

# Ethical Leadership of School Administrators and Teachers' Performance: Basis for Leadership Development Program

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**Abstract**— This study examined the relationship between ethical leadership and teachers' performance in public schools in Region III, the Philippines, to enhance management and improve teaching and learning experiences. It also explored the challenges administrators face in implementing ethical leadership and proposed strategies for capacity-building. The research analyzed respondents' professional development profiles, ethical leadership practices, teachers' performance, significant differences and relationships, and key challenges. Statistical tools, including the Mann-Whitney U test and Spearman's rho, were employed. Findings revealed that most administrators hold advanced academic credentials and actively engage in professional development. They exhibit a high level of ethical leadership (Mean = 4.35), with ethical envisioning rated highest, while teachers demonstrate outstanding performance (Mean = 4.572) across all PPST domains. A significant difference was found between administrators' and teachers' ratings of ethical leadership, indicating a perception gap; however, no significant difference emerged when ratings were grouped by profile. A strong positive relationship ( $r = 0.802$ ,  $p < .001$ ) between ethical leadership and teachers' performance was established. Challenges include cultural barriers, accountability, compassionate communication, and ethical dilemmas. Based on these findings, a leadership development program was proposed, featuring ethical decision-making workshops, mentorship, dialogic leadership circles, and values formation activities to foster a culture of integrity, collaboration, and continuous improvement in public schools across Region III.

**Keywords**— ethical leadership; leadership development program; perception gap; professional development; public schools in Region III; teachers' performance.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Ethical leadership plays a central role in shaping successful and inclusive schools. Leaders who prioritize students' well-being, equity, fairness, honesty, and respect for diversity help cultivate learning environments grounded in moral purpose, as emphasized by the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (Davidson et al., 2020). Organized support systems—including structured mentoring and continuous leadership development—equip educational leaders to manage complex situations and improve their professional practice (Chalikias et al., 2020; Butler, 2024).

Ethical leaders strengthen trust by demonstrating integrity and fairness, which leads to higher teacher satisfaction, motivation, and performance (McKimm & McLean, 2020; Al Hadhrami et al., 2022; George & Rose, 2023; Imam & Kim, 2023; Khan et al., 2023; Mahmoud, 2023; Pérezts et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2023). However, when societal and institutional moral foundations are weak, ethical challenges intensify, as seen in Nepal, where socio-political and economic

problems undermine educational ethics (Sherchan et al., 2024).

Effective communication is essential for ethical leadership. Clear and transparent communication from school leaders improves teacher motivation and trust (Al-Kahlan, 2024), whereas a lack of openness fosters distrust and poor collaboration (Amir et al., 2023). Unethical leadership—marked by lack of accountability, dishonesty, or unclear actions—damages school culture, teacher morale, and ultimately student achievement (Zacarias & Flores, 2024; Day et al., 2020; Robinson, 2020). Leaders may also experience moral distress when institutional constraints prevent them from acting ethically, leading to emotional exhaustion (Stelmach et al., 2021; Ancho et al., 2022).

In the Philippines, weak teacher performance, low student outcomes—such as below-average 2018 PISA scores—and inadequate professional development highlight the urgent need for stronger ethical leadership (Gladstone, 2020; Servallos, 2023; Bibon, 2022). Research across regions shows that ethical leadership significantly boosts teacher engagement, confidence,

and performance. In Leyte, ethical leadership was positively associated with teachers' self-efficacy (Flores & Zacarias, 2024). Similar findings emerged in Panabo City, where ethical and instructional leadership enhanced teacher engagement (Logroño & Tagadiad, 2023), and in Laguna, where strong instructional leadership increased dedication and enthusiasm (Magboo et al., 2023).

Conversely, unethical practices—such as favoritism and padrino systems—harm morale and hinder school performance. In the Bangsamoro region, hiring and promotion were found to favor personal connections over merit, thereby discouraging competent teachers and damaging school culture (Casil, 2021).

Overall, the literature consistently shows that ethical leadership—characterized by honesty, fairness, openness, and genuine care—creates positive school climates and improves teacher motivation, engagement, and productivity (Clements, 2025; Balyer & Zengin, 2023; George et al., 2023). In contrast, unethical leadership fosters distrust, low morale, and reduced performance.

Guided by these findings, the present study examined how ethical leadership affects teacher performance in public schools, identified the challenges faced by school leaders, and proposed reforms, including ethics training, accountability mechanisms, and merit-based systems, to strengthen leadership integrity and improve educational outcomes.

## II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The study's paradigm is shown in Figure 1, which is divided into frames.

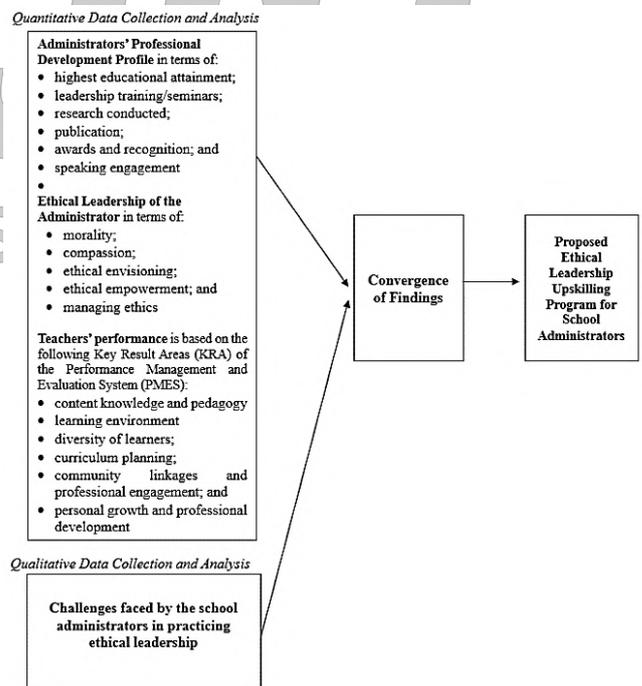
The administrator's professional development profile is presented in the first frame and is organized according to several criteria, including the administrator's highest educational attainment; leadership training and seminars; research conducted; publications; awards and recognition; and speaking engagements. These elements were essential during the evaluation of the administrators' ethical Leadership when grouped according to this professional development profile.

The administrator's ethical Leadership, particularly morality, compassion, ethical envisioning, ethical empowerment, and ethical management, is also under the first framework.

In addition, the first frame also includes the Key Result Areas (KRAs) of the Performance Management and Evaluation System (PMES) to classify the teacher performance. Content knowledge and pedagogy, learning environment, diversity of learners, curriculum planning, community linkages and professional engagement, and personal growth and professional development are among these KRAs. A thorough assessment of teachers' performance across a range of factors that affect results is made possible by categorizing their work under these KRAs.

Parallel to the first frame is the second frame, which presents the challenges faced by the school administrator in practicing ethical Leadership, the qualitative phase of this research.

Qualitative and quantitative phases were analyzed and interpreted simultaneously. The results of both quantitative and qualitative analyses were examined using a convergence-of-findings approach. Using the gathered and interpreted data, the researcher then proposed the Ethical Leadership Development Program for School Administrators.



*Figure 1. Paradigm of the Study*

## III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study would foster great significance to the following:

- **Learners.** Students may benefit from this study through ethical culture and its positive effects. Through ethical leadership, leaders can guide, motivate, and provide teachers with opportunities to advance their careers and develop their skills. Improving teachers' and leaders' performance will manifest in students' achievements and holistic development.
- **Teachers.** The results of this study can be used by teachers as a guide to enhance their professional, social, and curricular competence and to support school-managed programs. Based on the results, they will know what they must do to meet the school's and learners' needs. They may be encouraged to grow professionally and to connect with the community to achieve better performance outcomes. Moreover, teachers will benefit from enhancement programs developed based on the results of this study.
- **School Administrator.** Through this study, administrators will gain insights into how their leadership affects teachers' growth and practice. The findings can guide opportunities for professional, social, and curricular improvement, while the proposed program can help refine leadership styles, uphold ethical conduct, and inform school-based trainings and initiatives.
- **DepEd Officials.** The findings of this study will form the foundation for implementing initiatives to strengthen ties between administrators and teachers. DepEd authorities could use the results and the proposed leadership development program to ensure that professional integrity and values-driven leadership are incorporated for school administrators and teachers to develop their capacity.
- **Other Researchers.** Future researchers undertaking the same study can utilize the findings and insights from this study. They will also contribute to the rich body of literature and knowledge that future researchers can use in their reviews of related studies.

#### IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the objectives of the study:

- To determine the professional development profile of the school administrator, specifically in terms of highest educational attainment, leadership trainings and seminars, research conducted, publications,

awards and recognitions, and speaking engagements.

- To describe the ethical leadership of the school administrator in relation to morality, compassion, ethical envisioning, ethical empowerment, and managing ethics.
- To assess the level of teachers' performance based on the Performance Management and Evaluation System (PMES) across the major Key Result Areas.
- To determine whether there is a significant difference in the ethical leadership of school administrators as assessed by the administrators themselves and by the teacher-respondents.
- To find out whether significant differences exist in the ethical leadership behavior of school administrators when they are grouped according to their professional development profile.
- To examine the relationship between the ethical leadership behavior of the administrator and the level of teachers' performance.
- To identify the challenges faced by school administrators in practicing ethical leadership among teachers.
- To propose an ethical leadership development program for school administrators based on the findings of the research.

#### V. METHODOLOGY

##### Research Design

The study utilized a Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods Design in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously but analyzed separately before being integrated. This approach made it possible to examine ethical leadership, teacher performance, and administrative challenges from multiple angles, resulting in a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena (Taherdoost, 2022). As emphasized by Enosh (as cited in Dawadi et al., 2021), mixed-methods research provides both breadth and depth in addressing complex issues, while Poth and Munce (2020) highlighted the value of combining multiple data sources to produce a holistic perspective.

The quantitative phase focused on describing and comparing administrators' ethical leadership based on their self-assessments and teacher assessments, identifying differences according to administrator profiles, and determining the relationship between ethical leadership and teacher performance through correlational analysis. Statistical tools facilitated the

organization and interpretation of the data. George et al. (2021) noted that such analyses help clarify causes behind observed events, and Bhat (2023) reinforced their usefulness in examining cause-and-effect relationships, which in this study pertained to ethical leadership and teacher performance.

The qualitative phase provided deeper insights into the challenges administrators encountered in practicing ethical leadership. Seven administrators with high ethical-leadership ratings participated in in-depth interviews. Qualitative data analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase coding framework using MAXQDA 2018, enabling the identification of recurring patterns and barriers to ethical leadership through systematic coding, theme development, and refinement. Qualitative findings also supported the exploration of possible programs aimed at strengthening ethical leadership skills. By integrating quantitative and qualitative results, the mixed-methods approach allowed the findings to confirm, expand, or contrast one another. Lim (2024) emphasized that qualitative narratives enrich empirical findings by adding contextual understanding of participants' lived experiences.

### **Population and Sample**

The study was conducted in four School Division Offices (SDOs) in Region III—Bataan, Balanga City, Pampanga, and Olongapo—using stratified random sampling to ensure proportional representation across the divisions. Sample sizes for both administrators and teachers were determined using G\*Power V.3.1.9.4, based on a medium effect size and 95% statistical power. A total of seventy-four (74) junior high school administrators participated: 46 from SDO Pampanga (39.32% of the population), 24 from SDO Bataan (40%), 2 from SDO Olongapo (33.33%), and 2 from SDO Balanga (50%). For each administrator, three teachers served as evaluators using a 1:3 administrator-to-teacher ratio, resulting in teacher-respondents three times the number of administrators. The largest number of teacher-respondents came from SDO Pampanga with 138 teachers, followed by SDO Bataan with 72, while SDO Balanga and SDO Olongapo each had six teacher respondents. These distributions reflect larger populations in the province-based divisions than in the city divisions. Additionally, seven administrators were purposively selected for the qualitative phase based on four criteria: they must have come from a public secondary school, had at least ten years of professional experience, had served at least two school years in their

current station, and had received a “Very High Extent” rating on the Ethical Leadership and Behavioral Scale.

### **Research Instrument**

The research instrument for quantitative phase consisted of two parts: the first gathered basic respondent information for proper data organization and accurate pairing in the paired-samples t-test, while the second used a standardized tool by Buys (2019) to measure ethical leadership across five dimensions—morality, compassion, ethical envisioning, ethical empowerment, and ethics management—using a 6-point Likert scale with corresponding verbal interpretations. The instrument included 35 items for morality, 32 for compassion, 41 for ethical envisioning, 11 for ethical empowerment, and 42 for managing ethics. Additional data such as administrators' professional development profiles and teachers' performance ratings (from the 2025 PMES) were obtained through documentary analysis.

For the qualitative component, the researcher developed semi-structured interview questions focusing on challenges in practicing ethical leadership and potential development programs for administrators; these questions underwent expert validation by three educational research specialists, who provided feedback leading to several revisions before the final validation certificate was secured.

### **Data Analysis**

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods, and the analyses were conducted systematically to ensure the accuracy, reliability, and validity of the findings. Prior to data collection, the researcher secured formal approval from the DepEd Region III Office, allowing access to the respondents and the required documents. After the permit was granted, the researcher collected teachers' Individual Performance Commitment and Review Forms (IPCRFs) to assess their performance ratings.

Quantitative data were collected via Google Forms, which provided an efficient and accessible platform for gathering responses from both school administrators and teachers regarding ethical leadership and administrators' professional development profiles. Additional hard-copy questionnaires were administered during school visits and during breaks in various DepEd seminars to maximize participation and ensure a representative sample. For the qualitative component, seven school

administrators were interviewed in depth at mutually convenient times and locations to obtain rich, contextual insights into the challenges associated with ethical leadership.

The analysis of quantitative data was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). To describe the professional development profile of the administrators—specifically their educational attainment, trainings, research, publications, awards, and speaking engagements—frequency and percentage distributions were used. Meanwhile, the ethical leadership of administrators, measured across morality, compassion, ethical envisioning, ethical empowerment, and ethics management, was analyzed using weighted mean and standard deviation.

Teachers' performance levels across the Key Result Areas (KRAs) of the Performance Management and Evaluation System (PMES)—including content knowledge and pedagogy, learning environment, diversity of learners, curriculum planning, community linkages, and professional growth—were also interpreted using weighted mean.

Inferential statistics were employed to test the study's hypotheses. The Mann–Whitney U test was used to determine whether significant differences existed between the ethical leadership assessments of administrators and teachers. Differences in ethical leadership behavior when administrators were grouped according to professional development profile were analyzed using the Kruskal–Wallis H test. The relationship between ethical leadership and teachers' performance was examined using Spearman's rho, allowing the researcher to determine the strength and direction of the association between variables.

Qualitative data were analyzed by an experienced qualitative researcher using thematic analysis. This process involved systematic coding, categorization, and theme development to identify recurring patterns regarding administrators' challenges in practicing ethical leadership. The thematic analysis also informed the formulation of a proposed ethical leadership development program tailored to administrators' needs.

Through this combination of statistical and thematic techniques, the study produced a comprehensive analysis that integrated numerical trends with contextual explanations, strengthening the overall interpretation of results.

## VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Professional Development Profile of the Respondents*

The majority of school administrators hold advanced academic credentials: 33.78% have a doctorate, and 24.32% hold a master's degree. Most respondents (94.59%) attended 12 or more leadership training or seminars, indicating strong engagement in professional development. In terms of research productivity, 45.95% have conducted at least one research project, while 54.05% have published four or more articles. Furthermore, 51.35% received four or more awards and recognitions, and 67.57% had four or more speaking engagements. These findings reflect a highly credentialed and professionally active leadership group, consistent with ethical leadership principles emphasizing lifelong learning, accountability, and continuous improvement.

### *Ethical Leadership of School Administrators*

The overall ethical leadership of administrators is rated at a Very High Extent (Mean = 4.35), with ethical envisioning scoring the highest (Mean = 4.41), followed by morality (Mean = 4.38), ethical empowerment (Mean = 4.32), managing ethics (Mean = 4.32), and compassion (Mean = 4.31). School heads rated themselves higher (Mean = 4.84) compared to teachers (Mean = 4.18), indicating a perception gap. These results suggest that administrators strongly practice ethical principles, particularly in articulating a values-driven vision, though alignment between self-perception and teacher evaluation needs improvement.

### *Level of Teachers' Performance*

Teachers' performance is generally Outstanding (Mean = 4.572) across all domains of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST). The highest-rated domain is curriculum planning (Mean = 4.599), followed by community linkages and professional engagement (Mean = 4.598), learning environment (Mean = 4.595), content knowledge and pedagogy (Mean = 4.584), personal growth and professional development (Mean = 4.554), and diversity of learners (Mean = 4.505). These findings affirm strong instructional competence and collaborative practices, with opportunities to refine further strategies for addressing learner diversity.

### *Comparison of Ethical Leadership Ratings*

The Mann–Whitney U-test revealed significant differences in ethical leadership ratings between administrators and teachers, with an overall U-value of

4627.00 ( $p < .001$ ). This indicates that administrators consistently rate themselves higher than teachers do, confirming a perception gap that may affect trust and collaboration. Literature suggests that implementing feedback mechanisms and shared governance can help bridge this gap.

### ***Significant Difference in Ethical Leadership When Grouped by Profile***

Statistical analysis showed no significant difference in ethical leadership across administrators grouped by professional development profile, as the computed  $p$ -value exceeded the alpha level of 0.05. This suggests that ethical leadership practices are consistently high regardless of educational attainment, training, or research engagement.

### ***Significant Relationship Between Ethical Leadership and Teachers' Performance***

Spearman's rho revealed a strong positive relationship between administrators' ethical leadership and teachers' performance ( $r = 0.802$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This indicates that higher ethical leadership among administrators is associated with better teacher performance, consistent with the literature, which finds that ethical leadership fosters trust, collaboration, and instructional excellence.

### ***Challenges Faced by School Administrators in Practicing Ethical Leadership***

The study identified five major themes: (a) Ethical Climate and Culture, which includes cultural barriers, resource constraints, and policy clarity; (b) Modeling, Accountability, and Role Clarity, emphasizing visible integrity and consistent enforcement; (c) Compassionate Communication and Collaborative Practice, highlighting dialogic leadership and shared accountability; (d) Professional Growth and Pedagogical Integrity, showing how ethical leadership enhances teacher well-being and instructional quality; and (e) Navigating Ethical Tensions and Judgments, addressing dilemmas where compassion and duty collide. These challenges underscore the complexity of sustaining ethical leadership and the need for structured strategies such as ethics circles, multi-paradigm reasoning, and capacity-building programs.

### ***Convergence of Findings***

The table presents an integrated mixed-methods interpretation of the Ethical Leadership Behavior Scale (ELBS) by comparing quantitative ratings with qualitative themes and identifying areas of convergence

or divergence. Overall, the findings suggest a strong ethical leadership climate marked by morality, compassion, clear envisioning, and consistent ethical management. These qualities appear to reinforce high teacher performance and a supportive professional environment. However, the points of divergence—particularly in empowerment and experiences of professional development (PD)—indicate that although ethical leadership is rated highly, gaps persist in communication, policy interpretation, and the consistency of support provided to teachers. This type of convergence analysis is crucial because it does not merely affirm strong leadership; it explains how leadership is experienced in daily school life, where procedures, expectations, and interpersonal dynamics shape the practical expression of ethical leadership.

Furthermore, the observed convergence and divergence patterns highlight the relationship between leadership intentions and teacher perceptions. While leaders may uphold ethical practices grounded in fairness and vision, teachers' interpretations depend on the clarity of communication, the level of relational trust, and the consistency of leadership actions. Divergence, therefore, does not negate the presence of ethical leadership; instead, it reveals areas where alignment between leadership actions and teachers' lived experiences can be strengthened.

In terms of morality, the quantitative result indicates a very high rating ( $M=4.38$ ), and the qualitative findings reinforce this by describing leaders as navigating ethical tensions and judgments in ways that demonstrate strong moral grounding. This convergence implies that teachers do not merely perceive morality as an abstract trait; they see it expressed through consistent decision-making and principled responses to challenging situations. The qualitative strand adds texture to the numerical rating by showing that moral leadership becomes most visible when administrators must choose between competing demands, enforce standards, or address conflicts. Taken together, both strands suggest that moral leadership is institutionalized rather than incidental, meaning that ethical behavior is likely embedded in the school's routines, expectations, and accountability structures. Programmatically, this alignment underscores the importance of sustaining ethical decision-making mechanisms—such as clear grievance pathways, fair disciplinary processes, and transparent standards—because they seem to reinforce trust and predictability in leadership actions.

Compassion also shows a convergent pattern, with very high quantitative results ( $M=4.31$ ) and qualitative themes emphasizing compassionate communication and collaborative practice. What is especially important in the qualitative results is the repeated emphasis on dialogue, mentoring, and shared accountability, suggesting that compassion is experienced as relational and supportive rather than permissive. The convergence here indicates that leaders are viewed as caring while still being committed to standards and responsibilities. In practical terms, this implies an ethical balance: leaders offer understanding and assistance while maintaining professional expectations so that compassion does not weaken accountability. This kind of leadership is often critical in school settings because teachers need both emotional support and clear guidance, particularly amid workload pressures, performance expectations, and learner needs. The findings imply that programs that strengthen mentoring systems, promote respectful feedback cultures, and formalize collaborative support structures can reinforce compassion while maintaining accountability.

For envisioning, the quantitative data show the highest mean across ELBS dimensions ( $M=4.41$ ), and the qualitative themes converge on leaders who model expectations, communicate direction clearly (“walk your talk”), and consistently steward performance norms. This alignment suggests that school leaders are perceived as strong in setting goals, articulating standards, and ensuring continuity in priorities. The qualitative strand clarifies that envisioning is not only about having a vision statement; it is about sustained communication and consistent behaviors that signal what matters most in the organization. When teachers repeatedly see leaders align decisions with stated values and performance targets, the vision becomes credible. The convergence indicates that this credibility is present, which is significant because credible leadership vision often strengthens teacher coherence, reduces confusion about priorities, and supports collective responsibility. The implied program direction is to keep vision communication systematic—through regular consultations, shared planning, and consistent follow-through—so that teachers experience the vision as a lived practice rather than a one-time message.

Empowerment is where the table reveals divergence. Although the quantitative rating remains very high ( $M=4.32$ ), the qualitative findings introduce a more complex picture: teachers report that empowerment is

encouraged, yet it is sometimes constrained by how policies are interpreted or implemented, and by the limits of decision-making structures. This divergence suggests that teachers may endorse empowerment items on a survey because opportunities for involvement exist in general, but their lived experiences may include moments when empowerment is uneven, procedural, or dependent on administrative interpretation. In other words, empowerment may be present in intention but inconsistent in execution. The qualitative evidence that administrators’ actions follow policy and are sometimes “misinterpreted” also implies that empowerment may be undermined by communication gaps, unclear role boundaries, or insufficient explanation of why certain decisions must follow non-negotiable policies. Programmatically, this divergence points to the need for clearer decision-making protocols, improved communication about policy constraints, and structured spaces for teacher voice that are predictable and meaningful. Strengthening empowerment may therefore require not only providing opportunities to participate, but also clarifying which decisions are shared, which are consultative, and which are compliance driven.

Managing ethics returns to convergence, with very high quantitative results ( $M=4.32$ ) and qualitative descriptions focusing on stewardship and ethical order. Both strands suggest that leaders are perceived as actively maintaining ethical standards and ensuring professional conduct. The qualitative emphasis on “system/process gaps” and the need for Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) indicates that managing ethics is not simply about individual integrity; it is also about maintaining systems that support fairness, consistency, and due process. The convergence here implies that teachers recognize ethical management as a legitimate leadership responsibility and experience leaders as generally consistent in this role. At the same time, the mention of SOP gaps suggests that ethical management can still be strengthened by institutional refinement—clearer guidelines, documented procedures, and consistent implementation—so that ethical expectations are not dependent on personalities but sustained through systems.

Teacher performance, reflected in PPST KRAs, also demonstrates convergence. Quantitatively, teachers rated performance as outstanding overall ( $M=4.572$ ), and the qualitative themes connect this performance to ethical leadership that promotes professional growth and pedagogical integrity. This alignment implies that

ethical leadership is not merely a moral or relational advantage; it has functional benefits for instruction and professional practice. The qualitative strand suggests that when leaders are ethical, supportive, and consistent, they create conditions that encourage teacher effectiveness—through constructive feedback, a positive environment, and a culture of accountability. This convergence also supports a broader interpretation that ethical leadership contributes to instructional quality indirectly by shaping teacher motivation, professional identity, and commitment to standards. Program implications include continuing leadership practices that sustain teacher performance—such as feedback cycles, recognition systems, coaching, and supportive monitoring—while ensuring they remain fair, transparent, and grounded in clear standards.

The perception gap between administrators' self-ratings and teachers' ratings is also convergent. The quantitative result indicates a significant difference ( $U=4627.00$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), with administrators rating themselves higher, and the qualitative results describe "clashing ethical views" and communication misalignment. Together, these findings suggest that the gap is not necessarily a sign of unethical leadership; rather, it may reflect differences in perspective, role expectations, and access to decision-making information. Administrators may evaluate themselves based on intentions, policy compliance, and leadership pressures, while teachers may evaluate leadership based on day-to-day experiences, communication clarity, and how decisions affect workloads and classroom realities. The qualitative emphasis on improving dialogue and collaborative practices implies that bridging the perception gap requires structured communication—not just more communication, but clearer, two-way exchanges where expectations, rationales, and constraints are shared openly. This suggests that alignment can be strengthened through regular consultation, transparent decision rationales, and shared reflection on ethical dilemmas.

Differences in EL by PD profile reveal another divergence: quantitative results indicate no significant differences across PD profiles ( $p>.05$ ), but qualitative findings suggest that teachers still experience differences in support, training, engagement, and shared vision. This divergence implies that while professional development opportunities may be distributed or delivered similarly in frequency, the quality and impact of PD may vary by individual context, access,

mentoring, or relevance to teachers' needs. Quantitative measures may not capture subtle inequities in how PD is experienced, such as whether coaching is sustained, whether feedback is timely, or whether teachers feel genuinely included in collaborative learning. The qualitative strand, therefore, signals that PD evaluation should go beyond attendance or availability and consider the lived experience of support and the practical usefulness of PD in addressing classroom challenges. Programmatically, this points toward differentiated and needs-based PD, stronger mentoring structures, and mechanisms that ensure all teachers experience equitable, meaningful professional learning rather than uniform but unevenly impactful training.

Finally, the relationship between ethical leadership and teacher performance shows convergence, with a strong positive quantitative correlation (Spearman's  $r = 0.802$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) supported by qualitative themes emphasizing modeling, accountability, and role clarity. This convergence reinforces the interpretation that ethical leadership is a key driver of teacher performance, not only through formal supervision but through relational trust, clear expectations, and consistent support. The qualitative findings suggest that ethical leadership must be "sustained and developed," meaning it is not a one-time leadership trait but a continuing practice that must be nurtured through reflection, communication, and institutional support. Taken as a whole, the convergence table depicts an organization where ethical leadership is strong and widely recognized, and where teacher performance benefits from an ethical climate, while also highlighting areas where systems and communication must be strengthened to ensure empowerment and PD experiences are more consistent across stakeholders.

### ***Proposed Leadership Development Program Based on Findings***

Based on the study's findings, a comprehensive leadership development program is proposed to strengthen ethical leadership and enhance school performance. The program includes targeted interventions such as Ethical Leadership Workshops to reinforce principled decision-making and visionary practices; Mentorship and Peer Coaching to promote collaborative governance and accountability; Dialogic Leadership Circles for open communication and conflict resolution; and Compassionate Communication Training to balance empathy with integrity. Additionally, Research and Publication Seminars will support evidence-based decision-making, while Values

Formation and Restorative Practice Workshops will foster a favorable school climate. Structured protocols for fairness, multi-paradigm reasoning sessions, and external partnerships with guidance and legal sectors are integrated to address cultural barriers, resource constraints, and ethical dilemmas. Together, these activities aim to build a leadership culture that is coherent, caring, and accountability-driven, ensuring sustainable ethical practices in schools.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Based on the study's findings, school administrators demonstrate strong academic preparation and sustained professional development, reflecting a deep commitment to lifelong learning and ethical responsibility. These qualifications provide a robust foundation for effective leadership and contribute to the overall improvement of school processes and outcomes. The results further reveal that administrators exhibit a Very High Extent of ethical leadership across all domains, especially in ethical envisioning and moral discernment. However, the notable perception gap between administrators and teachers underscores the need for intentional reflective dialogue, shared governance mechanisms, and transparent communication to strengthen alignment, trust, and mutual accountability.

Teachers, meanwhile, display outstanding performance across all Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) domains, affirming their instructional competence, collaborative engagement, and professional commitment. The study also establishes a strong positive relationship between ethical leadership and teacher performance, indicating that when administrators model ethical behavior, provide moral clarity, and cultivate a fair and supportive work environment, teacher performance improves significantly. This confirms ethical leadership as a powerful driver of instructional quality, teacher motivation, and school success.

Notably, the study finds that ethical leadership practices remain consistently high regardless of administrators' educational attainment, training backgrounds, or research involvement. This suggests that ethical leadership is shaped more by organizational culture, personal values, and relational dynamics than by demographic or credential-related factors. Despite this strength, administrators encounter substantial challenges—such as conflicting cultural expectations,

limited resources, and ethical dilemmas involving compassion versus duty—which reveal the intricate and often tension-filled nature of ethical school leadership. These challenges signal the necessity for structured policies, clear role expectations, and collaborative systems that reinforce ethical decision-making.

To address these complexities and sustain ethical leadership, the study highlights the need for a comprehensive development program emphasizing ethical decision-making skills, values-based leadership, mentorship, dialogic leadership practices, compassionate communication, and ongoing professional growth. Such a framework may ensure principled consistency, strengthen moral agency, and support administrators in navigating the ethical demands of contemporary schooling.

Overall, the study concludes that ethical leadership in today's schools is inherently contextual and performative—shaped by cultural norms, enacted through role modeling and dialogue, and reinforced through teacher development and shared values. Principled consistency, supported by clear policies and collaborative practices, anchors ethical leadership in sustainable school improvement. These findings underscore the need for schools to prioritize ethical leadership to enhance trust, promote collaboration, and ensure continuous improvement in teaching and learning.

## VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions drawn from the study, the following are hereby recommended:

The Regional Office may strengthen ethical leadership across schools by conducting regular workshops on ethical decision-making, multi-paradigm reasoning, and conflict resolution to equip administrators with the necessary tools to address complex ethical dilemmas. It may also implement the Leadership Development Program, integrating ethical leadership workshops, mentorship activities, dialogic leadership circles, values formation sessions, and restorative practices to address existing challenges and sustain ethical school leadership.

To support reflective practice, Department of Education policymakers may institutionalize monthly ethics circles and Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions, enabling administrators and teachers to engage in open dialogue, shared accountability, and cooperative problem-solving

within an appropriate timeframe. Policy makers may establish a framework that strengthens administrators' capacity to advance inclusion and differentiated support systems school-wide, ensuring effective implementation of the PPST "Diversity of Learners" domain in alignment with SDG 4's commitment to inclusive and equitable quality education. They may also design ethical leadership frameworks and establish monitoring tools to ensure ethical standards remain consistent and sustainable across all levels of the educational system.

To enhance accountability and fairness, institutions may develop a role-clarity charter and ensure consistent policy implementation across all leadership levels. Administrators may serve as ethical role models by applying policies to themselves and providing clear explanations for their decisions to strengthen trust within the school community. The Department of Education may also safeguard assessment integrity by establishing clear protocols for grading and classroom management, preventing leniency from compromising the fairness of academic evaluation. Additionally, restorative practices and coaching cycles may be employed to reinforce ethical norms and support continuous professional growth.

District Supervisors and School Administrators may further promote a culture of compassionate communication and well-being by providing training on compassionate communication and bias awareness. They may complement these efforts with wellness programs and recognition systems designed to improve teacher motivation, enhance psychological safety, and foster a positive school climate. At the same time, Division Offices may help build research and publication capacity by offering seminars that strengthen evidence-based decision-making and encourage a culture of continuous improvement among educators.

Administrators may also formalize partnerships with external organizations by establishing Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with guidance counselors, legal advisers, and representatives from the religious sector. Such collaborations may provide specialized support when administrators encounter ethically challenging situations that require additional expertise.

Preparing future leaders is equally important; thus, graduate schools may introduce a full course on ethical leadership to strengthen the competencies of aspiring

administrators, helping them lead with integrity, fairness, and professionalism.

Lastly, future researchers may use the full cycle of the Performance Monitoring and Evaluation System (PMES) from 2025 to 2028 to obtain comprehensive, reliable data on teacher performance, supporting deeper insights and more informed decision-making in future studies.

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