ensure they maintain professional competencies and continue to meet their instructional responsibilities. Adaptability, proactive professional development, and strong peer collaboration are key strategies teachers use to navigate leadership transitions. Many teachers take the initiative to seek out training opportunities, mentor support, or self-directed learning to strengthen their skills. Building positive relationships with new leaders and staying open to feedback also helps teachers adjust to new expectations while maintaining their professional standards. By focusing on teachers' own growth and maintaining a learner's mindset, teachers safeguard the competencies and resilience, ensuring that leadership changes, while challenging, become opportunities rather than setbacks.

Out of the responses from the participants of the study, three essential themes were drawn from the transcripts, as follows: 1) Ensuring Teaching Stability; 2) Adapting to leadership Transitions; and 3) Building Peer Support Systems.

Table 2. *Coping Mechanisms to Ensure Professional Competencies under Changing Leadership*

Ensuring Teaching Stability	Structured Routines	Maintaining professional routines and consistent teaching practices helps ensure stability. Teachers adapt by aligning with leadership goals while staying grounded in proven practices. Focus on time management to reduce disruption regardless of external changes.
	Learner-Centered Practice	Prioritize core subjects like reading and math to anchor instructional focus. Design lessons that remain effective under different leadership styles. Tailor instruction based on student needs rather than administrative preference.
	Standard and Documentation	Align lesson planning with national or state curriculum standards. Teachers' balance aligning with leadership goals while staying true to their own teaching philosophy. Strategic adaptation is done without compromising core educational values.
Adapting to Leadership Transitions	Flexible Mindset	Adapting teaching methods and classroom goals is essential to meet evolving standards. Respond to change by observing first before making instructional shifts.
	Strategic Learning and Growth	Approach new policies with openness while filtering what works best for students. Set personal development goals that align with new leadership priorities. Explore new technologies and tools promoted by school heads.
	Navigating Uncertainty	Use feedback from observations to improve teaching performance. Clarify new expectations through direct communication or peer discussion. Cope with sudden changes by staying focused on long-term professional goals. Develop patience and composure when leadership lacks clear communication.
Building Peer Support Systems	Collaborative Adjustments	Participate in group planning to align with new instructional goals. Share lesson resources to lighten the workload during adjustment periods. Help interpret unclear expectations by exchanging perspectives with peers Use team discussions as an outlet for stress and uncertainty.
	Shared Emotional Resilience	Gain strength and confidence from knowing others are experiencing similar challenges. Support colleagues emotionally during difficult administrative transitions. Attend group-led PD sessions to keep up with shifting expectations.
	Professional Learning Networks	Join informal peer groups to exchange best practices. Create small, consistent learning circles for sustained professional growth. Professional growth continues through self-initiative – attending trainings, seeking feedback, and staying updated.

Ensuring Teaching Stability

Teachers rely on established routines, effective classroom management strategies, and a clear understanding of curriculum standards to provide stability for teachers and the students. Participants shared that:

"To keep things stable amid leadership changes, I maintain regular classroom routines, work closely with other educators, and remain attentive to the needs of the students." (P3)

"I stick to what works in my classroom, like my routines and lesson plans. I also consult with other teachers and plan together, so we stay on the same page. That helps me keep things steady, even when leadership is changing." (P7)

This claim was also supported by another participant, who expressed the same sentiments:

"To maintain stability during leadership transitions, I stick to consistent routines in the classroom. Focus on student needs and learning goals. Stay flexible but true to effective teaching methods. Maintain open communication with colleagues for support. Document my work to show alignment with school goals." (P5)

Additionally, another participant experienced the same and shared:

"Just do your work. Be flexible and open to new initiatives, while also advocating for evidence-based practices that benefit students." (P1)

According to Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2017), having established classroom routines can buffer teachers against stress and uncertainty, especially during times of administrative change. Similarly, Collie (2021) emphasized that organizational support and clarity in routines strengthen teachers' occupational commitment during periods of transition. Participant responses reflected how adhering to proven instructional routines allowed teachers to continue delivering quality education despite external leadership shifts. This is a vital coping mechanism teachers use to maintain professional competencies during leadership changes. Despite new expectations or administrative shifts, teachers focus on delivering consistent, high-quality instruction to support student learning. Teachers rely on established routines, effective classroom management strategies, and a clear understanding of curriculum standards to provide stability for teachers and the students.

Adapting to Leadership Transitions

Teachers developed adaptive strategies, including reflective practice, emotional resilience, and proactive professional development, to enhance their effectiveness. These approaches were narrated with the lines of the participants stated below:

"Adapting to new administrative expectations while continuing to grow professionally takes balance and flexibility. When a new leader sets different goals or priorities, I start by listening carefully to understand what they are looking for and how it aligns with my own teaching philosophy." (P10)

This claim was also supported by another participant, who expressed the same sentiments:

"I adapt by staying open to feedback, aligning my goals with new expectations, and seeking professional development that fits both the new vision and my growth. I also ask questions and stay proactive in learning new policies or practices." (P5)

Additionally, another participant experienced the same and shared:

"I adapt by staying open to feedback, aligning my goals with new expectations, and seeking professional development that fits both the new vision and my growth. I also ask questions and stay proactive in learning new policies or practices." (P5)

This aligns with the findings of Collie and Martin (2023), who argue that teachers with a flexible mindset are more likely to engage in self-reflection, adjust their teaching strategies, and enhance their overall professional development. This ongoing reflection is essential for fostering continuous growth and enhancing the quality of teaching. Lin et al. (2022) further emphasize the role of adaptability in fostering teacher self-efficacy, which enables educators to adjust the teaching methods and remain motivated to achieve better outcomes despite changing leadership priorities. It helps teachers maintain professional competencies. Teachers adjust by observing the leadership style, aligning their practices with new expectations, and remaining flexible in their approach. Teachers often approach changes with an open mind, focusing on communication, collaboration, and continuous learning to smoothly integrate into the new leadership environment. This adaptability enables teachers to maintain professional performance, foster positive relationships with new leaders, and continue contributing effectively to school goals despite uncertainties.

Building Peer Support Systems

Collegial collaboration and shared leadership roles were essential for maintaining morale and instructional coherence. These approaches were narrated with the lines of the participants stated below:

"Well, work becomes easier when shared. No matter how hard it is for us to cope with a drastic change in leadership styles, it becomes lighter when we have colleagues who sympathize and share our burdens. In any field or organization, it is essential to have a circle where you can move freely and talk freely, regardless of who is in charge of the school." (P8)

Another participant shared the thoughts:

"When a new principal brought in many changes, our team met often to help each other understand what was expected. We shared ideas" (P7)

Additionally, some other participants shared:

"During a leadership change, my colleagues and I formed a support group to share resources, clarify new expectations, and co-plan lessons. This teamwork reduced stress and helped us adapt quickly while keeping instruction consistent." (P5)

Some research supports the efficacy of collaborative adjustments in enhancing teacher resilience. For instance, a study by Meyer et al. (2023) found that principal leadership practices promoting teacher collaboration significantly contributed to organizational change and improved teaching practices. The longitudinal case study highlighted the importance of structured collaboration in facilitating teacher adaptation to new leadership and educational reforms. Similarly, Hsieh et al. (2024) demonstrated that both instructional and distributed leadership styles positively influenced teacher professional collaboration, which in turn enhanced collective teacher innovativeness and self-efficacy. These findings highlight the crucial role of collaborative environments in supporting teachers during leadership transitions. By fostering strong relationships with colleagues, teachers create networks where they can share experiences, exchange strategies, and offer emotional support. These peer connections help alleviate the stress of change, foster collective problem-solving, and promote professional growth. Through collaboration and mutual encouragement, teachers strengthen their resilience and maintain a stable, high-quality teaching practice even when faced with new leadership dynamics.

3.3 Teachers' Insight Regarding the Effects of Leadership Rotation on School Management

Teachers' insights regarding the effects of leadership rotation on school management reflect a range of perspectives that highlight both challenges and opportunities. Leadership rotation, where principals or school leaders periodically change roles, can create a sense of instability and uncertainty among teachers. This is often due to the need to adjust to new leadership styles, expectations, and priorities with each transition. However, teachers also recognize that leadership rotation can bring fresh ideas, new approaches, and a broader perspective on school management, which can invigorate school culture and improve operational efficiency.

Out of the responses from the participants of the study, three essential themes were drawn from the transcripts, as follows: 1) Strengthen School Culture through Leadership Stability; 2) Mitigate Negative Effects of Leadership Rotation; and 3) Adapt Teaching practices to Leadership Changes.

Table 3. Teachers' Insight Regarding the Effects of Leadership Rotation on School Management

Strengthen School Culture through Leadership Stability	Build Trust and Relationships	Consistent leadership fosters trust among teachers, students, and parents.
	Ensure Growth and Continuity	Strong relationships develop with stable leadership, creating a supportive environment.
		Long-term leadership helps maintain school goals and values.
	Empower Teachers to Shape Culture	Consistent leadership ensures long-term improvements and stability.
		Teachers should play a key role in shaping school culture, independent of leadership turnover.
Mitigate Negative Effects of Leadership Rotation		Leadership should adjust to the existing culture rather than change it.
	Manage Disruption and Uncertainty	Leadership changes can be confusing; clear communication reduces disruption.
	Leverage New Leadership	Stability is key to preventing burnout during transitions.
	Support Teachers During Transitions	New leaders bring fresh perspectives and opportunities for growth.
		Leadership changes inspire teachers to adopt new strategies.
Adapt Teaching Practices to Leadership Changes	Embrace Flexibility	Provide professional development and mentoring to help teachers adjust.
	Prioritize Teachers' Wellbeing	Teachers should be included in leadership transition processes.
	Empower Teachers with Autonomy	Teachers must adapt their practices to changing leadership priorities.
		Flexibility ensures continued focus on student outcomes during leadership shifts.
		Recognize and appreciate teachers to boost motivation and job satisfaction.
		Leadership should ensure teachers feel valued to improve performance.
		Leadership should balance autonomy with support, allowing teachers to thrive.
		Teachers need resources and guidance to succeed while maintaining independence.

Strengthening School Culture through Leadership Stability

Teachers emphasized the importance of consistency in leadership for maintaining trust and instructional continuity. These approaches were narrated with the lines of the participants stated below:

"Consistent leadership can help build positive relationships among teachers, students, and parents, which is critical for creating a positive school culture." (P1)

Moreover, this was supported by other participants who shared the same experience:

"When leadership is consistent, teachers feel more secure in their roles because they have a clear understanding of expectations, priorities, and the overall direction of the school." (P10)

"Teachers often observe that leadership consistency plays a crucial role in fostering a positive school culture, like trust and stability, sustained improvement, and positive relationships." (P4)

Similarly, Miller (2018) emphasized that stable leadership provides the continuity needed to embed school values, strengthen instructional practices, and sustain professional development programs over time. Further supporting this view, Urick and Bowers (2019) noted that leadership continuity fosters clear communication of expectations and a cohesive sense of direction among teachers, reducing uncertainty and promoting a stronger professional climate. The teachers' comments reinforce these findings, noting that a leader's extended tenure can foster stronger teams and more effective plans, ultimately enabling long-term leaders to establish more stable foundations.

Mitigate Negative Effects of Leadership Rotation

Teachers highlighted that frequent turnover affects morale and planning, but noted that participative leadership and shared governance can soften the impact. These approaches were narrated with the lines of the participants stated below:

Teachers often feel that frequent leadership rotation can disrupt professional growth and reduce job satisfaction due to uncertainty and lack of continuity. However, a positive new leader can provide fresh opportunities for growth, motivation, and a renewed sense of purpose." (P5)

Moreover, this was supported by other participants who shared the same experience:

Teachers' experiences with different leadership styles shape their expectations, causing them to value clear communication, supportive relationships, and collaborative decision-making. They often prefer leaders who are approachable, consistent, and open to feedback, fostering a positive, trust-based school environment." (P5)

Another participant also shared the sentiments:

"Effective leadership rotation needs to be supported by clear communication, consistent professional development, and a unified vision to benefit teachers' long-term development truly." (P4)

Teachers observed that frequent leadership changes can lead to confusion, inconsistency in policies, and lowered morale if not correctly managed. To address this, teachers suggest the importance of clear communication, structured transition plans, and strong peer collaboration to maintain stability. By fostering a resilient school culture, providing professional development, and ensuring that incoming leaders are well-oriented to the school's existing vision and practices, the negative impacts of leadership rotation can be significantly reduced, allowing the school community to continue thriving despite changes. In conclusion, providing robust emotional and professional support to teachers during leadership transitions enhances their ability to adapt, maintains school stability, and improves long-term educational outcomes.

Adapting Teaching Practices to Leadership Changes

Teachers often revised lesson planning and instructional priorities to align with new leaders' visions while preserving effective core practices. These approaches were narrated with the lines of the participants stated below:

"Introduce new initiatives or programs, which teachers can incorporate into the practice to enhance student learning." (P1)

Moreover, this was supported by other participants who shared the same experience:

"Good leaders produce good teachers, then good teachers produce good learners. If a leader empowers their subordinates, they are driven to work more effectively or even optimally. It boosts our confidence when we feel our school head values us or listens to us. Experience-wise, I have had a share of bittersweet moments with school heads. If my school head appreciates me, I am eager to do better things and attend school with a happy heart. However, when my school head only sees my wrongdoings, it gives me headaches, so I end up calling in sick. Haha" (P8)

Another participant also shared sentiments:

"My teaching practices evolved by becoming more structured to align with new leadership expectations, incorporating data-driven instruction and standardized assessments. I also adapted by collaborating more with colleagues and exploring new teaching strategies to meet leadership goals." (P5)

Teachers recognize that each new leader may bring different priorities, instructional strategies, and expectations, requiring them to be flexible and responsive in their classroom approaches. This adaptability involves aligning lesson planning, assessment methods, and professional goals with new leadership directives while maintaining the core needs of the students. Teachers view this flexibility not as a loss of professional identity but as an opportunity for growth, innovation, and continued collaboration, ensuring that quality education is sustained even amid administrative transitions. Research supports the importance of teacher adaptability in times of leadership change. According to Mullen et al. (2021), flexible teachers are better able to sustain professional commitment and effectiveness when faced with shifting school contexts, including leadership transitions. The study highlights that resilience and adaptability are essential traits that enable teachers to maintain focus on student achievement even amid organizational upheaval.

4.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, teachers' experiences with leadership rotation in public schools underscore both the challenges and growth opportunities that arise during periods of leadership change. While leadership transitions often lead to instability in teaching practices and school routines, they also offer avenues for professional development, innovation, and improvement. In addition, highlighting these experiences informs educational leaders and policymakers on the strategies for mitigating the challenges in leadership rotation. Teachers' ability to adapt through proactive learning, peer collaboration, and building strong relationships with new leaders plays a crucial role in maintaining teaching quality and ensuring resilience during these transitions. Furthermore, teachers emphasize the importance of leadership stability and clear communication to mitigate the adverse effects of frequent leadership changes. By embracing flexibility and prioritizing professional growth, teachers can navigate leadership transitions successfully, ultimately contributing to a more dynamic and effective school environment. Thus, leadership rotation, when supported with the right structures and support systems, can become an opportunity for school renewal and teacher empowerment. It motivates teachers to teach well to the students. By reinforcing support systems, providing continuous professional development, and fostering collaborative cultures, schools may better sustain stability and effectiveness despite leadership changes.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Author 1: Conceptualization, data gathering, data analysis.
Author 2: Proposal writing, data analysis, and data gathering.

6.0 Funding

Not indicated.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

Not indicated.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The completion of this research study would not have been possible without the support, guidance, and encouragement of many individuals. It is with great gratitude that the researcher extends her heartfelt thanks to those who contributed to the success of this endeavor.

Special thanks to Dean Hari G. Lopez, DBM, for his steadfast support and leadership that inspire academic growth.

Heartfelt appreciation is also given to the adviser, Zandro P. Ibañez, Ed. D, for his invaluable guidance, expertise, and encouragement throughout the research process.

To the defense panelists, thank you for your constructive insights and thoughtful evaluation that greatly enriched this study.

The researcher also expresses gratitude to the school principals and teachers in the Schools Division of Digos City who participated and provided essential support during data collection. To families and friends, your unwavering love, patience, and moral support have been her greatest strength. Above all, we thank our Almighty Father for His divine guidance, wisdom, and blessings that made this journey possible.

9.0 References

- Ainin, J., Tampus, M. G., & Eliseo, J. M. (2025). Teacher leadership and collaboration in leading curriculum innovation: A case study on effective practices. *International Journal of Research in Social Science and Humanities*, 6(1), 96–114. <https://doi.org/10.47505/IJRSS.2025.1.7>
- Bartanen, B., Husain, A. N., Liebowitz, D. D., & Rogers, L. K. (2024). The returns to experience for school principals. *American Educational Research Journal*, 61(5), 1030–1073. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312241266216>
- Collie, R. J., & Martin, A. J. (2023). Teacher well-being and sense of relatedness with students: Examining associations over one school term. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 132, 104233. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2023.104233>
- Collie, R. J. (2021). COVID-19 and teachers' somatic burden, stress, and emotional exhaustion: Examining the role of principal leadership and workplace buoyancy. *AERA Open*, 7, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2332858420986187>
- Creswell, J. (2013). Steps in conducting a scholarly mixed methods study [powerpoint slides]. Digital Commons @ University of Nebraska-Lincoln. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/dberspeakers/48>
- Department of Education. (2017a). Philippine professional standards for teachers. <https://tinyurl.com/39weywy7>
- Department of Education. (2017b). DO 16, s. 2017 – Research management guidelines. <https://tinyurl.com/bdzbpzaz>
- Fernández Velasco, P. (2022). Disorientation and self-consciousness: A phenomenological inquiry. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 21(1), 203–222. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11097-020-09659-1>
- Friedrich-Nel, H., & Ramlal, A. (2020). Ethical considerations. In *medical imaging and radiotherapy research: Skills and strategies* (pp. 81–97). Springer. <https://tinyurl.com/36m2bwea>
- Gurr, D., & Drysdale, L. (2012). Tensions and dilemmas in leading Australia's schools. *School Leadership & Management*, 32(5), 403–420. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2012.723619>
- Hennink, M. M., & Kaiser, B. N. (2022). Sample sizes for saturation in qualitative research: A systematic review of empirical tests. *Social Science & Medicine*, 292, Article 114523. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114523>
- Hsieh, C. -C., Chen, Y. -R., & Li, H. -C. (2024). Impact of school leadership on teacher professional collaboration: Evidence from multilevel analysis of Taiwan TALIS 2018. *Journal of Professional Capital and Community*, 9(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPC-01-2023-0002>
- Kraft, M. A., & Gilmour, A. F. (2016). Can principals promote teacher development as evaluators? A case study of teacher evaluation in practice. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 52(5), 711–753. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X16653445>
- Lahtero, T. J., Lång, N., & Alava, J. (2017). Distributed leadership in practice in Finnish schools. *School Leadership & Management*, 37(3), 217–233. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2017.1293638>
- Leithwood, K. (2019). Characteristics of effective leadership networks: A replication and extension. *School Leadership & Management*, 39(2), 175–197. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2018.1470503>
- Lewis, S., & Creswell, J. W. (2015). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches (3rd ed.) [book review]. *Health Promotion Practice*, 16(4), 473–475. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524839915580941>
- Lin, W., Yin, H., & Liu, Z. (2022). The roles of transformational leadership and growth mindset in teacher professional development: The mediation of teacher self-efficacy. *Sustainability*, 14(11), Article 6489. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14116489>
- Loyola, A. S. (2024). Predictive model on leadership skills of school heads towards school climate in cluster 3, Davao City division. *Pedagogy*, 2(1), 60–71. <https://doi.org/10.62718/vmca.pr-ijetas.2.1.SC-0524-007>
- Lu, M. Y., Chen, B., Williamson, D. F., Chen, R. J., Liang, L., Ding, T., Jaume, G., Odintsov, I., Le, L. P., Gerber, G., Parwani, A. V., Zhang, A., & Mahmood, F. (2024). A visual-language foundation model for computational pathology. *Nature Medicine*, 30(3), 863–874. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-024-02856-4>
- Macasinag, M. T. B. (2024). How leadership transitions affect the education sector. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. <https://tinyurl.com/2npfaekd>
- McGregor, S. L. T. (2020). Understanding and evaluating research: A critical guide (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781071802656>
- Meyer, A., Hartung-Beck, V., Gronostaj, A., Krüger, S., & Richter, D. (2023). How can principal leadership practices promote teacher collaboration and organizational change: A longitudinal multiple case study of three school improvement initiatives. *Journal of Educational Change*, 24(4), 425–455. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-022-09451-9>
- Miller, A. (2018). Principal turnover and student achievement. *Economics of Education Review*, 64, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2018.03.002>
- Mullen, C. A., Shields, L. B., & Tienken, C. H. (2021). Developing teacher resilience and resilient school cultures. *Journal of Scholarship & Practice*, 18(1), 8–24. <https://tinyurl.com/4932ctnj>
- Nguyen, D., See, B. H., Brown, C., & Kokotsaki, D. (2023). Reviewing the evidence base on school leadership, culture, climate and structure for teacher retention. Education Endowment Foundation. <https://tinyurl.com/yc4j3u2s>
- Skaalvik, E. M., & Skaalvik, S. (2017). Still motivated to teach: A study of school context variables, stress, and job satisfaction among teachers in senior high school. *Social Psychology of Education*, 20(1), 15–37. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-016-9363-9>
- Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2022). Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications. <https://tinyurl.com/cw265fhp>
- Urick, A., & Bowers, A. J. (2019). Assessing international teacher and principal perceptions of instructional leadership: A multilevel factor analysis of TALIS 2008. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 18(3), 249–269. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2017.1499384>
- van Manen, M. (2023). Phenomenology of practice: Meaning-giving methods in phenomenological research and writing (2nd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003228073Sala>
- S. A. (2024). Alternative learning system formal education in jail student learning experiences. *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology (IJSRT)*, 765–773. <https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/IJSRT24JUN372>