



# Bridging Belief and Practice: Educational Philosophies as Predictors of Leadership Practices in Schools

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## Abstract

## Original Research

This study examines the connection between school head leadership practices and their educational philosophies. It discusses the modern purpose of learning to lead and manage their assigned schools in line with organizational goals, while maintaining their own beliefs for the best of the institution and its stakeholders' best interests, based on their own experiences. The purpose of this study is to determine how the leadership practices of the school heads align with different educational philosophies (e.g., progressivism, constructivism, essentialism). A descriptive-correlational approach and phenomenological study were used to gather the necessary data.

A survey was administered to 221 principals, and all data were collected using a Likert scale; semi-structured interviews provided the richness needed for qualitative analysis. The perceived leadership school leaders had an overall average score of 4.20 and a standard deviation of 0.37, and were described as "Good". This indicates that school leaders demonstrate both empowering their staff and using an evidence-based approach to school management. The dominant educational philosophy was progressivism, with a mean rating of 4.25, followed by constructivism (4.17) and essentialism (3.99). Overall, the philosophical perceptions of the school heads were 4.14, indicating that leaders in this sample are committed to using these frameworks to inform the development of their administrative and community-centered decision-making. Furthermore, a Pearson's correlation of 0.901 ( $p < .001$ ) indicates a strong positive relationship between principals' leadership practices and their underlying educational philosophies. The leadership style of principals is therefore shaped primarily by the beliefs they hold on educational matters. In other words, the deeper the commitment of the principal to a particular educational belief, the more consistent and identifiable their corresponding behaviors will be. The results of the statistical analysis therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and provide empirical evidence that supports the proposition that educational philosophies (i.e., Progressivism, Essentialism, and Constructivism) serve as guiding principles for school heads in governing their respective institutions. In conclusion, the evidence presented in this study provides clear and strong support for the notion that effective leadership involves much more than technical capabilities; effective leadership is a direct reflection of the principals' most fundamental educational philosophies.

**Keywords:** Educational Philosophies, Leadership Practices, Progressivism, Constructivism, Essentialism.

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## Introduction

The quality of effective educational leadership is important to education, as it creates a huge impact on the experiences of students and teachers. Specific leadership skills of the school leaders should be involved to encourage and support others in achieving academic success and developing as individuals. Unlike standard management practices, which are largely focused on administrative tasks, school leadership takes a broader perspective, emphasizing the creation of a vision for student learning and the establishment of a positive school culture that supports collaboration between teachers and students. This is accomplished through detailed strategies to improve teaching quality and through collaborative work to create an environment where education can flourish (Johnson & Fournillier, 2021).

A positive working environment is one of the best things that a school leader can achieve, where educators can be flexible, collaborative with others, and make decisions grounded in moral values. School leaders can motivate staff and sustain staff development by setting high expectations and using creative strategies within a well-organized curriculum. School leaders also manage the resources available to their staff, treat all employees with fairness and respect, and create a safe environment for learning (Charley et al., 2022). Ultimately, the development of sound educational leadership practices that align with research-based educational philosophies will create world-class institutions and promote student achievement.

The leadership style adopted by school leaders is greatly influenced by educational philosophies, which shape their decision-making and their ability to effectively carry out their responsibilities. For example, leaders who adopt a progressive philosophy are likely to make decisions grounded in best practices for experiential learning and critical thinking. Therefore, these leaders will adopt democratic and collaborative leadership approaches to promote engagement, innovation, and flexibility (Pihl, 2024). Conversely, a leader adhering to an essentialist philosophy will typically

use authoritative leadership to ensure that all students achieve exemplary academic performance by emphasizing discipline, structure, and the core elements of the subject area (Tan, 2025). In constructivist educational philosophies, learning is viewed as an active and social process; the school leader will act as a transformational leader by helping to create a learning environment that is both interactive and meaningful (Vassallo & School, 2022). By combining these three educational philosophies with the leadership practices of school leaders, it could positively impact student achievement and create a more inclusive school environment. Thus, school leaders must clearly understand and apply the three educational philosophies effectively to address current educational issues and create an environment that supports the holistic development of both students and teachers (Rinto et al., 2024).

By focusing on critical thinking and real-world experiences, Progressivism promotes a transformative style of leadership. Leaders who use this style are characterized by their ability to motivate and inspire both teachers and students to reach their full potential. Examples of how Progressivism supports collaboration and innovation are seen through project-based learning and providing professional development related to using active learning strategies. In these examples, a culture of questioning and creativity was created (Alainati et al., 2023). Another one is Essentialism, which focuses on structured curriculum, mastery of basic subject areas, and high academic expectations, and aligns with an instructional leadership style. School leaders who use these instructional leadership styles to promote effective teaching do so by monitoring classrooms, giving timely feedback, and using standardized assessments to develop a culture of discipline, rigor, and academic success (Stanley, 2024). Additionally, Constructivism aligns with a servant-leadership style, where leaders are focused on the growth and well-being of both their staff and students. The collaborative leadership style is illustrated with the use of mentorship programs and shared decision-making, both of which support the professional growth of educators and the socially

constructed learning experience of all students (Shapiro, 2022). Collectively, all of these philosophies of education influence how leaders implement their educational philosophies, establish effective instruction in their schools, and foster collaboration amongst staff to support improved student outcomes.

One of the most difficult things for school leaders to do is to balance differing educational philosophies against the practical realities of running a school. When new philosophies, such as progressivism or constructivism, are introduced into schools that have a history of being entrenched in an essentialist culture, faculty may resist moving away from their traditional teaching style in favor of new and innovative methods of teaching (Pant & Rabindra Shiwakoti, 2025). For school leaders to succeed in implementing these new philosophies, they need to develop comprehensive change management plans that are centered around communication and collaboration with staff to achieve success (Shahin et al., 2024). Another challenge to implementing new educational philosophies is that many of the rigid policies in place at schools have pushed institutions to deliver content in a standardized manner, which limits the creativity that teachers can use when developing and implementing their own pedagogy (Arsalim et al., 2025).

Leadership has many dimensions, and one of the most complex is stakeholder demands that may differ regarding whether schools should place greater emphasis on teaching students to think critically or on preparing students to perform well on standardized testing (Fuentes & Sison, 2025). Effective leaders are able to lead active conversations among their stakeholders in order to help create school processes that reflect their community's values while also addressing critical issues surrounding equity and access to technology (Amjad et al., 2024). The ability of school leaders to reach this balance will ultimately impact the development of inclusive, supportive and productive environments, which meet the needs of a diversity of students.

This research highlights the importance of understanding how educational philosophies shape the leadership practices school heads may demonstrate. Along these lines, examining how these philosophies of education relate to leadership practice may reveal how well school leaders will navigate the challenges of modern educational environments. The exploration of various educational philosophies, such as progressivism, essentialism, and constructivism, will highlight their influence on different leadership styles and provide a comprehensive analysis of how these philosophies shape decision-making processes, policy implementation, and stakeholder involvement. Accordingly, the study seeks to demonstrate how a deep understanding of educational philosophies can go a long way toward enhancing school heads' leadership skills and developing innovative schooling methods that include all students and educators.

### *Research Questions*

This study aims to investigate the connections between educational philosophies—such as progressivism, essentialism, and constructivism—and leadership practices among school heads.

Specifically, this study will find answers to the following questions:

1. How do school heads perceive the characteristics of their leadership practices as aligned with the following educational philosophies:
  - 1.1 Progressivism
  - 1.2 Essentialism
  - 1.3 Constructivism?
2. How do school heads adopt and implement different leadership practices in their practice?
3. Is there a significant relationship between school heads' leadership practices and their underlying educational philosophies?
4. How do school heads perceive the role of educational philosophies in shaping their leadership decisions?

5. In what ways do school heads integrate their educational philosophies into policymaking and stakeholder engagement?

## Materials and Methods

A mixed-methods design was utilized in this study to explore how different educational philosophies shape the leadership practices of school heads in the Schools Division of Bulacan. The number of school heads selected for the analysis during the quantitative study phase was 221 out of 493. Taro Yamane's formula was utilized to determine the size of a random sample, emphasizing representative sampling without sacrificing feasibility in collecting and analyzing quantitative data (Islam et al., 2026). Convenience sampling was used because it allowed the researchers to select participants who were readily accessible and available within the given time frame and resources. The target respondents, who are school heads, were chosen based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study, making data collection more practical and efficient. (Golzar et al., 2022). For the qualitative phase of the study, purposive sampling was used to select school head participants based on the sizes of their schools: "medium," "large," or "very large." It was anticipated that there would be at most 10 informants in the qualitative study, providing sufficient data to achieve thematic saturation, per the qualitative research methodology (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2024).

A structured survey questionnaire and a semi-structured interview questionnaire were used to conduct this study. For the survey, the first part measures educational philosophies of the respondents, and the second part measures their leadership styles. Part I of Educational Philosophies had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.83, indicating good internal consistency or high reliability. Part II of Leadership Styles had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.78, indicating acceptable reliability. Therefore, based on the results, the instrument used is valid for conducting statistical analyses of relationships and patterns. The semi-structured interview guide was used to discuss experiences of the informants regarding how their educational philosophies

influenced their decision-making, policy-making, and stakeholder engagement.

Before beginning data collection, formal approval was obtained from the Schools Division of Bulacan for ethical compliance and to gain access to participants. Following this approval, the survey and interview tools were validated through expert review and pilot testing to ensure clarity and adequate reliability. The validated survey was administered via Microsoft Forms to 221 school heads, with efforts made to improve response rates coordinated with the Division Office. In addition to the survey, 10 face-to-face interviews with school heads from "medium," "large," and "very large" schools were conducted. Quantitative data were analyzed using statistical methods, whereas qualitative data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis method (Caulfield, 2023).

## Research Design

The purpose of this research is to explore the relationship between the type of philosophy adopted by school heads, such as progressivism, essentialism, and constructivism, and the way they lead their institution. A mixed-methods design approach allowed the collection of quantitative data on administrators' philosophies and leadership styles, and also permitted the gathering of qualitative data to provide interpretive context to complement the quantitative results. Thus, the findings from both types of data provided a comprehensive picture of how leadership was influenced not only by the quantitative characteristics of educational philosophies of school heads but also by their lived experiences, beliefs, and contextual factors (Harvard Catalyst, 2022). The method was designed so that quantitative data were collected and analyzed first through a descriptive-correlational research approach, followed by qualitative inquiry through a phenomenological study design relative to the quantitative results (sequential explanatory design).

Using a descriptive-correlational design, researchers examined the relationship between school leaders' educational philosophies and their leadership practices. The researchers used structured

survey questionnaires to collect measurable data, identify trends, and establish relationships among variables. This first phase provided the researcher with some focus areas for the qualitative phase of this study. The qualitative phase of this study utilized a phenomenological research methodology to examine how leaders integrate their educational philosophy into practice. The researcher used in-depth

interviews to gather participants' lived experiences and to demonstrate how their personal beliefs, as well as their institutional contexts, influenced their leadership decisions in actual schools (Gumilao & Dagondon, 2026). This qualitative data helped to enhance and support the quantitative results of this study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

**Results and Discussion**

**Table 1.** School heads' Perception of the characteristics of their leadership styles as aligned with *Progressivism*

Alignment with Progressivism	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Description	Verbal Interpretation
The school heads...				
1 encourages innovative teaching strategies that respond to students' needs.	4.29	0.64	Agree	Positive
2 promotes experiential and activity-based learning in the school.	4.24	0.61	Agree	Positive
3 supports teachers in adapting instruction based on learners' interests.	4.24	0.62	Agree	Positive
4 values collaboration among teachers and students in decision-making.	4.19	0.63	Agree	Positive
5 fosters a school environment that is open to change and new ideas.	4.24	0.65	Agree	Positive
6 prioritizes the holistic development of learners over rigid academic standards.	4.24	0.63	Agree	Positive
7 encourages problem-solving and critical thinking in teaching practices.	4.26	0.64	Agree	Positive
8 supports interdisciplinary and flexible curriculum implementation.	4.31	0.63	Agree	Positive
9 promotes democratic participation within the school community.	4.21	0.61	Agree	Positive

<b>10</b>	empowers teachers to experiment with new teaching approaches.	<b>4.29</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Positive</b>
	<b>Overall Mean and Standard Deviation</b>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>0.38</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Positive</b>

Note: 4.50-5.00 - Strongly Agree / Highly Positive; 3.50- 4.49 – Agree / Positive; 2.50-3.49 – Neutral ; 1.50-2.49 – Disagree / Negative; 1.00-1.49 – Strongly Disagree / Highly Negative

The data presented in Table 1 show that the participating school heads believe their leadership styles are very closely aligned with progressivism, with an average rating of 4.25 (SD = 0.38), which falls in the “agree” range and indicates a consistently positive verbal interpretation of the results of this study. The results further indicate that school heads believe a priority is placed on flexible, teacher-driven leadership. The highest-rated indicator was support for interdisciplinary or flexible curriculum implementation (M=4.31); however, teaching innovation (M=4.29) and empowering teachers to innovate (M=4.29) also received high scores.

Therefore, the results suggest that the participating school heads are facilitators of pedagogical practice evolution rather than administrative professionals, and value creative, learner-centered solutions over rigid, traditional teacher-centered ones. The low overall standard deviation among the 221 participants indicates high consensus and that progressivism serves as a unifying, foundational philosophy for the group. Overall, the results indicate that the participating school heads are committed to developing an adaptable, collaborative, and innovative educational environment.

**Table 2.** School heads’ Perception of the characteristics of their leadership styles as aligned with *Essentialism*

<b>Aligned with Essentialism</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Qualitative Description</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>
The school heads...				
<b>1</b> emphasizes mastery of basic skills such as reading, writing, and mathematics.	<b>3.99</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Positive</b>
<b>2</b> ensures strict implementation of school rules and policies.	<b>4.00</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Positive</b>
<b>3</b> prioritizes academic excellence and measurable learning outcomes.	<b>3.99</b>	<b>0.71</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Positive</b>
<b>4</b> closely monitors teachers’ adherence to the prescribed curriculum.	<b>4.03</b>	<b>0.70</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Positive</b>

5	values teacher authority and structured classroom management.	3.95	0.73	Agree	Positive
6	promotes discipline as a key factor in student success.	4.00	0.74	Agree	Positive
7	ensures that instruction is focused on essential subject content.	4.02	0.71	Agree	Positive
8	supports traditional teaching methods when effective.	4.01	0.74	Agree	Positive
9	maintains high expectations for both teachers and students.	4.00	0.76	Agree	Positive
10	emphasizes standardized assessment as a measure of learning.	3.91	0.72	Agree	Positive
<b>Overall Mean and Standard Deviation</b>		<b>3.99</b>	<b>0.41</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Positive</b>

Note: 4.50-5.00 - Strongly Agree / Highly Positive; 3.50- 4.49 – Agree / Positive; 2.50-3.49 – Neutral ; 1.50-2.49 – Disagree / Negative; 1.00-1.49 – Strongly Disagree / Highly Negative

Table 2 illustrates how school leaders believe about their leadership styles regarding Essentialism. The overall mean was 3.99 with a SD of .41, resulting in the qualitative result being coded as “Agree” and the verbal interpretation as “Positive,” indicating that while these leaders implement progressive methods, they have not deviated from their commitment to traditional academic benchmarks. The data provide evidence of a considerable focus on oversight and the integrity of the curriculum. The two indicators with the highest average scores (M=4.03 and 4.02) concerned how closely school leaders monitored teachers' adherence to the curriculum and ensured that the focus was on essential subject content. These findings show that the essentialism requires ongoing emphasis on high

academic achievement and on ensuring that the basics are not compromised by new, unproven methods. Though all results were positive, the lowest mean average (M=3.91) was given to the use of standardized testing. This could imply that although these school leaders support a traditional means of evaluating student mastery, they are more hesitant to support a high-stakes testing system than to support direct supervision of a teacher and their class. Based on the survey results, acceptable combinations of essentialist and progressive philosophies enable school leaders to provide structure, discipline, and intensity in their leadership, thereby effectively laying a solid foundation for the successful implementation of innovative and progressive strategies.

**Table 3.** *School heads' Perception of the characteristics of their leadership styles as aligned with Constructivism*

Aligned with Constructivism	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Description	Verbal Interpretation
The school heads...				
1 promotes learning as an active process of constructing knowledge.	4.11	0.71	Agree	Positive
2 encourages teachers to connect lessons to students' prior knowledge.	4.22	0.62	Agree	Positive
3 supports collaborative learning activities among students.	4.19	0.64	Agree	Positive
4 values reflective practices among teachers and learners.	4.14	0.66	Agree	Positive
5 encourages inquiry-based and problem-based learning approaches.	4.13	0.68	Agree	Positive
6 supports the integration of real-life experiences into instruction.	4.19	0.67	Agree	Positive
7 promotes student autonomy in the learning process.	4.21	0.66	Agree	Positive
8 encourages teachers to act as facilitators rather than sole knowledge providers.	4.13	0.64	Agree	Positive
9 values multiple perspectives and diverse ways of learning.	4.14	0.68	Agree	Positive
10 supports continuous professional development focused on learner-centered pedagogy.	4.23	0.66	Agree	Positive
<b>Overall Mean and Standard Deviation</b>	<b>4.17</b>	<b>0.38</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Positive</b>

Note: 4.50-5.00 - Strongly Agree / Highly Positive; 3.50- 4.49 – Agree / Positive; 2.50-3.49 – Neutral ; 1.50-2.49 – Disagree / Negative; 1.00-1.49 – Strongly Disagree / Highly Negative

Table 3 shows the views of the school heads on the compatibility of their leadership style with Constructivism, with an overall mean of 4.17 and a standard deviation of 0.38. This means that these results would be considered “Positive” and indicate

that the school heads are strong facilitators of their students' active construction of their own knowledge. The data demonstrate a commitment to learner-centered pedagogy and to developing professional educators within the organization. The highest rated

result is the encouragement of continuous professional development for an educator’s use of learner-centered pedagogy (M= 4.23) followed by the encouragement of teachers to be able to use their students’ background knowledge to connect to the lessons being taught (M=4.22) and the encouragement of teachers to provide opportunities for students to have autonomy over their learning

experiences as it related to the teaching and learning processes that occur in the classroom (M=4.21). These results show that school leadership is focused not only on the student end product but also on empowering educators to move from being “knowledge providers” to facilitators of learning experiences for all students.

**Table 4.** *Summary Table of the School heads’ Perception of the characteristics of their leadership styles as aligned with Educational Philosophies*

<b>Philosophies</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Qualitative Description</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>
Progressivism	4.25	0.38	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Positive</b>
Essentialism	3.99	0.41	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Positive</b>
Constructivism	4.17	0.38	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Positive</b>
<b>Overall Mean and Standard Deviation</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>0.36</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Positive</b>

Note: 4.50-5.00 - Strongly Agree / Highly Positive; 3.50- 4.49 – Agree / Positive; 2.50-3.49 – Neutral ; 1.50-2.49 – Disagree / Negative; 1.00-1.49 – Strongly Disagree / Highly Negative

The integration of educational philosophies into school leadership establishes a "social contract" that informs and guides school culture and policy. Findings from 221 school leaders reveal a sophisticated and eclectic leadership profile, with Progressivism as the primary philosophical framework for leadership, Constructivism as a secondary driver of leadership practice, and Essentialism serving as the grounding philosophical framework of leadership practice. With an average philosophical mean of 4.14, leaders across this sample are committed to using these frameworks to inform the development of their administrative and community-centered decision-making. Progressivism (4.25) represents the primary influence on the development of education, supporting innovation, learner-centered policies, and the holistic development of all learners, while

providing a counterbalance to absolutism and control. Constructivism (4.17), which indicates that leaders value active learning and student autonomy while shifting their role from authoritarian manager to facilitator of inquiry. While Progressivism and Constructivism philosophies continue to shape educational leadership today, Essentialism (3.99) plays a vital role in creating an academic foundation for all learners. Essentialism provides school leaders with a means to harmonize their personal philosophy with the school's philosophy. By partnering with families, teachers, and community members, school leaders build a collaborative ecosystem. The synthesis of these philosophies will support school leaders in implementing visionary leadership that is adaptable to the realities of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century educational landscape.

**Table 5. Leadership Practices of the School Heads**

Leadership Practices	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Description	Verbal Interpretation
1 I adjust my leadership approach depending on the situation and the needs of my school.	4.22	0.60	Agree	Good
2 I involve teachers and staff in making important school decisions.	4.15	0.57	Agree	Good
3 I clearly communicate school goals, expectations, and priorities to my teachers.	4.17	0.58	Agree	Good
4 I inspire and motivate teachers to perform their best in their roles.	4.29	0.61	Agree	Good
5 I provide clear directions and closely monitor tasks when necessary.	4.22	0.57	Agree	Good
6 I guide and mentor teachers to help improve their teaching practices.	4.26	0.59	Agree	Good
7 I delegate responsibilities and empower teachers to take initiative.	4.24	0.62	Agree	Good
8 I promote collaboration and teamwork among teachers and staff.	4.16	0.58	Agree	Good
9 I make timely and firm decisions during challenging situations.	4.16	0.59	Agree	Good
10 I encourage innovation and openness to new teaching strategies.	4.21	0.61	Agree	Good
11 I recognize and appreciate the efforts and achievements of teachers.	4.22	0.55	Agree	Good
12 I use data, feedback, and observations to improve school performance.	4.24	0.59	Agree	Good
13 I create a positive, inclusive, and supportive school environment.	4.14	0.58	Agree	Good
14 I remain approachable and open to suggestions and concerns from my staff.	4.18	0.64	Agree	Good
15 I adapt my leadership strategies based on the context and challenges of my school.	4.18	0.64	Agree	Good
<b>Overall Mean and Standard Deviation</b>	<b>4.20</b>	<b>0.37</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Good</b>

Note: 4.50-5.00 - Strongly Agree / Exceptional; 3.50- 4.49 – Agree / Good; 2.50-3.49 – Neutral/ Satisfactory; 1.50-2.49 – Disagree / Developing; 1.00-1.49 - Strongly Disagree Poor

The perceived leadership practices of the 221 school leaders had an overall average score of 4.20 and a standard deviation of 0.37, as shown in Table 5.

Based on the scale provided, this was rated as "Agree" which has an interpretation of "Good." According to the data, the following indicates that the school

leaders felt very effective in the areas of inspiration and mentoring. The Highest rating (M=4.29) for an indicator was the ability to inspire and motivate teachers to do their best work; the next highest rating was for the ability to guide and mentor teachers to improve their practice (M=4.26). The results show that the participants see themselves as successful not only as administrators but also as leaders of instruction and coaches to teachers. The participants

also demonstrated high competence at both operational and strategic levels. The participants gave high mean ratings for delegating tasks and responsibilities (M=4.24) and using data and feedback to improve student outcomes (M=4.24). Therefore, the scores indicate that school leaders demonstrate both empowering their staff and using an evidence-based approach to school management.

**Table 6.** *Correlation between School Heads' Leadership Style and their Underlying Educational Philosophies*

Variables	r	Description	p - value	Decision	Interpretation
Leadership Practices	.901	With Correlation	<0.001	Reject H <sub>0</sub>	There is significant relationship.
Underlying Educational Philosophies					

The correlation and significance statistics in Table 6 indicate a strong positive relationship between leadership practices of school heads and their underlying educational philosophies, as evidenced by a Pearson correlation coefficient (r = 0.901). The leadership style of principals is therefore shaped primarily by the beliefs they hold on educational matters. In other words, the deeper the principal's commitment to a particular educational belief, the more consistent and identifiable the principal's corresponding behaviors will be. The p-value of <0.001 indicates that these results are highly statistically significant and not due to chance. The

statistical analysis enables rejection of the Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) and provides empirical evidence supporting the proposition that educational philosophies (i.e., Progressivism, Essentialism, and Constructivism) serve as guiding principles for school governance. In conclusion, the evidence presented in this study provides clear and strong support for the notion that effective leadership involves much more than technical capabilities; effective leadership is a direct reflection of the principals' most fundamental educational values and vision.

**Table 7.** *Perceived Role of Educational Philosophies in Leadership Decisions of School Heads*

Category	Central Theme	Sub-Themes / Patterns
<b>Influence of Educational Philosophies on Leadership Decisions</b>	<b>Integration of Educational Philosophies in Decision-Making</b>	Learner-centered decision-making (Progressivism);  Academic mastery and discipline focus (Essentialism);

		Experiential learning orientation (Constructivism);
<b>Application of Educational Philosophies in Practice</b>	<b>Contextualized Leadership Implementation</b>	Instructional flexibility; Philosophy-based program implementation and participatory school leadership

The qualitative thematic analysis in Table 7 examines how principals integrate different educational philosophies into their leadership practices and decision-making. The data is divided into two main themes: The Impact of Educational Philosophies on Leadership Decisions and The Use of Educational Philosophies in Leadership Practices. Theme 1 (The Use of Educational Philosophies in Leadership Decision-Making) shows that principals use educational philosophies in multidimensional ways when making school-wide decisions. The three sub-themes represent how school principals used Progressivism to make child-centered decisions, Essentialism to ensure students master the basics and Constructivism to provide students with real-world experiences. The data indicate that educational leadership decisions are guided by what will benefit students, develop their core skills, and provide students with a collaborative, inquiry-based approach.

Once the principals have made decisions based on their chosen educational philosophy, Theme

2 (How School Leaders Implement Leadership Using Educational Philosophies) illustrates how school heads implement these philosophies in their schools through two sub-themes: Instructional Flexibility and Participatory Leadership in Instructional Implementation (How to Implement an Educational Philosophy). Some examples of how to implement an educational philosophy in the real world, according to informants, were: a school modifying its school-wide activities in order to provide students with engaging learning opportunities during the pandemic (Progressivism) and implementing an intensive remedial program (Essentialism). In addition, the findings indicate a movement toward democratic governance, in which school leaders involve all stakeholders in decision-making about school improvement. Overall, the matrix demonstrates that educational philosophy is not just theoretical but is used practically as a directional compass to help school administrators navigate their administrative challenges and create inclusive learning environments.

**Table 8.** *Integration of Educational Philosophies in Policymaking and Stakeholder Engagement of School Heads*

Category	Central Theme	Sub-Themes / Patterns
<b>Educational Philosophy in Policymaking</b>	<b>Philosophy-Driven Policy Development and Implementation</b>	Learner-centered policy design (Progressivism); Academic mastery and standards alignment (Essentialism); Constructivist learning integration; Flexible and context-based policymaking; Shared leadership in policy formulation

<b>Communication of Educational Philosophy</b>	<b>Value-Based and Philosophy-Driven Stakeholder Communication</b>	Learner-centered communication; academic expectations advocacy; promotion of active learning; transparency and openness; consultative engagement
<b>Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration</b>	<b>Philosophy-Guided Partnership and Community Involvement</b>	Parent involvement in learning; community partnerships; experiential and showcased learning; flexible collaboration; shared leadership in school improvement

Table 8 provides a thematic analysis of the integration of educational philosophy into school heads' practice regarding policy development, communication, and stakeholder engagement. The findings are presented in three main central themes: Philosophy-Driven Policy Development, Values-Based Communication, and Partnership Guided by Philosophy. With respect to policy development, the evidence indicates that school leaders view the guidelines provided as extensions of their own personal beliefs rather than rigid mandates. For example, one informant emphasizes learner-centered discipline, reflecting a progressive educational philosophy, whereas another bases their policies on essentialist educational philosophies that emphasize mastery of content knowledge. These examples illustrate how educational philosophy serves as a lens through which school officials interpret and act on official standards.

Themes associated with communication and stakeholder engagement indicate a shift away from "administrative direction" to "philosophical advocacy"; in other words, rather than just telling parents and teachers what they expect concerning academic achievement and how students should be learning, educational leaders are working together to build a shared vision of success for the school community. An informant views educational leaders as also extending partnerships beyond the school through family involvement in home learning, because they see education as an ongoing, community-based process rather than limited to the school setting. Thus, Table 8 illustrates how school heads leverage their educational philosophy to turn stakeholders into active, collaborative partners in the

school's mission.

**Conclusion and Recommendation**

The research discussed in this paper found a clear correlation between school leaders' leadership behaviors and the philosophies that underpin their education. A quantitative analysis revealed a strong Pearson correlation ( $r = 0.901$ ) between a leader's pedagogical philosophy (the philosophical beliefs that underpin their behavior) and their practices. The empirical data indicate that school leaders exhibit a balanced leadership profile, predominantly Progressivism and Constructivism; they show a strong desire for innovation and the promotion of student autonomy while maintaining a strong foundation in Essentialism to ensure academic rigor. In addition, the qualitative analysis confirmed that school leaders view their educational philosophy as a "social compass" that guides their decisions, shapes policies, and informs their interactions with all stakeholders. By integrating their personal values with those of their organization, school leaders successfully move from managing administration to serving as visionaries. Finally, the research found that establishing a clear philosophical anchor is critical for governance, enabling leaders to maintain a consistent, values-based direction as they move forward.

To improve educational outcomes, the Department of Education should develop a system to conduct leadership reflection workshops for school leaders; this will help them define and align their personal philosophies with the philosophical

mandates of their schools. There is strong evidence that belief and action are interrelated; therefore, professional training for school leaders should focus on how to bridge progressive innovation and essentialist academic rigor from a philosophical-harmony perspective. Furthermore, school leaders should build relationships with both parents and teachers at their schools and create a traditional model of governance, where teachers and parents are equal participants in developing school policies, moving from an administrative management style to a vision-setting facilitation style. To facilitate this transition, school leaders should create peer-mentoring networks among themselves to share best practices of context-based leadership. Finally, longitudinal studies should be the next step in educational research to ascertain whether philosophically aligned leadership by school leaders has a direct impact on improved student outcomes; thereby creating a data-based rationale for encouraging particular philosophies among school administrators.

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