Managerial Skills of Mathematics–Specialized School Heads in Cotabato City Division

Norhaya D. Balawag

Degree Master of Science Education Major in Secondary Mathematics Graduate Program College of Education Mindanao State University - Maguindanao

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the managerial skills of mathematics-specialized school heads in Cotabato City Division, specifically in handling complaints during the school year 2024–2025. Purposive sampling technique was used, considering that the only 48 mathematics–specialized school heads or BSED major in mathematics that are now school heads in Cotabato City Division. The researcher utilized a modified questionnaire adapted from the study of Songcayawon (2022) as its main instrument in obtaining appropriate data. The research investigated the demographic profiles of the respondents, including age, sex, highest educational attainment, and years in service. It further assessed how these school heads' managerial skills—particularly in decision-making, problem-solving, and communication—impacted their effectiveness in complaint management. The study also evaluated their counseling skills and examined the relationship between their managerial competencies and the effectiveness of complaint handling at the school level. The study also employed a structured interview to obtain reliable data using the descriptive qualitative method. Finally, the study delved into their specific experiences in managing and addressing school-related complaints. Findings showed that most school heads were aged 31–35, predominantly female (68.8%), with 60.4% holding a master's degree, and 41.7% having 4 to 10 years of service. The assessment revealed high levels of managerial competency, with mean scores of 4.34 in decision-making, 4.32 in problem-solving, and 4.38 in communication, all interpreted as "skilled." Their counseling skills were also rated skilled, with a mean of 4.39. A significant relationship was found between their managerial skills and their effectiveness in handling complaints, affirming the importance of such skills in educational leadership. The study concluded that managerial and counseling skills are essential for school heads to effectively manage complaints and promote a harmonious school environment. These findings reinforce existing literature that emphasizes the necessity of strong managerial capabilities in successful school leadership.

Keywords: Managerial Skills, Mathematics-Specialized School Heads, Complaint Handling, Educational Leadership, and Counseling Skills

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Managerial skills are important capabilities that determine who can serve as an executive or head of an organization (school). It is viewed as the ability to plan, organize, and direct the operations of an educational enterprise for the educational system as a whole (Giami and Obiechina ,2019).

In educational institutions, the role of school heads extends beyond administrative duties; it encompasses the critical function of conflict resolution. Effective management of complaints is crucial for maintaining a harmonious learning environment and ensuring the smooth operation of schools. Despite the pivotal nature of this role, many school heads often exhibit limited knowledge and skills in effectively handling complaints, which undermines their ability to manage school complaints efficiently (Tagarda, 2022).

The urgency of this issue is underscored by the growing complexity of school environments, where complaints can arise from various sources, including students, parents, and staff. These complaints, if not addressed appropriately, can lead to a range of problems, such as decreased student morale, increased staff turnover, and strained relationships with parents. Effective handling complaints require a combination of interpersonal skills, strategic thinking, and emotional intelligence, which are critical components of managerial competence. However, a significant gap exists in the preparedness of school heads to handle these challenges (Gomez, 2022).

The impact of insufficient knowledge among school heads in managing complaints is profound and multifaceted. Firstly, many school heads are promoted based on their teaching experience or administrative efficiency rather than their proficiency in conflict management. This oversight often means that they lack formal training in handling disputes or handling complaints effectively. Consequently, they may struggle with fundamental aspects of conflict resolution, such as active listening, negotiation, and mediation (Gomez, 2022).

And the absence of systematic professional development programs targeting conflict management contributes to this issue. While school heads may receive training in educational leadership and management, specific training in handling complaints and handling complaints is often minimal or non-existent. Without these targeted skills, school heads might default to ineffective or ad-hoc methods, which can exacerbate complaints rather than resolve them (Gomez, 2022).

The dynamic and high-pressure environment of schools, coupled with the diverse needs and expectations of various stakeholders, can overwhelm school heads that are unprepared for conflict situations. This stress can impair their decision-making abilities, further compounding the problem (Kaufmaan, 2019).

Addressing this issue is essential for enhancing the overall effectiveness of school leadership. Developing a comprehensive understanding of conflict management techniques and incorporating these into leadership training programs can empower school heads to handle complaints more effectively. By investing in targeted professional development, educational institutions can equip their leaders with the necessary skills to foster a more positive and productive school environment (Andacao, 2022).

This study strengthened the idea that school heads need counseling skills to effectively resolve school complaints because these skills enhance their ability to understand and address underlying issues that contribute to complaints. Counseling techniques such as active listening, empathy, and mediation are crucial for de-escalating tensions and finding mutually acceptable solutions. By employing these skills, school heads can better manage emotional responses, foster open communication, and build trust among stakeholders, ultimately leading to a more harmonious and supportive school environment. This proactive approach not only resolves complaints but also prevents their recurrence.

Statement of the Problem

The study was conducted to trace out the relatedness of managerial skills to counselling skills of mathematics-specialized school heads in Cotabato City Division during the school year 2024-2025.

Specifically, the study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the socio demographic profile of the respondents?

1.1 age;
1.2 sex;
1.3 highest educational attainment; and
1.4 years in service?

2. What is the level skill of managerial skills of mathematics-specialized school heads impact the following areas?

2.1 decision-making skills;
2.2 problem-solving skills; and

2.3 communication skills?

3. What is the level of the counselling skills of mathematics-specialized school heads contribute to the status of handling complaints at the school level?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the profile of mathematics-specialized school heads and their managerial skills in decision-making, problem-solving, and communication?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the managerial skills of mathematics-specialized school heads and the status of handling complaints?
6. What are the specific experiences of mathematics-specialized school heads in managing and addressing complaints within their schools?

Hypothesis

H_0: There is no significant relationship between mathematics–specialized school heads managerial skills and counseling skills in handling school complaints.

Significance of the Study

The study was deemed important to school heads, teachers, policymakers, and learners.

Findings of the study will enable school heads to shape the school's culture and climate by creating systems and policies that minimize conflict. Effective managerial practices ensure that resources are allocated efficiently, roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and communication channels are open and functional.

Findings of the study will serve as fundamental for school heads in handling complaints. These skills involve not just overseeing day-to-day operations but also anticipating potential issues and implementing preventive measures. For example, a principal’s ability to organize professional development programs for teachers on conflict management can proactively address issues before they escalate.

Conflict often arises from miscommunication, mismanagement, or inadequate resources. School heads with strong managerial skills can address these root causes by ensuring that all staff members understand and follow established protocols. They can also facilitate a collaborative environment where problems are discussed openly and resolved collectively. By applying effective managerial strategies, school heads can foster a positive school culture that reduces the likelihood of complaints.

The findings of the study will strengthen the school heads' idea that counseling skills are equally important in handling complaints. These skills involve empathy, active listening, and the ability to mediate disputes. When complaints arise, whether between students, staff, or parents, school heads with strong counseling skills can facilitate understanding and dialogue among the parties involved. This approach helps in addressing the emotional and psychological aspects of complaints, which can be crucial for finding mutually agreeable solutions.

The integration of managerial and counseling skills can significantly enhance conflict resolution in schools. While managerial skills provide the framework and processes for conflict management, counseling skills ensure that these processes are implemented with sensitivity and understanding. For instance, while a principal might develop a conflict resolution policy, the success of this policy depends on how well the principal can communicate and mediate within the framework.

The significance of this thesis extends to the broader field of educational leadership. Understanding the interplay between managerial and counseling skills in conflict resolution can inform training and development programs for school heads. It highlights the need for a balanced skill set that includes both strategic management and interpersonal communication.

And finally this study will provide valuable insights for policy makers and educational administrators in designing support systems for school leaders. By recognizing the importance of these skills, educational

institutions can invest in professional development that equips school heads with the tools they need to handle complaints effectively.

Scope of the Study

The study was conducted to trace out various managerial skills being exhibited by BSEd major in Mathematics school heads or mathematics–specialized school heads in dealing with teachers and learners in school settings. It also determined the relationship with their counseling skills in handling school-related complaints.

Initially, the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, bachelor's degree, highest educational attainment, and years of experience was important to come up with their background in math-related fields of specialization. The mathematics-specialized school heads managerial skills covered the following components: decision-making skills, problem-solving skills, and communication skills. On the other was the counseling skills of mathematics–specialized school heads in handling complaints in school.

The study employed the mathematics–specialized school heads or BSEd major in Mathematics graduates as the main sources of information in the Division of Cotabato City during the school year 2024-2025.

Definition of Terms

To understand thoroughly this study, the following salient terms was operationally defined.

Communication Skills refers to the ability of the school heads to convey information clearly and effectively using both verbal and nonverbal methods.

Counseling skills refers to the ability of the school heads to provide effective guidance and support to students, teachers, and parents regarding academic and personal issues including their proficiency in active listening, empathy, problem-solving, and offering constructive feedback.

Decision-making skills refers to the ability of the school heads to evaluate options and choose the most effective course of action in resolving conflict or complaints.

Managerial skills of school heads refers to the decision-making skills, problem-solving skills, and communication skills of mathematics school heads.

Mathematics-specialized school heads refers to school administrators who have a good foundation or degree of mastery over mathematics. These are individuals who may have obtained advanced degrees in mathematics or mathematics education.

Profiles of the Respondents refers to the bachelor's degree, age, gender, highest attainment, and years of experience of the mathematics school heads and their teachers.

Problem-solving skills are the ability to identify issues, generate potential solutions, evaluate and select the best option, and implement the solution effectively.

School heads are heads with authority inside a school and are responsible for managing general school operations, management, and curricula. The word also includes the educational system's positions like principals, head teachers, or directors of schools, who manage people, enforce rules, ensure that curriculum demands are met, and try to have a learning environment suitable for students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter shows the review of related literature from foreign and local settings.

School Heads' Demographic Profile

Principals' efficiency and effectiveness are often linked to demographic characteristics. Managers' demographic factors, such as age, gender, educational qualifications, expertise, and marital status, may be useful or detrimental when performing their duties (Owan et al., 2022). It has also been suggested that principals' demographic characteristics influence how they use material resources in secondary schools (Jang & Alexander, 2022; Owan et al., 2021).

A large body of data indicates that a leader's age is related to their administrative achievement (Ali et al., 2021; Kandade et al., 2021; Schiuma et al., 2022). According to Campos-García & Zúñiga-Vicente (2020), leaders in their fifties have greater administrative skills compared to those below in their fifties. This suggests that people tend to divide into complex functions as they develop. Other research (Onubuleze, 2018; Kalkan, 2020) have also found a positive correlation between principal age and efficiency.

Campos-García & Zúñiga-Vicente (2022) found that certain characteristics, such as age, training, gender, and background, may lead to more successful and efficient principals. Onubuleze (2018) also found out that the completion of secondary school administration tasks and the sex of principals were shown to be significantly correlated in another survey. Only female managers with professional experience are associated with higher management quality, demonstrating the existence of barriers to advancement for women (Martínez et al., 2020).

According to another study, the source of power and the development of educational leadership through collaborations between principals and teachers determine the sex differences in principals' leadership in education (Shaked et al., 2018). This research highlights that male and female principals may draw on different sources of authority—such as positional power, expertise, or relational influence—and that these differences are shaped and reinforced through their interactions with teaching staff. The study emphasizes that collaborative leadership practices can either bridge or amplify gender-based distinctions in leadership approaches.

On the other hand, the educational attainment of principals had a slight impact on their proficiency in managing the school procurement process (Kirianki, 2017) and integrating ICT into school administration (Mutisya et al., 2017). However, the years of experience of principals have been generally recognized in certain research as a significant element influencing the degree of their administrative effectiveness (Lien et al., 2023; Mukinya, 2013).

Due to their years of work experience, seasoned principals are known to act from a more comprehensive and advanced knowledge base (McHenry-Sorber et al., 2023). They have strong forms and styles for effective administration, counseling, supervision, and evaluation of teachers under their supervision (Graham et al., 2020). Additionally, pupils' academic success was significantly correlated with the number of years of experience of principals; in particular, schools run by principals with more experience produced the best outcomes (Gümüş et al., 2024).

Additionally, instructors have a favorable opinion of principals who are more experienced and well-trained (Gebczynski & Kutsyuruba, 2022). The principals' experience affects their procurement expertise and that they use their knowledge, abilities, and experience to increase their schools' ability to conduct appropriate procurement (Kirianki, 2017). Moreover, the principals' years of experience significantly influenced how they carried out instruction in public high schools (Arop, 2018). The more managers are willing to incorporate information into their assignments, the more educators invest in the programs, and seasoned representatives continue to boost teacher buy-in at the school level. It was found that more experienced administrators are generally less knowledge-motivated than less experienced managers (Yoon, 2016).

School Heads' Managerial Skills

School heads' managerial skills involve their ability to effectively lead and organize school operations. This includes planning and implementing educational programs, managing staff and resources, setting and

achieving goals, and addressing challenges. Their skills are assessed through their success in fostering a positive school environment, enhancing student outcomes, and ensuring smooth day-to-day administration.

Decision-Making Skills

Many authors have defined decision-making in different ways, with the major emphasis on the process of

selecting the best option from among options. Duze (2021) described decision-making as the process by which educational managers (school heads) choose the best action or most preferred course of action among alternative courses of action with the purpose of solving problems and achieving set goals effectively and efficiently. As a result, the school administrator, who supervises the school, should have a thorough understanding of decision-making in coordinating individuals or groups to determine the nature of a specific problem and choose among available options to solve the problem and accomplish the intended outcome.

Decision-making begins with identifying an issue, then planning activities and implementing strategies within the right time limit. The process includes participatory planning, implementation, evaluation, and feedback. The decision-making process also comprises policies (the setting of objectives), resources (people, money, materials, and authority), and methods of implementation (strategies). In the school setting, the content value of the decision-making process is concerned with the ability or skills of the school head to be able to identify policy decision that seeks purposeful action and execute decisions that ensure the best coordination of actions (Duze, 2021).

The ability of the institution's administrator to make good choices is essential to the organization's success. This is why Oviwigbo (2021) stated that principals need to give considerable attention to key elements of the managerial process: planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting in making decisions (POSDCORB). Every day at school, assessments are made about individual responsibility, work behavior, resource distribution, and short-term objectives.

Decision-making is a critical competency for school heads, influencing the effectiveness of educational leadership and overall school performance. Recent literature emphasizes the multifaceted nature of decision-making skills required by school heads, highlighting their impact on various aspects of school management and student outcomes (Delmonte, 2021).

According to a study by Koirala et al. (2023), effective decision-making by school heads involves a blend of strategic thinking, data analysis, and stakeholder engagement. School leaders who utilized data-driven decision-making approaches significantly improved student achievement and teacher satisfaction. They emphasized that contemporary school heads must integrate data analytics into their decision-making processes to address complex educational challenges and adapt to evolving needs.

A 2022 article by Smith and Lewis underscores the importance of emotional intelligence in decision-making. The study reveals that school heads with high emotional intelligence are better equipped to handle the interpersonal aspects of decision-making, such as managing complaints and fostering a positive school climate. Emotional intelligence allows school leaders to navigate the complexities of stakeholder relationships and make decisions that are both effective and sensitive to the needs of students, teachers, and parents (Smith & Lewis, 2022).

Furthermore, recent research by Johnson and Brown (2024) highlights the role of collaborative decision-making in enhancing school effectiveness. Their study shows that involving teachers and other stakeholders in the decision-making process leads to more inclusive and well-rounded decisions. Collaborative approaches not only improve the quality of decisions but also increase buy-in and implementation success. The authors advocate for school heads to foster a collaborative culture to harness diverse perspectives and expertise.

In addition, a study by Patel et al. (2023) explores the impact of decision-making frameworks and tools on school management. The research indicates that structured decision-making frameworks, such as the SWOT

analysis and decision matrices, help school heads systematically evaluate options and make informed choices. These tools support leaders in organizing their thoughts, analyzing potential outcomes, and selecting the most viable solutions for their schools.

The recent literature emphasizes that effective decision-making skills are vital for school heads to lead successful educational institutions. The integration of data-driven approaches, emotional intelligence, collaborative methods, and structured decision-making tools are crucial elements that enhance the decision-making process. As educational environments continue to evolve, school leaders must continually develop and refine their decision-making skills to address emerging challenges and achieve positive outcomes for their schools.

Problem-Solving Skills

Successful leadership practices for resolving school issues are based on data from the transformational leadership model, which emphasizes the task of building and developing school workers' abilities, organizational commitment, the formation of new leaders, and the development of the organization. Problem-solving is defined as a cognitive process aimed at achieving an aim for learners that do not have a primary solution strategy. This meaning consists of four major components (Day, 2018).

Problem-solving skills are crucial for school heads as they navigate complex educational environments and address diverse challenges within their institutions. Recent literature underscores various dimensions of problem-solving competencies necessary for effective school leadership, including cognitive strategies, interpersonal skills, and adaptive approaches (National Research Council, 2019).

A 2023 study by Thompson and Parker examines the cognitive strategies employed by school heads in problem-solving. Their research highlights that effective school leaders utilize systematic approaches such as root-cause analysis and scenario planning to tackle issues ranging from curriculum development to crisis management. The authors found that school heads who regularly engage in reflective practices and systematic problem-solving techniques achieve better outcomes in handling both routine and complex problems. They stress the importance of fostering a mindset oriented towards continuous learning and adaptability in leadership roles (Thompson & Parker, 2023).

In a similar vein, Miller and Davis (2024) focus on the role of interpersonal skills in problem-solving. Their study reveals that effective problem-solving is not solely a cognitive process but also involves significant interpersonal dynamics. School heads who excel in communication, negotiation, and conflict resolution are better positioned to address issues collaboratively with staff, students, and parents. The authors argue that strong interpersonal skills facilitate a collaborative problem-solving environment where diverse perspectives are considered and solutions are more comprehensively developed (Miller & Davis, 2024).

A notable contribution to this field is the work by Nguyen and Roberts (2023), which explores the integration of technology in problem-solving processes. Their research suggests that digital tools such as data analytics platforms and collaborative software enhance problem-solving capabilities by providing real-time insights and fostering teamwork. The study indicates that school heads who effectively leverage these technologies can streamline problem-solving processes, improve decision-making accuracy, and enhance overall school performance. The authors advocate for ongoing training in technology use to keep pace with evolving educational tools and resources (Nguyen & Roberts, 2023).

The 2022 study by Green and Patel highlights the importance of adaptive problem-solving skills. The authors argue that school heads must be able to adjust their problem-solving strategies in response to changing conditions and emerging challenges. Their research emphasizes the need for flexibility and resilience, as school leaders frequently encounter unexpected issues that require quick thinking and adaptability. The study suggests that fostering a culture of innovation and encouraging creative problem-solving approaches are vital for addressing dynamic educational environments effectively (Green & Patel, 2022).

Overall, recent literature emphasizes that problem-solving skills for school heads involve a combination of cognitive strategies, interpersonal effectiveness, technological proficiency, and adaptability. These skills are crucial for navigating the complexities of modern educational leadership and ensuring the successful resolution of diverse challenges. As educational contexts continue to evolve, school leaders must continually refine their problem-solving competencies to achieve positive outcomes for their schools.

Communication Skills

Communication connects individuals and groups by facilitating the flow of information and understanding. Information is the most important aspect of communication. It refers to information that is transmitted, studied, analyzed, interpreted, and stored. As a result, the school manager must set aside time to collect, analyze, and store data for decision-making and day-to-day operations. Communication serves two important functions within an organization. First, it disseminates the information required by employees to complete tasks and develop trusting and committed relationships. Second, it promotes relationship building and the achievement of goals.

To achieve collective goals in all organizations, school leaders must communicate effectively. Effective interaction between managers and employees is essential for organizational success. It was also believed that an effective school administrator should have excellent communication skills and practices in order to improve teacher communication satisfaction. Akinwale and Okotoni (2018) explained that communication systems in schools and other organizations can be likened to blood in human beings. No administrative functions in schools are able to accomplish without clear and effective communication. Principals at secondary schools use communications to plan, organize, control, coordinate, and conduct other administrative responsibilities. Okotoni, Akinwale, and Ayotunde (2019) emphasized that in a school system, communication takes place between and among principals, teaching and non-teaching staff, students, as well as other stakeholders.

Effective communication is essential for school heads to lead their institutions successfully. Recent literature highlights various facets of communication skills necessary for school leaders, including verbal and non-verbal communication, active listening, and strategic messaging. These skills play a pivotal role in fostering a positive school environment and achieving educational goals.

A 2023 study by Martinez and Johnson examines the impact of verbal communication skills on school leadership. Their research underscores that clear, articulate, and persuasive communication is crucial for school heads in delivering instructional guidance, setting goals, and motivating staff. The study highlights that leaders who excel in verbal communication can effectively convey expectations, provide constructive feedback, and articulate a vision for the school. The authors emphasize that ongoing professional development in communication can enhance these skills, leading to improved school performance and staff engagement (Martinez & Johnson, 2023).

In a related study, Chen and Lee (2024) explore the importance of non-verbal communication in school leadership. They argue that non-verbal cues, such as body language, facial expressions, and eye contact, significantly impact how messages are received and interpreted by staff and students. Their research finds that school heads who are aware of and effectively manage their non-verbal communication are better able to build trust, demonstrate empathy, and reinforce verbal messages. The authors advocate for training programs that help leaders develop awareness of their non-verbal communication to enhance overall effectiveness (Chen & Lee, 2024).

Active listening, a critical component of effective communication, is the focus of a 2022 study by Adams and Robinson. Their research reveals that school heads who practice active listening—characterized by fully engaging with and understanding the speaker's message—are more successful in handling complaints, addressing concerns, and building strong relationships with staff and students. The study highlights that active listening skills enable leaders to respond more appropriately to the needs of their school community and make informed decisions based on comprehensive input (Adams & Robinson, 2022).

A 2023 article by Brown and Green addresses the role of strategic messaging in communication. The authors argue that school heads must develop and deliver messages that align with the school's mission, values, and goals while addressing the needs and concerns of various stakeholders. Effective strategic messaging involves tailoring communication to different audiences, utilizing various channels, and ensuring consistency in the school's narrative. Their study emphasizes that strategic communication enhances stakeholder engagement and supports the successful implementation of school initiatives (Brown & Green, 2023).

The recent literature highlights that communication skills are fundamental to effective school leadership. School heads must master verbal and non-verbal communication, practice active listening, and employ strategic messaging to foster a positive and productive school environment. Continued professional development in these areas is essential for school leaders to navigate the complexities of modern educational settings and achieve their institutional goals (Birk, 2023).

Although various studies have looked into the significant impact that school leaders' communication methods have on their teachers' morale, happiness, and so on, there has been little research into how school leaders' communication styles increase teacher communication satisfaction. This research gap limits our understanding of how effective communication strategies and school administrators can increase teachers' communication satisfaction, resulting in a more pleasant and productive work environment. Ibrahim & Mahmund (2017) stressed that in schools, communication always happens and in many ways. However, administrators have certain communication styles or patterns when presenting their thoughts and perspectives, and these styles or patterns may have an enormous effect on teachers' communication satisfaction inside a school system.

Counseling Skills

Counseling skills are crucial for school heads as they play a significant role in supporting students, staff, and the broader school community. Recent literature underscores the importance of these skills in fostering a supportive and productive educational environment. This review explores the latest research on the counseling skills required by school heads, focusing on empathy, active listening, conflict resolution, and mental health support.

A 2023 study by Williams and Martin examines the role of empathy in school leadership. Their research highlights that empathy, the ability to understand and share the feelings of others, is a critical counseling skill for school heads. The study finds that empathetic school leaders are better equipped to build strong relationships with students and staff, address their concerns, and create a supportive school culture. Williams and Martin argue that empathy enhances leaders' effectiveness in handling sensitive issues and promoting a positive school climate (Williams & Martin, 2023).

In a similar vein, Johnson and Lee (2024) emphasize the importance of active listening as a key counseling skill. Their study shows that effective school heads use active listening techniques to fully understand the issues faced by students and staff. Active listening involves giving full attention to the speaker, acknowledging their concerns, and responding appropriately. According to the research, school leaders who practice active listening are more successful in handling complaints, providing meaningful support, and fostering a collaborative environment. The authors recommend training programs that focus on developing active listening skills to enhance school leadership effectiveness (Johnson & Lee, 2024).

Conflict resolution is another essential counseling skill for school heads, as highlighted by the 2022 study by Roberts and Green. Their research explores various strategies that school leaders use to manage and resolve complaints among students, staff, and parents. The study identifies techniques such as mediation, negotiation, and problem-solving as effective methods for addressing complaints. Roberts and Green argue that school heads who are skilled in conflict resolution can create a more harmonious school environment and improve relationships within the school community. They suggest that professional development in conflict resolution can significantly benefit school leaders (Roberts & Green, 2022).

Mental health support is increasingly recognized as a vital aspect of counseling skills for school heads. A 2023 article by Patel and Adams explores how school leaders can support the mental health and well-being of their students and staff. The study emphasizes that school heads need to be knowledgeable about mental health issues, provide appropriate resources, and create an environment where individuals feel safe to seek help. Patel and Adams highlight the importance of integrating mental health support into school policies and practices, and they advocate for training that equips school leaders with the skills to address mental health concerns effectively (Patel & Adams, 2023).

The literature underscores that counseling skills are essential for school heads to foster a supportive and effective educational environment. Empathy, active listening, conflict resolution, and mental health support are key components of effective counseling. As the demands on school leaders continue to evolve, ongoing professional development in these areas is crucial for enhancing their ability to support their school communities and achieve positive educational outcomes.

Counseling allows the client to explore aspects of their life and feelings by talking openly and freely. Talking like this is rarely possible with family or friends, who are likely to be emotionally invested and hold opinions and biases that may influence the discussion. Talking to a counselor allows clients to express difficult emotions such as anger, resentment, guilt, and fear in a private setting. The counselor may encourage the client to examine areas of their lives that they previously found difficult or impossible to confront. There may be some investigation into early childhood experiences to shed light on why a person reacts or responds in certain ways in specific situations. This is frequently followed by discussions about how the client could change such behaviors.

Good counseling should clear up the client's confusion, allowing them to make informed decisions that lead to positive changes in their attitude and/or behavior. The goal of counseling is to empower the client to make their own choices, decisions, and actions. Counselors must have extensive knowledge and skills to effectively assist clients.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The study was anchored on Transformational Leadership Theory, developed by Bernard Bass and James Burns in 1978, which focuses on how leaders can inspire and motivate their followers to exceed expectations and achieve higher levels of performance. In the context of school heads, this theory suggests that principals who exhibit transformational leadership behaviors can create a vision for the school, foster an environment of trust and collaboration and drive organizational change. It emphasizes different aspects of effective leadership and management, providing valuable insights into how school heads can enhance their managerial skills to improve school outcomes.

The theory identifies four main leadership styles: directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating. Each style corresponds to the level of readiness or competence of the followers. School heads articulate a compelling vision for the school's future, inspiring staff and students to work towards shared goals.

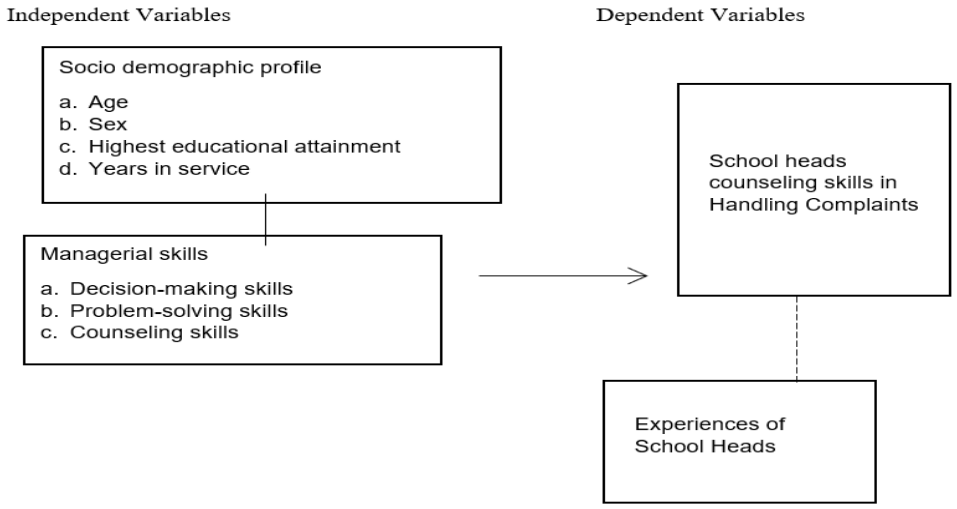
Another related theory was Gordon's Teacher Effectiveness Training (TET)

Developed by Thomas Gordon in the 1970s. Teacher Effectiveness Training is a theory designed to improve the effectiveness of teachers and school leaders through effective communication and counseling skills. Although originally focused on teachers, the principles can be applied to school heads and their role in counseling and managing school environments. It emphasizes the importance of truly understanding the speaker's perspective by listening attentively and providing appropriate feedback. This theory encourages expressing feelings and concerns in a non-confrontational way using "I" statements (e.g., "I feel concerned when..."), which helps in handling complaints and improving relationships. It also focuses on collaborative problem-solving techniques that involve all parties in finding mutually acceptable solutions to issues. It stresses the importance of showing empathy and respect towards others to build trust and create a positive, supportive environment.

Transformational Leadership Theory emphasizes inspiring and motivating followers to exceed expectations through vision, support, and individualized consideration. For mathematics-specialized school heads, this theory aligns closely with essential managerial skills such as strategic thinking, problem-solving, and instructional leadership. These leaders must foster a culture of collaboration and high academic standards, particularly in a subject as rigorous as mathematics. When it comes to handling complaints, transformational leadership encourages open communication, empathy, and proactive conflict resolution. School heads practicing this style are more likely to address issues constructively, improving school climate and stakeholder trust.

Gordon's Teacher Effectiveness Training (TET) emphasizes active listening, assertive communication, and conflict resolution—skills that are vital to effective school leadership. For mathematics-specialized school heads, TET supports the development of clear, respectful, and student-centered communication, essential for managing both staff and student interactions. These heads often face academic pressure and complex problem-solving demands; thus, TET's principles help them foster open dialogue and collaborative problem-solving within their teams. In handling complaints, TET equips school heads with strategies to de-escalate tensions and build trust. By addressing concerns empathetically and constructively, they create a positive, solutions-focused school culture.

Figure 1 the Conceptual Framework of the Study



METHODOLOGY

This portion shows the research design, location and duration of the study, respondents of the study and sampling procedure, research instrument, Data gathering procedure, and statistical treatment of data.

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, specifically combining descriptive-correlational and qualitative approaches. The design aimed to assess the relatedness of managerial skills to counseling skills of mathematics-specialized school heads in the Cotabato City Division during the school year 2024–2025.

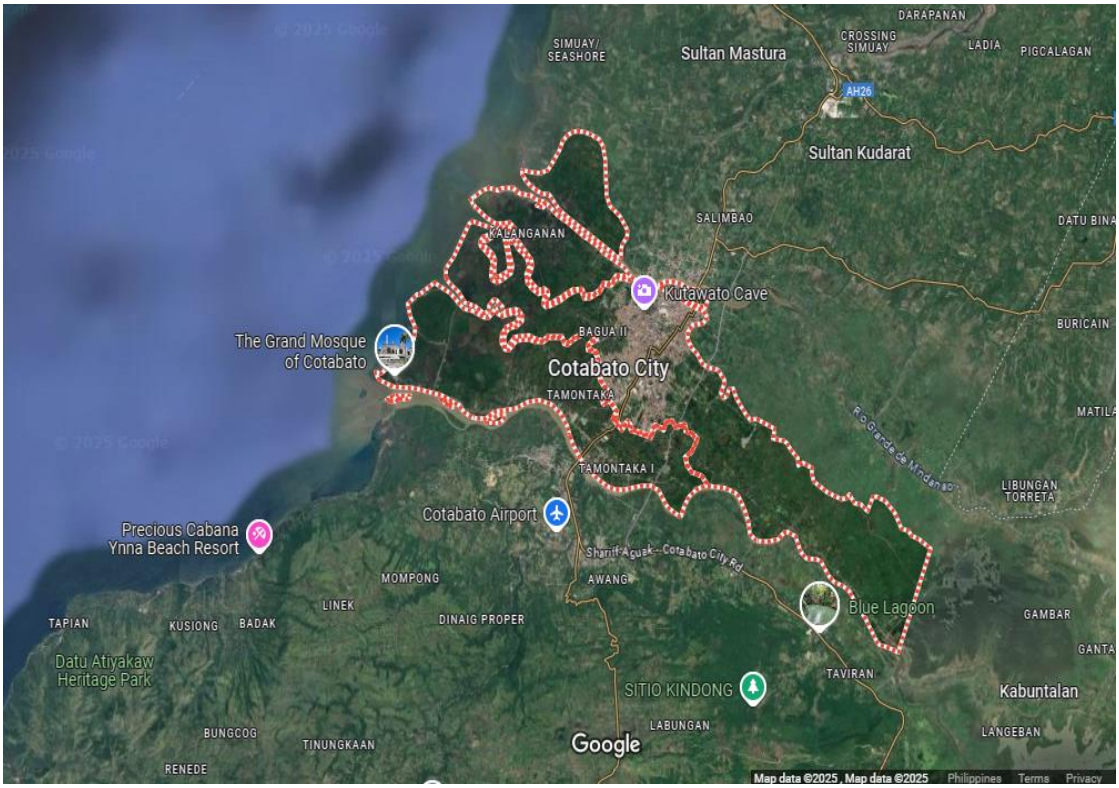
The quantitative component (Descriptive-Correlational Design) was used to describe the socio-demographic profile of the respondents and determine the level of their managerial and counseling skills. It also established the significant relationships between socio-demographic variables and managerial skills, managerial skills and counseling skills in handling complaints.

The qualitative approach was used to explore and understand the specific experiences of school heads in managing and addressing complaints. This helped gain deeper insights into the practical application of managerial and counseling competencies.

Location and Duration of the Study

The study was conducted during the school year 2024-2025 in the public secondary schools of Cotabato City Division, MBHTE, BARMM. The Ministry of Basic, Higher, and Technical Education (MBHTE) is the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao's (BARMM) education ministry, ensuring that quality, accessible, and inclusive education is available for all Bangsamoro and contributes to shared prosperity and peacebuilding in the region.

Figure 2 the Location of the Study



Note: Map generated from Google Maps

Respondents of the Study and Sampling Procedure

The study involved 48 Mathematics–specialized school heads or BSED major in Mathematics graduates who are now school heads of Cotabato City Division served as the respondents of this study from the 15 public secondary schools of the division. The respondents consisted of 3 from Cotabato City National High School - Main Campus; 12 from Cotabato City National High School – Rojas Site, 7 from ND Village National High School, 2 from J. Marquez National High School, 1 respondent from Datu Siang National High School, 4 from Datu Ayunan National High School, 6 from Canizares National High School, 2 from P.C Hill National High School, Bubong National High School with 1, Buaya-Buaya National High School with 1, Don E. Sero National High School with 2, Diocolano National High School with 1, Datu Sema Kalantungan National High School with 1, Pilot Provincial Science High School and Technology with 3, L.R Sebastian National High School with 2 respondents. The researcher used the purposive sampling technique, with the inclusion criteria: presently a school head in Cotabato City Division and graduate of BSEd Mathematics or an advanced Math degree. According to Patton (2002), purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique used to select participants based on specific characteristics or criteria relevant to the research study, ensuring that the sample aligns closely with the research objectives.

Research Instrument

The researcher of this study utilized a modified questionnaire obtained from the study of Songcayawon

(2022). The said instrument was supplemented with interviews to substantiate the findings. The questionnaire was composed of three parts, namely, Part I, focused on the profile of respondents that includes age, sex, bachelor's degree, years of experience, and highest educational attainment. Part II concentrated on school heads' managerial skills, which comprise decision-making skills, problem-solving skills, and communication skills and Part III yielded on the school heads' counseling skills in handling school-related problems. And Part IV was the interview to the school heads which utilized a structured interview questions.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher formally sought permission to conduct the study from her adviser and program coordinator of the MSciEd and sent a letter of request to the Schools Division Superintendent of Cotabato City Division, as well as to the school heads of fifteen (15) public secondary schools within the division. Upon receiving approval, the researcher reproduced the appropriate number of survey questionnaires corresponding to the total number of intended respondents.Before administering the survey, the researcher secured informed consent from the participants, ensuring their voluntary participation in the study. The questionnaires were then systematically distributed to the respondents.

In addition to the survey, the researcher conducted interviews with six (6) mathematics-specialized school heads. These interviews focused on their specific experiences in managing and addressing complaints within their respective schools.After the data collection phase, the researcher carefully recorded, organized, and analyzed the responses gathered from both the survey and the interviews to derive meaningful insights for the study.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The data was analyzed through statistical computations such as frequency and percentage to determine the respondents' profiles. Mean and Standard Deviation to determine the extent of managerial skills of mathematics-specialized school heads impact and counselling skills of mathematics-specialized school heads contribute to the effective handling of complaints at the school level. Adapted from the Likert Scale of measurement, the researcher will make use of the scaling system: 5 – Highly Skilled; 4 – Skilled; 3 – Moderately Skilled; 2 – Less Skilled; and 1 – Least Skilled. The adapted scale uses a five-point continuum, allowing respondents to self-assess or be assessed based on observable behaviors and performance indicators.

The following descriptions define each level:

Scale Point	Description	Interpretation
5	Highly Skilled	Demonstrates exceptional proficiency and consistency in applying the skill.
4	Skilled	Shows strong and effective application of the skill in most situations.
3	Moderately Skilled	Demonstrates average or adequate ability, but with room for improvement.
2	Less Skilled	Shows limited or inconsistent application of the skill.
1	Least Skilled	Rarely or ineffectively demonstrates the skill.

This scaling system was chosen to provide a quantifiable and interpretable measure of complex behavioral attributes such as managerial and counseling skills, allowing for comparative analysis across different variables, including demographic profiles. It also supports statistical treatment suitable for descriptive and correlational research designs.

Range of Mean	Description
4.51 – 5.00	Highly Skilled
3.51 – 4.50	Skilled
2.51 – 3.50	Moderately Skilled
1.51 – 2.50	Less Skilled
1.00 – 1.50	Least Skilled

Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to determine the relationship between the managerial skills of mathematics-specialized school heads and their status in handling complaints. Thematic analysis was employed in this study to analyze the qualitative data gathered through in-depth interviews with mathematics-specialized school heads. This method was chosen for several compelling reasons: thematic analysis is particularly effective in identifying, analyzing, and interpreting repeated patterns or themes within qualitative data. Given the study's aim to explore experiences and insights related to managing and addressing complaints, this method allows for a deeper understanding of the common challenges, strategies, and perceptions shared by school heads.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data generated from the results of the tabulated statistics based on the responses taken from the identified respondents of the study.

The Profile of the Respondents in terms of Age, Sex, Highest Educational Attainment, and Years in Service

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents (n = 48) in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, and years in service. This information provides context for understanding the background and experiences of the participants, which may have implications for interpreting the results of the study.

Table 1 The socio demographic profile of the respondents (n = 48)

Profile	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Age		
56 – 60	2	4.20
51 – 55	4	8.30
46 – 50	6	12.50
41 – 45	8	16.70
36 – 40	10	20.80
31 – 35	14	29.20
26 – 30	4	8.30

Sex		
Female	33	68.80
Male	15	31.20
Highest Educational Attainment		
Bachelor's Degree	10	20.80
Master's Degree	29	60.40
Doctorate Degree	9	18.80
Years in Service		
32 – 38 years	1	2.10
25 – 31 years	6	12.50
18 – 24 years	8	16.70
11 – 17 years	13	27.10
4 – 10 years	20	41.70

Table reveals that the majority of the respondents were within the 31–35 years age range, with a mean percentage of 29.2%, followed by those within the 36–40 age range at 20.8%. The school heads aged 26–30 and 51–55 each represent 8.3% of the total. These findings imply that 58.3% of mathematics-specialized school heads are 35 years old or younger, placing them in the middle career category.

In the context of Cotabato City, Ministry of Basic, Higher, and Technical Education, BARMM, this age group suggests that most school heads are well-positioned to adapt to change and are flexible in applying new technologies in the workplace. These findings support the study of Ng and Feldman (2010), which emphasizes that younger employees typically adapt more readily to change, are proficient in using digital tools, and are more open to continuous learning.

This aligns with the notion that mathematics-specialized school heads in this region are innovative, enthusiastic, and capable of implementing modern and technology-driven practices. Their presence in school organizations contributes to institutional initiatives and innovations and reflects a commitment to professional development through ongoing mentoring and coaching. The findings are also consistent with Owan et al. (2022), who assert that age significantly influences how school heads execute their duties and drive innovation. However, the low representation of the 56–60 age group (4.2%) suggests possibilities such as early retirement, career transition, or reduced involvement in leadership roles. This underrepresentation may affect mentorship continuity and knowledge transfer in schools. Additionally, the data suggest that age and experience shape how school heads utilize resources, highlighting the need to maintain institutional knowledge through appropriate succession planning.

Regarding gender, the data reveal that female respondents accounted for 68.8%, while male respondents made up 31.2%. This indicates that women have greater participation in work-related responsibilities, a trend commonly observed in public sector institutions. These findings support the research of Ali et al.

(2021), Kandade et al. (2021), and Schiuma et al. (2022), who noted that a leader's age correlates positively with administrative effectiveness and that experience enhances leadership performance. Moreover, the overrepresentation of females may reflect their progression into leadership roles during the later stages of their careers, consistent with literature emphasizing maturity and accumulated expertise as factors contributing to successful administration.

Further, the data show that the majority of respondents hold a master's degree (60.4%), followed by bachelor's degree holders (20.8%), and a smaller proportion with a doctorate degree (18.8%). These results imply that school heads with advanced qualifications tend to exhibit stronger managerial skills and are more capable of addressing complex educational challenges. The high percentage of master's degree holders suggests that these leaders have been exposed to contemporary and collaborative leadership models, which are typically emphasized in graduate-level programs. This supports the study of Shaked et al. (2018), which asserts that leadership styles among school heads are shaped by both educational attainment and collaborative experiences with teachers and colleagues.

Finally, in terms of years of service, the majority of respondents had 4–10 years of experience (41.7%), followed by those with 11–17 years (27.1%). A smaller group had 18–24 years (16.7%), 25–31 years (12.5%), and only 2.1% had served for 32–38 years. These findings suggest that the educational workforce in Cotabato City, particularly among mathematics-specialized school heads, is largely composed of individuals in their mid-career phase. This trend may be the result of educational reforms, promotional opportunities, or personal career decisions. The minimal representation of school heads with 32–38 years of service indicates that fewer educators remain in the system long-term, possibly due to retirement or career shifts. These findings support the conclusions of Arop (2018), who found that principals' years of experience significantly affect how they implement instructional practices in public high schools. The study highlighted that experienced school leaders are more capable of fostering teacher engagement, leading to greater investment in school programs. However, Yoon (2016) observed that more experienced administrators are generally less knowledge-motivated than their less experienced counterparts, indicating a potential need to reinvigorate professional learning among senior school heads.

The Level of Managerial Skills of Mathematics-specialized School Heads in terms of Decision-Making Skills

Table 2 presents the level of the managerial skills of mathematics-specialized school heads specifically in terms of their decision-making skills. The table includes ten indicators that describe how school heads apply decision-making skills in various administrative and instructional contexts. These include goal achievement, complaint handling, stakeholder engagement, and adherence to educational policies and ethical standards.

Each item is rated based on the respondents' self-assessment, with corresponding mean scores and standard deviations indicating the overall trend. The descriptive equivalent helps interpret the level of skill demonstrated by the respondents, providing insight into their competency in decision-making.

Table 2 The level of mathematics-specialized school heads' managerial skills on decision-making (n = 48)

Decision-Making Skills	Mean	SD	Description
1. I ensure that the process of making decisions involves choosing the best option among alternatives.	4.38	0.57	Skilled
2. I choose the best action or most preferred course of action among alternative courses of action with the purpose of handling complaints.	4.44	0.58	Skilled
3. I achieved set goals effectively and efficiently.	4.40	0.64	Skilled
4. I demonstrate deep and expert knowledge of decision-making in coordinating individuals or group members to handle the problem and	4.23	0.62	Skilled

produce the desired result.			
5. I involve participatory planning, participatory implementation, evaluation, and feedback among teachers, parents, and community partners.	4.37	0.64	Skilled
6. I evaluate options and informed choices for the best coordination of actions within the school premises.	4.48	0.61	Skilled
7. I depend largely on the ability to make effective decisions guided by educational laws, regulations, and ethical guidelines to ensure compliance and uphold standards.	4.42	0.64	Skilled
8. I involve a blend of strategic thinking, data analysis, and engagement of teachers, parents, and stakeholders.	4.29	0.58	Skilled
9. I demonstrate emotional intelligence to handle the interpersonal aspects of decision-making, such as managing complaints and fostering a positive school climate.	4.23	0.66	Skilled
10. I navigate the complexities of stakeholder relationships and make decisions that are both effective and sensitive to the needs of students, teachers, and parents.	4.23	0.66	Skilled
Grand Mean and SD	**4.35**	**0.62**	**Skilled**

Legend: 4.51 – 5.00 - Highly Skilled

3.51 – 4.50 - Skilled

2.51 – 3.50 - Moderately Skilled

1.51 – 2.50 - Less Skilled

1.00 – 1.50 - Least Skilled

The result reveals that the mathematics-specialized school heads demonstrate a high level of competence in decision-making, with the highest mean rating of 4.48 with the standard deviation of 0.61 by "evaluating options and informed choices for the best coordination of actions within the school premises", followed by "choosing the best action or most preferred course of action among alternative courses of action with the purpose of handling complaints" with a 4.44 mean score with the standard deviation of 0.58, "depending largely on the ability to make effective decisions guided by educational laws, regulations, and ethical guidelines to ensure compliance and uphold standards" with a mean rating of 4.42 with the standard deviation of 0.64, and "achieving set goals effectively and efficiently" with a 4.40 mean score and 0.64 standard deviation.

The findings imply that the school heads have been adopting the system of evaluating the applied or listed options and informed choices, which resulted in the solutions made for the benefit of the school and learners as well. These results support the study by Patel et al. (2023), who explore the impact of decision-making frameworks and tools on school management. The research indicates that structured decision-making frameworks, such as the SWOT analysis and decision matrices, help school heads systematically evaluate options and make informed choices. These tools support leaders in organizing their thoughts, analyzing potential outcomes, and selecting the most viable solutions for their schools.

Similarly, mathematics-specialized school heads demonstrate a high level of competence in decision-making, with a mean rating of 4.38 with the standard deviation of 0.57 given to their ability to choose the

best option among alternatives. This is consistent with Duze (2021), who defines decision-making as the process of selecting the most effective course of action among alternatives to solve problems and achieve objectives. The data also highlight the school heads' emphasis on participatory decision-making, as shown by the closely rated score of 4.37 with the standard deviation of 0.64, which includes planning, implementation, evaluation, and feedback involving various stakeholders such as teachers, parents, and community partners.

The result suggests that collaborative leadership is a core aspect of their managerial practice, enhancing transparency, ownership, and inclusivity in school operations. The mean score of 4.29 and with the standard deviation of 0.58 for integrating strategic thinking, data analysis, and stakeholder engagement reflects a modern, evidence-based approach to decision-making. These demonstrate that school heads are not only efficient in making decisions but also in incorporating broader perspectives, which makes them more likely to engage in a structured and inclusive decision-making process.

Furthermore, mathematics-specialized school heads' managerial skills were rated as skilled in three of the indicators and were the lowest rated, with the same mean rating of 4.23 with the standard deviation of 0.66, and these were in "demonstrating deep and expert knowledge of decision-making in coordinating individuals or group members to handle the problem and produce the desired result", "demonstrating emotional intelligence to handle the interpersonal aspects of decision-making, such as managing complaints and fostering a positive school climate", and "navigating the complexities of stakeholder relationships and make decisions that are both effective and sensitive to the needs of students, teachers, and parents".

Although these three indicators' ratings were still high, their lowest results indicate areas for improvement, which calls for the inclusion of emotional intelligence, particularly reflecting an awareness of the soft skills necessary for effective school leadership. The results support the findings of Smith and Lewis (2022), who emphasize that emotional intelligence is critical for school leaders in managing stakeholder relationships and ensuring that decisions are not only strategically sound but also empathetic and context-sensitive. In the context of school leadership, such emotional awareness is essential for fostering trust, collaboration, and a healthy school environment.

Thus, the extent of mathematics specialized school heads' managerial skills was rated as skilled, with an overall mean score of 4.35 with the standard deviation of 0.62. This implies that most of the mathematics-specialized school heads in Cotabato City are generally competent and effective in performing key managerial tasks. This level of proficiency suggests that these school heads possess a solid foundation in areas such as decision-making, leadership, coordination, and stakeholder engagement. This aligns with the study of Johnson and Brown (2024), which highlights the role of collaborative decision-making in enhancing school effectiveness. Their study shows that involving teachers and other stakeholders in the decision-making process leads to more inclusive and well-rounded decisions.

The Level of Managerial Skills of Mathematics-specialized School Heads in terms of Problem-Solving Skills

Table 3 illustrates the extent of impact of the managerial skills of mathematics-specialized school heads in terms of their problem-solving skills. The table presents ten indicators reflecting how school heads identify, analyze, and resolve issues involving students, teachers, and stakeholders. It also highlights the use of logical reasoning, cognitive strategies, and adaptive approaches in addressing both routine and complex problems.

Each item includes the mean and standard deviation scores based on the responses of 48 school heads, with

corresponding descriptions indicating their level of proficiency. The results provide insight into how skilled the respondents are in applying systematic and collaborative problem-solving techniques in their administrative roles.

Table 3 The level of mathematics-specialized school heads' managerial skills on problem solving (n = 48)

Problem-Solving Skills	Mean	SD	Description
1. I recognize the specific complaint to be solved, design and execute a solution, and observe and assess progress throughout the process.	4.48	0.58	Skilled
2. I used logical reasoning to process certain information in a way that can be used to solve the problem effectively and efficiently.	4.25	0.60	Skilled
3. I address diverse challenges within the school premise, which include student-teacher, student-students, and parent-parent complaints.	4.42	0.61	Skilled
4. I underscore various dimensions of problem-solving competencies necessary for effective school leadership, including cognitive strategies, interpersonal skills, and adaptive approaches.	4.31	0.58	Skilled
5. I examine the cognitive strategies employed by school heads in problem-solving.	4.27	0.61	Skilled
6. I utilize systematic approaches such as root-cause analysis and scenario planning to tackle issues ranging from simple to complex complaints.	4.23	0.62	Skilled
7. I follow systematic problem-solving techniques to achieve better outcomes in handling both routine and complex problems.	4.40	0.53	Skilled
8. I adjust the problem-solving strategies in response to changing conditions and emerging challenges.	4.42	0.57	Skilled
9. I explain to the school committee that effective problem-solving is not solely a cognitive process but also involves significant interpersonal dynamics.	4.25	0.60	Skilled
10. I facilitate a collaborative problem-solving environment where diverse perspectives are considered, and solutions are more comprehensively developed.	4.31	0.62	Skilled
Grand Mean and SD	**4.32**	**0.59**	**Skilled**

Legend: 4.51 – 5.00 - Highly Skilled

3.51 – 4.50 - Skilled

2.51 – 3.50 - Moderately Skilled

1.51 – 2.50 - Less Skilled

1.00 – 1.50 - Least Skilled

The result reveals that the mathematics-specialized school heads demonstrated a high level of competence in problem-solving skills, with the highest rating of 4.48 with the standard deviation of 0.58 in "recognizing the specific complaint to be solved, designing and executing a solution, and observing and assessing progress throughout the process". This was followed by two indicators with the same mean score of 4.42

with the standard deviation of 0.61 "addressing diverse challenges within the school premises, which include student-teacher, student-student, and parent-parent complaints", and "adjusting the problem-solving strategies in response to changing conditions and emerging challenges, and following systematic problem-solving techniques to achieve better outcomes in handling both routine and complex problems", with a mean rating of 4.40 with the standard deviation of 0.53.

The findings imply that the school heads demonstrate a consistently high level of competence, evident in their ability to recognize specific complaints, design and implement effective solutions, and monitor progress throughout the resolution process. In the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), where educational institutions face unique socio-political and cultural challenges, such problem-solving competence is essential. This only proves that mathematics-specialized school leaders can manage conflicts and foster a harmonious school environment. Having these skills in adaptability is very important in the context of BARMM situations, where conditions vary because of external factors and political and community issues.

The findings support the study of Johnson and Lee (2024), who emphasize the role of active listening in effective leadership. In the Bangsamoro context, where cultural sensitivity and community engagement are key to educational success, active listening allows school heads to navigate diverse perspectives, mediate conflicts, and cultivate a collaborative atmosphere. On the other hand, mathematics-specialized school heads were also skilled in "underscoring various dimensions of problem-solving competencies necessary for effective school leadership, including cognitive strategies, interpersonal skills, and adaptive approaches", and in "facilitating a collaborative problem-solving environment where diverse perspectives are considered and solutions are more comprehensively developed", with the same mean rating of 4.31 with the standard deviation of 0.58, followed by "examining the cognitive strategies employed by school heads in problem-solving" with a 4.27 mean score with the standard deviation of 0.61.

The other two of the indicators with the same mean ratings of 4.25 with the standard deviation of 0.60: "using logical reasoning to process certain information in a way that can be used to solve the problem effectively and efficiently", and "explaining to the school committee that effective problem-solving is not solely a cognitive process but also involves significant interpersonal dynamics". The lowest rated indicator was on utilizing systematic approaches such as root-cause analysis and scenario planning to tackle issues ranging from simple to complex complaints, with a mean score of 4.23 with the standard deviation of 0.62. The findings reveal that the school heads who specialized in mathematics demonstrate the capacity to facilitate collaborative problem-solving environments, reflecting their ability to value diverse perspectives and involve stakeholders in decision-making. This is particularly critical in Bangsamoro schools, where inclusivity and cultural sensitivity can significantly influence school governance and community trust. Engaging teachers, parents, and students in open dialogue promotes not only better solutions but also a stronger sense of shared responsibility, which is the key to strengthening institutional resilience in post-conflict settings.

The school heads' use of cognitive strategies in solving problems supports the study of Thompson and Parker's (2023) findings, which emphasize the importance of reflective practices and structured techniques such as root-cause analysis and scenario planning. However, in this study, such systematic methods received the lowest rating of 4.23 mean score with the standard deviation of 0.62, suggesting a potential area for capacity-building among school leaders in the region. In the Bangsamoro context, equipping school heads with systematic, evidence-based strategies can strengthen institutional accountability and effectiveness, particularly in addressing complex, recurring challenges such as curriculum gaps, student retention, and resource limitations. Moreover, fostering a mindset of continuous learning and adaptability, as emphasized in the 2023 study by Thompson and Parker, is crucial in a region where educational leadership must remain responsive to evolving community needs and policy reforms.

Therefore, the extent of mathematics-specialized school heads' managerial skills in terms of problem-solving was skilled, with an overall mean of 4.32 with the standard deviation of 0.59. This implies that their level of competence is not only demonstrated by technical proficiency but also by practical applications,

where they respond immediately to a variety of challenges. This supports the study of Green and Patel (2022), who emphasize the importance of fostering a culture of innovation and encouraging creative problem-solving within educational institutions.

The Level of Managerial Skills of Mathematics-specialized School Heads in terms of Communication Skills

Table 4 presents the level of the managerial skills of mathematics-specialized school heads in terms of their communication skills. Mean and standard deviation scores are provided for each item, alongside descriptive interpretations based on the established scale.

Table 4 The level of mathematics-specialized school heads' managerial skills on Communication skills (n = 48)

Communication Skills	**Mean**	**SD**	**Description**
1. I bridge the gap, when necessary, between individuals and groups through the flow of information/complaints.	4.44	0.50	Skilled
2. I disseminate the information needed by all members of the committee to understand and get things done.	4.65	0.56	Highly Skilled
3. I ensure to build relationships of trust and commitment to handle complaints accurately.	4.50	0.54	Skilled
4. I help on building relationships and facilitating the achievement of goals efficiently.	4.27	0.61	Skilled
5. I demonstrate excellent communication styles and practices that fuel communication satisfaction among students, teachers, parents, and community partners.	4.27	0.64	Skilled
6. I emphasize that clear, articulate, and persuasive communication between and among members of the school committee is crucial in handling complaints and delivering guidance.	4.25	0.60	Skilled
7. I demonstrate verbal communication to effectively convey expectations and provide constructive feedback within the group.	4.52	0.50	Highly Skilled
8. I show mindfulness in using non-verbal cues, such as body language, facial expressions, and eye contact, which significantly impact how messages are received and interpreted by staff and students during the call of handling complaints.	4.29	0.54	Skilled
9. I practice active listening to fully engage with the members of the school committee and understand each other's point of view, which makes them more successful in handling complaints.	4.29	0.68	Skilled
10. I demonstrate active listening to respond more appropriately to the needs of their school community and make informed decisions based on comprehensive input.	4.33	0.69	Skilled
Grand Mean and SD	**4.381**	**0.58**	**Skilled**

Legend: 4.51 – 5.00 (Highly Skilled); 3.51 – 4.50 (Skilled); 2.51 – 3.50 (Moderately Skilled);

1.51 – 2.50 (Less Skilled); 1.00 – 1.50 (Least Skilled)

Table 4 presents the level of the managerial skills of mathematics-specialized school heads in terms of communication skills. It reveals that the mathematics-specialized school heads were highly skilled in "communication skills in disseminating the information needed by all members of the committee to understand and get things done", with a mean rating of 4.65 with the standard deviation of 0.56, followed by "demonstrating verbal communication to effectively convey expectations and provide constructive feedback within the group" with a 4.52 mean score with the standard deviation of 0.50, "ensuring to build relationships of trust and commitment to handle complaints accurately" with a mean score of 4.50 with the standard deviation of 0.54, "bridging the gap, when necessary, between individuals and groups through the flow of information/complaints" with a mean score of 4.44 with the standard deviation of 0.50, and "demonstrating active listening to respond more appropriately to the needs of their school community and make informed decisions based on comprehensive input" with a 4.33 mean score with the standard deviation of 0.69.

The findings support the study conducted by Martinez & Johnson (2023), who emphasize that leaders who excel in verbal communication can effectively convey expectations, provide constructive feedback, and articulate a vision for the school. The authors emphasize that on-going professional development in communication can enhance these skills, leading to improved school performance and staff engagement.

Similarly, school heads in Cotabato City demonstrate a skilled level of competence in communication, particularly in handling complaints and fostering school relationships, with a mean score of 4.29 with the standard deviation of 0.68. This emphasizes their skills in being mindful of nonverbal and active listening, such as body language, facial expressions, and eye contact, which significantly impact how messages are received and interpreted by staff and students during the handling of complaints and being fully engaged with the members of the school committee and understand each other's point of view, which makes them more successful in handling complaints.

The other indicators, with scores ranging from 4.25 to 4.27 mean scores, reflect the school heads' ability to build relationships and facilitate the achievement of goals efficiently, demonstrating excellent communication styles and practices that fuel communication satisfaction among students, teachers, parents, and community partners; and emphasize that clear, articulate, and persuasive communication between and among members of the school committee is crucial in handling complaints and delivering guidance. These competencies indicate that Cotabato City school leaders are not only managing interpersonal interactions effectively but also contributing to the overall efficiency of school governance and community engagement.

These findings support the study of Adams and Robinson (2022), which states that school heads who practice active listening, characterized by fully engaging with and understanding the speaker's message, are more successful in handling complaints.

Thus, the extent of mathematics-specialized school heads' managerial skills in terms of communication skills was skilled, with an overall mean of 4.38 with the standard deviation of 0.58. This implies that school heads in Cotabato City are already demonstrating strong communication skills. Further enhancing these abilities, especially through context-sensitive training in intercultural communication and emotional intelligence, would amplify their effectiveness. Doing so would not only improve internal school dynamics but also strengthen the trust and cooperation between schools and their surrounding communities. According to Okotoni, Akinwale, and Ayotunde (2019), in a school system, communication takes place between and among principals, teaching and non-teaching staff, students, as well as other stakeholders.

The Level of Mathematics-Specialized School Heads' Managerial Skills

Table 5 summarizes the overall level of the managerial skills of mathematics-specialized school heads. The table consolidates the results of three core dimensions: decision-making, problem-solving, and communication skills.

Table 5 The aggregate table of the level of mathematics-specialized school heads' managerial skills (n = 48)

Managerial Skills	**Mean**	**SD**	**Description**
Decision Making Skills	4.35	0.62	Skilled
Problem Solving Skills	4.32	0.59	Skilled
Communication Skills	4.38	0.58	Skilled
Grand Mean and SD	**4.35**	**0.59**	**Skilled**

Legend: 4.51 – 5.00 - Highly Skilled

3.51 – 4.50 - Skilled

2.51 – 3.50 - Moderately Skilled

1.51 – 2.50 - Less Skilled

1.00 – 1.50 - Least Skilled

This aggregate data reveals that mathematics-specialized school heads in Cotabato City possess a skilled level of managerial competence, as reflected in the overall grand mean of 4.35 with the standard deviation of 0.62 across three critical domains: communication skills (4.38) with the standard deviation of 0.58, decision-making skills (4.35) with the standard deviation of 0.62, and problem-solving skills (4.32) with the standard deviation of 0.59. These consistently high ratings suggest that the school heads in Cotabato City who specialize in Mathematics are well-equipped to lead and manage their schools effectively and efficiently within the complexities of the local educational landscape in BARMM. Among the three domains, communication skills emerged as the strongest area, with the highest mean of 4.38 with the standard deviation of 0.58. This aligns with earlier data showing the importance of active listening, clear articulation, and persuasive communication in school leadership. In Cotabato City—an area marked by ethnic and cultural diversity, historical political transitions, and ongoing integration into the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region—effective communication is not just a leadership asset but a necessity for fostering trust, inclusion, and conflict-sensitive engagement within school communities.

Similarly, decision-making skills follow closely with a mean of 4.35 with the standard deviation of 0.62, reflecting the school heads' ability to assess situations critically, consider stakeholder input, and make informed choices. This competency is particularly vital in Cotabato City's shifting administrative landscape, where school leaders must often make timely and strategic decisions amidst limited resources and evolving educational policies. On the other hand, problem-solving skills, with a mean of 4.32 with the standard deviation of 0.59, also indicate strong but slightly more variable performance. This may suggest that while school heads are competent in addressing day-to-day challenges, there is room to enhance their use of structured analytical tools and innovative approaches to more complex or systemic issues, particularly those related to curriculum gaps, student retention, and community conflict resolution.

Thus, the overall mean of the aggregate results of the mathematics-specialized school heads' managerial skills revealed school heads' high level of managerial skills, where their planning and organizational skills were demonstrated effectively in the context of Cotabato City. The findings are well-supported by Giami and Obiechina (2019), who emphasize that managerial skills are foundational to educational leadership, enabling school heads to plan, organize, and direct school operations effectively. In the context of Cotabato City, these skills take on even greater significance, as school leaders must navigate not only internal administrative demands but also broader socio-political influences that shape school functioning and community relationships.

The Level of Counseling Skills of Mathematics-Specialized School Heads

Table 6 presents the level of counseling skills demonstrated by mathematics-specialized school heads and how these contribute to effectively handling complaints within the school setting.

Table 6 The counseling skills of mathematics-specialized school heads contribute to the status of handling complaints at the school (n = 48)

School Heads' Counseling Skills	Mean	SD	Description
1. I demonstrate empathy and the ability to understand and share the feelings of others with students and staff.	4.48	0.50	Skilled
2. I build strong relationships with students and staff while addressing their complaints.	4.44	0.68	Skilled
3. I establish a trust and confidence to create a supportive school culture.	4.44	0.58	Skilled
4. I emphasize the importance of active listening as a key counseling skill.	4.48	0.61	Skilled
5. I use active listening techniques to fully understand the issues or complaints faced by students, teachers, staff, parents, and community partners.	4.48	0.58	Skilled
6. I encourage all members of the school committee to practice active listening to be more successful in handling complaints, providing meaningful support, and fostering a collaborative environment.	4.33	0.66	Skilled
7. I explore various strategies to be used to manage and resolve complaints among students, staff, and parents.	4.21	0.65	Skilled
8. I create more harmonious school environment and improves relationships within the school community.	4.17	0.63	Skilled
9. I explore how to support the mental health and well-being of the students and teachers.	4.54	0.50	Highly Skilled
10. I monitor progress after initial counseling sessions, checking in with individuals to ensure ongoing support and adjustment of strategies	4.42	0.67	Skilled
Grand Mean and SD	**4.40**	**0.60**	**Skilled**

Legend:
4.51 – 5.00 - Highly Skilled
3.51 – 4.50 - Skilled
2.51 – 3.50 - Moderately Skilled
1.51 – 2.50 - Less Skilled
1.00 – 1.50 - Least Skilled

Mathematics-specialized school heads in Cotabato City demonstrate a highly skilled level of counseling competence in "exploring how to support the mental health and well-being of the students and teachers", with the highest mean rating of 4.54 with the standard deviation of 0.50, showing the exceptional commitment to the emotional care of the school learning environment. This was followed by "emphasizing the ability to understand and share the feelings of others with students and staff", "emphasizing the importance of active listening as a key counseling skill", and "using the active listening techniques to fully understand the issues or complaints faced by students, teachers, staff, parents, and community partners" with the same mean rating of 4.48 with the standard deviation of 0.61. These results define the diverse and transitional area within BARMM where school heads' counseling skills matter to serve and provide services in a very compassionate way to advocate for learners' well-being.

These findings support the study of Williams and Martin (2023), who emphasize that empathetic school leaders are better equipped to build trust, address sensitive concerns, and cultivate emotionally supportive environments. The strong scores in these areas affirm that Cotabato City school heads are effectively applying these qualities, making them more responsive to both individual and collective needs within their schools.

Moreover, school heads' counseling skills were also rated as skilled in "building strong relationships with students and staff while addressing their complaints and establishing trust and confidence to create a supportive school culture", with the same mean score of 4.44 with the standard deviation of 0.58.

The following indicators show that school heads are not only reactive but also proactive and consistent in providing ongoing support in "monitoring progress after initial counseling sessions, checking in with individuals to ensure ongoing support and adjusting strategies", with a mean rating of 4.42 with the standard deviation of 0.67, "encouraging all members of the school committee to practice active listening to be more successful in handling complaints, providing meaningful support, and fostering a collaborative environment" with a 4.33 mean score with the standard deviation of 0.66, "exploring various strategies to be used to manage and resolve complaints among students, staff, and parents" with a mean score of 4.21 with the standard deviation of 0.65, and "creating more harmonious school environment and improves relationships within the school community" with the lowest mean rating of 4.17 with the standard deviation of 0.63.

The results suggest that Cotabato City school heads are emotionally intelligent leaders who integrate empathy and counseling strategies into their daily practice, especially in managing the school.

Therefore, the extent of counseling skills of mathematics-specialized school heads that contribute to the status of handling complaints in school showed a high level of competencies with an overall mean of 4.39 with the standard deviation of 0.60. Their utmost concern for the mental health and well-being of the learners was demonstrated effectively to ensure that all teachers and learners were given enough opportunities to be actively involved in all the school activities without sacrificing their health and psychological safety.

These capabilities are not merely complementary to their managerial duties but are critical tools for fostering a resilient, inclusive, and emotionally healthy school culture in a complex and evolving regional context. According to Patel and Adams (2023), the importance of integrating mental health support into school policies and practices is emphasized, and they advocate for training that equips school leaders with the skills to address mental health concerns effectively.

The Correlation Analysis Showing the Relationship between the Profile and Managerial Skills of Mathematics-Specialized School Heads

Table 7 shows the correlation analysis conducted to determine the relationship between the profile and their managerial skills of mathematics-specialized school heads.

Table 7 The relationship between profile and managerial skills of mathematics-specialized school heads

Variable	Values	Decision-Making Skills	Problem-Solving Skills	Communication Skills
Age	r – value	0.31*	0.28*	0.25*
	p – value	0.002	0.006	0.012
Sex	r – value	0.12	0.10	0.15
	p – value	0.230	0.298	0.138
Highest Educational Attainment	r – value	0.20	0.32*	0.30*
	p – value	0.052	0.003	0.005
Years in Service	r – value	0.38*	0.21*	0.33*
	p – value	0.00	0.049	0.003

* significant at 0.05 level

Based on the data presented in Table 5, there is a statistically significant relationship between the profile of mathematics-specialized school heads and their managerial skills in decision-making, problem-solving, and communication. Specifically, age shows a significant positive correlation with all three managerial skills: decision-making ($r = 0.31$, $p = 0.002$), problem-solving ($r = 0.28$, $p = 0.006$), and communication ($r = 0.25$, $p = 0.012$).

This implies that as school heads age, their managerial skills in these areas tend to improve. Sex, on the other hand, does not show a significant relationship with any of the managerial skills, as all p-values are above the 0.05 threshold.

This indicates that managerial skill levels do not differ significantly between male and female school heads. Highest educational attainment is significantly related to problem-solving skills ($r = 0.32$, $p = 0.003$) and communication skills ($r = 0.30$, $p = 0.005$), suggesting that those with higher educational qualifications are more effective in these areas. However, the relationship between educational attainment and decision-making skills ($r = 0.20$, $p = 0.052$) is not statistically significant, although it is close to the cut-off point.

Years in service has the strongest and most consistent relationship with managerial skills. It is significantly correlated with decision-making ($r = 0.38$, $p = 0.000$), problem-solving ($r = 0.21$, $p = 0.049$), and communication ($r = 0.33$, $p = 0.003$), indicating that experience in the service contributes positively to the development of managerial competencies. Overall, the findings suggest that certain aspects of school heads' profiles -particularly age, educational attainment, and years in service - are significantly associated with their effectiveness in managerial skills, while sex is not a determining factor.

The Correlation Analysis Showing the Relationship between the Managerial Skills of Mathematics-Specialized School Heads and their counselling skills

Table 8 displays the result of the correlation analysis conducted to determine the relationship between the managerial skills of mathematics-specialized school heads and their counseling skills.

Table 8 The relationship between managerial skills of mathematics-specialized school heads and their counseling skills.

Variables	r - value	p - value	Interpretation
Managerial Skills & Counseling skills	0.74	0.00	Strong correlation/ Significant

$p < .05$, significant at $\alpha = .05$ level

The result shows that there is a strong positive correlation between the managerial skills of mathematics-specialized school heads and their handling of complaints ($r = 0.74$, $p = 0.00$). Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the relationship is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This indicates that school heads with higher managerial skills tend to handle complaints more effectively.

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between Managerial Skills of Mathematics-Specialized School Heads and their Handling of Complaints in Cotabato City. The results led to the rejection of the null hypothesis, which stated that "H_0: There is no significant relationship between mathematics–specialized school heads managerial skills and counseling skills in handling school complaints".

The findings support the study of Giami and Obiechina (2019), who emphasize that managerial skills are critical determinants of a school leader's effectiveness, particularly in conflict resolution. These skills, encompassing the ability to plan, organize, and direct school operations, are directly linked to a leader's capacity to manage complaints and disputes.

The study highlights a significant relationship between strong managerial competencies and the ability to maintain a harmonious school environment. School heads who possess well-developed managerial skills are more capable of addressing conflicts constructively and ensuring smooth school operations. Conversely, a lack of these skills can impair their ability to handle complaints effectively, ultimately undermining school leadership and performance.

The Specific Experiences of Mathematics-Specialized School Heads in Managing and Addressing Complaints within their School Indicators

The specific experiences of Mathematics-specialized school heads in managing and addressing complaints within their school are presented in the following table. The table included the line number, significant responses, formulated meaning, clustered themes and emergent themes with corresponding codes.

Table 9 Experiences of Mathematics-Specialized School Heads in Managing and Addressing Complaints within their School

Line Number	Significant Statements	Formulated Meaning	Clustered Themes	Emergent Theme	Code
12-14	When handling complaints, I apply a structured process to involved relevant parties. This includes establishing clear communication on channels and assessing that needs to be involved based on the complaints nature.	The respondent used the structured process to make sure that the problem or complaints are resolve based on the appropriate way and also make sure to be fair to both parties.			001

15-16	I follow a structured process by gathering statements from all involved parties, consulting relevant school personnel, and ensuring confidentiality.	The respondent handled the complaints systematically by gathering the statements of both parties.			001
19-20	We follow the structured school procedures in addressing every complaint with respect to its level.	The respondent believes in structured school procedures when it comes to resolve the complaints.	Systematic and structured procedure in complaint resolution		001
30-31	My approach involves listening problem-solving and refreshing to school policies. I also use complaints as educational opportunities and analyse them to prevent future issues.	The respondent is actively listening to the complaints of the complainants.			002
32-33	I utilize consultative approach. I listen to both sides and try to weigh things. I ensure that I arrive at a decision.	The respondent is actively listening to all sides, carefully weighing the information, and ensuring that she arrives at fair decisions.	Active and impartial listening in decision-making		002
34-35	I always listen first to different parties as needed and apply the school policies respectively.	The respondent listening to all appropriate information of each party and make sure that all process was not against the school's policies.		Structured Equitability in Practice	002
46-47	I handled about 20 to 30 formal complaints annually along with many informal concerns.	The respondent manages to handle numerous formal and informal concerns.			003
52	I cannot count either, perhaps more than 30 or 40 annually.	Respondent cannot count how many complaints that she handled but estimated			003

		30 or 40 annually.			
53	There are so many complaints that I have handled.	The respondent handled a significant number of complaints over time.	Extensive experience handling numerous complaints		003
60	Over 10 years as Department Head.	The respondent has been in their position for a long time.			004
65-66	More than a decade, starting from being an adviser, coordinator, and up to being a school head.	The respondent progressed through different leadership functions in education start from being an adviser, advancing to a coordinator, and ultimately serving as a school head	Expertise in handling school-Related Issues	Experienced Practitioner in Educational Conflict Mediation and Resolution	004
67-68	I have been engaged for 18 years in handling school-related complaints.	Respondent is actively involved in addressing and managing school-related complaints for the past 18 years.			004

Table 9 shows the specific experiences of Mathematics-specialized school heads in managing and addressing complaints within their school with a theme that emerged; Structured Equitability in Practice. This theme is taken from clustered theme, systematic and structured procedure in complaint resolution.

As observed, Mathematics-specialized school heads are fair, systematic and follow the procedure as revealed in the statements below.

"When handling complaints, I apply a structured process to involve relevant parties. This includes establishing clear communication on channels and assessing that needs to be involved based on the complaints nature."[**line 12 – 14**]

The statement revealed that the Mathematics-specialized school heads are fair to both parties and make sure that they are following the procedure when handling complains. It is also supported by another statement that the Mathematics-specialized school head is handled the complaints systematically by gathering the statements of both parties.

"I follow a structured process by gathering statements from all involved parties, consulting relevant school personnel, and ensuring confidentiality." [**line 15 – 16**]

Another experienced of the Mathematics-specialized school heads in handling complaints is believes in structured school procedures when it comes to resolve the complaints as revealed by the statement below.

"We follow the structured school procedures in addressing every complaint with respect to its level." [**line 19 – 20**]

Another specific experienced of Mathematics-specialized school heads in managing and addressing complaints within their school with a theme that emerged; Structured Equitability in Practice. This theme is taken from the clustered theme, active and impartial listening in decision-making.

Mathematics-specialized school heads shared that they are actively listening to the complaints of the complainants as revealed in the statements below.

"My approach involves listening problem-solving and refreshing to school policies. I also use complaints as educational opportunities and analyse them to prevent future issues." [**line 30 – 31**]

Another experienced of the Mathematics-specialized school heads in handling complaints is actively listening to all sides, carefully weighing the information, and ensuring that she arrives at fair decisions as revealed in the statements below.

"I utilize consultative approach. I listen to both sides and try to weigh things. I ensure that I arrive at a decision." [**line 32 – 33**]

It is also supported by the statements of the respondents that they are actively responded the complaints. The respondent is actively listening to all appropriate information of each party and make sure that all process was not against the school's policies as revealed in the statements below.

"I always listen first to different parties as needed and apply the school policies respectively." [**line 34 – 35**]

Another specific experienced of Mathematics-specialized school heads in managing and addressing complaints within their school with a theme that emerged; Experienced Practitioner in Educational Conflict Mediation and Resolution. This theme is taken from the clustered theme: Extensive experience handling numerous complaints.

The mathematics-specialized school heads shared also their experience in number of complaints they handled in school as shows in the statements below.

"I handled about 20 to 30 formal complaints annually along with many informal concerns." [**line 46 – 47**]

It is revealed that the respondents manage to handle numerous formal and informal concerns. It is supported by another statement that the mathematics-specialized school heads cannot count the complaints they handled but it is estimated to 30 or 40 annually as revealed in the statements below.

"I cannot count either, perhaps more than 30 or 40 annually." [**line 52**]

Another statement by the respondent is that they handled a significant number of complaints over time as revealed in the statement below.

"There are so many complaints that I have handled." [**line 53**]

Another specific experienced of Mathematics-specialized school heads in managing and addressing complaints within their school with a theme that emerged; Experienced Practitioner in Educational Conflict Mediation and Resolution. This theme is taken from the clustered theme, Expertise in Handling School-Related Issues.

The mathematic-specialized school heads shared their experience on how many years that they engaged in handling school-related complaints as shows in the statement below.

"Over 10 years as Department Head." [**line 60**]

The respondent obviously has been in their position for a long period of time. It is also supported by another statement that the respondents progressed through different leadership functions in education start from being an adviser, advancing to a coordinator, and ultimately serving as a school head as revealed by the statements below.

"More than a decade, starting from being an adviser, coordinator, and up to being a school head." [**line 65 – 66**]

Another specific experienced by the mathematics-specialized school heads is that they are actively involved in addressing and managing school-related complaints for the past 18 years as revealed in the statement below.

"I have been engaged for 18 years in handling school-related complaints." [**line 67 – 68**]

Managerial skills of school heads are interrelated with the performance of the teachers, that shows its impact on the multifaceted forces, needs, inducements, desires, goals and other contrivances, which initiate and preserve voluntary activities by the members of organizations such as educational institutions, for attaining personal aims, organizational aims, goals, proficient roles and positions (Nadeem et al., 2018).

M. Shaiq (2018) found that well equipped managers with managerial skills motivate their teaching staff by using all their creative, innovative and motivational skills for quality education which result in better achievements of the institutional goals (Shaiq, 2018). Technical skills are primarily used for classroom management, whereas interpersonal skills are used for counseling and motivating teachers, which helps them, develop their teaching abilities. An innovative and creative head teacher can help teachers improve their skills by training them in all aspects of the teaching and learning process. A head teacher, among other skills, can clearly define educator responsibilities and achieve institutional goals without assistance. The head teacher can run the teaching and learning process smoothly in the institution by inspiring staff with inspirational activities in or out of the institution (Godwin & Kabeta, 2019).

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarizes the research work undertaken, the conclusion drawn from the findings, and the recommendations made as an outgrowth of this study.

Summary

The following presents the summary of the results of the study, which explored the profiles, managerial and counseling skills, and lived experiences of mathematics-specialized school heads, as well as examined the relationship between their managerial competencies and the effectiveness of handling complaints within their respective schools.

1. Regarding the profile of the respondents, the results revealed that the average mean most mathematics-specialized school heads were in the younger age group, predominantly female, held a master's degree, and had moderate years of service.
2. In terms of the extent of impact of managerial skills, mathematics-specialized school heads were described as skilled in decision-making, problem-solving, and communication, indicating an overall skilled level of managerial competence.
3. As to the contribution of counseling skills, mathematics-specialized school heads were likewise described as skilled in using counseling strategies to address complaints at the school level.
4. On the relationship between managerial skills and complaint handling, findings showed a significant and strong positive correlation, indicating that better managerial skills are associated with more effective complaint handling.

5. With regard to the experiences of school heads in managing complaints, participants shared a principled and structured approach to handling school-related complaints. Through consistent application of systematic procedures, active and impartial listening, and extensive experience, the participants ensure fair, policy-based resolutions.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals that the managerial skills of mathematics-specialized school heads in Cotabato City play a critical role in their effectiveness in counseling skills and resolving school-related conflicts. A strong positive correlation between their managerial competence and conflict management capabilities indicates that skills in planning, organization, and decision-making directly enhance their ability to maintain a peaceful and functional school environment. These school heads employ a balanced, policy-based approach that emphasizes confidentiality, active listening, and fairness in addressing issues. Their extensive experience demonstrates their ability to foster positive relationships and uphold school harmony through practical, experience-driven leadership.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings of this study, the following were recommended:

1. The MBHTE, through the Schools Division of Cotabato City, may organize professional development seminars and leadership workshops to address the identified low scores in emotional intelligence, stakeholder sensitivity, and interpersonal coordination. These activities should focus on developing skills in emotional intelligence for better decision-making, effective stakeholder engagement, and managing interpersonal relationships.
2. The MBHTE, through the Schools Division of Cotabato City, may promote academic advancement by supporting doctoral studies through scholarships, tuition aid, or study leave, and by recognizing advanced degrees in promotions. This will strengthen research-based and STEM-focused leadership.
3. The Schools Division Offices, through the Curriculum Implementation Division (CID), may establish a succession and mentoring framework to address the low number of senior school heads nearing retirement. By pairing experienced leaders with younger counterparts, the initiative can preserve institutional knowledge, ensure leadership continuity, and sustain ongoing innovations and best practices.
4. The Schools Division of Cotabato City, in response to BARMM-specific socio-political challenges, may develop a localized problem-solving model supported by case-based training. These sessions should focus on effective conflict mediation in multicultural settings and promote community-based resolution frameworks to strengthen context-sensitive leadership and school-community relations.
5. Schools may standardize data-driven decision-making by using tools like decision matrices, stakeholder feedback loops, and ethical compliance checks in school improvement planning. With monitoring and support from division offices, this approach can strengthen transparency, accountability, and overall effectiveness in school governance.

Approval Sheet

The Faculty of the Institute of Management of Mindanao State University -Maguindanao accepts this study: "**MANAGERIAL SKILLS OF MATHEMATICS–SPECIALIZED SCHOOL HEADS IN COTABATO CITY DIVISION.**"

Submitted by **NORHAYA D. BALAWAG** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Science Education Major in Secondary Mathematics.

APPROVED on May 21, 2025 by the Advisory Panel during the Oral Examination.

MUHAMAD ALI E. MIDZID, PhD **USMAN B. MALIM, MAEd-Math**

Member Member

_____ _____

Date Signed Date Signed

JOEL C. ARENAS, PhD

Chairperson

_____

Date Signed

JOHN PAUL N. CABOTAJE, MIM

Adviser

_____

Date Signed

ACCEPTED in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Master of Science Education Major in Secondary Mathematics

JOEL C. ARENAS, PhD

Dean, College of Education

_____

Date Signed

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I, Norhaya D. Balawag, declare that the research work carried out for this thesis was in accordance with the regulations of the Mindanao State University – Maguindanao. The work presented in it is my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research, and if external sources were used, such sources have been cited. It is original and has not been submitted to any other institution to obtain another degree or qualification. This is a true copy of the thesis, including final revision.

Date: _____

Name: NORHAYA D. BALAWAG

Signature: _____

Dedication

This manuscript is wholeheartedly dedicated by the researcher to her parents

Sapia Dindikan Balawag, Al-hajja, Mohsin "Musiba" G. Balawag, Al-haj,

who have been the source of her inspiration, motivation and strength

when she thought of giving up, who continually provide

moral, spiritual, and emotional support.

To her ever supportive siblings: Daud D. Balawag, LPT and his family, Rohania D. Balawag, LPT, Mosmira D. Balawag, and Hasna D. Balawag,to her loved one, Raof K. Pendulat, who shared wordsof advice and encouragement to finish this study.

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Above all, the researcher dedicated this manuscript wholeheartedly to Almighty Allah (S.W.T) for His guidance, strength, power of mind, protection, skills and for giving her healthy life.

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APPENDIX A

Survey Questionnaire

Directions: In answering this questionnaire, think about the extent of school heads' managerial skills. Please encircle the number that corresponds to your answer from the five-point scale below. Rest assured that all data gathered will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Range	**Descriptive Interpretation**
4.50- 5.00	Highly Skilled
3.50- 4.49	Skilled
2.50- 3.49	Moderately Skilled
1.50- 2.49	Less Skilled
1.00- 1.49	Least Skilled

Part I – Profile of the Respondents

Name (optional):_____

School: _____

Age: ☐ 30 - 35 ☐ 36-40 ☐ 41 – 45 ☐ 46-50

51 - 55 ☐0 others (please specify): _____

Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Highest Educational Attainment: _____

Years in service: _____

Part II - School Heads Managerial Skills

A). Decision-Making Skills					
11. I ensure that the process of making decisions involves choosing the best option among alternatives.	5	4	3	2	1

12. I choose the best action or most preferred course of action among alternative courses of action with the purpose of handling complaints.	5	4	3	2	1
13. I achieved set goals effectively and efficiently.	5	4	3	2	1
14. I demonstrate deep and expert knowledge of decision-making in coordinating individuals or group members to handle the problem and produce the desired result.	5	4	3	2	1
15. I involve participatory planning, participatory implementation, evaluation, and feedback among teachers, parents, and community partners.	5	4	3	2	1
16. I evaluate options and informed choices for the best coordination of actions within the school premises.	5	4	3	2	1
17. I depend largely on the ability to make effective decisions guided by educational laws, regulations, and ethical guidelines to ensure compliance and uphold standards.	5	4	3	2	1
18. I involve a blend of strategic thinking, data analysis, and engagement of teachers, parents, and stakeholders.	5	4	3	2	1
19. I demonstrate emotional intelligence to handle the interpersonal aspects of decision-making, such as managing complaints and fostering a positive school climate.	5	4	3	2	1
20. I navigate the complexities of stakeholder relationships and make decisions that are both effective and sensitive to the needs of students, teachers, and parents.	5	4	3	2	1

B). Problem solving skills					
11. I recognize the specific complaint to be solved, design and execute a solution, and observe and assess progress throughout the process.	5	4	3	2	1
12. I used logical reasoning to process certain information in a way that can be used to solve the problem effectively and efficiently.	5	4	3	2	1
13. I address diverse challenges within the school premise, which include student-teacher, student-students, and parent-parent complaints.	5	4	3	2	1
14. I underscore various dimensions of problem-solving competencies necessary for effective school leadership, including cognitive strategies, interpersonal skills, and adaptive approaches.	5	4	3	2	1
15. I examine the cognitive strategies employed by school heads in problem-solving.	5	4	3	2	1
16. I utilize systematic approaches such as root-cause analysis and scenario planning to tackle issues ranging from simple to complex	5	4	3	2	1

complaints.					
17. I follow systematic problem-solving techniques to achieve better outcomes in handling both routine and complex problems.	5	4	3	2	1
18. I adjust the problem-solving strategies in response to changing conditions and emerging challenges.	5	4	3	2	1
19. I explain to the school committee that effective problem-solving is not solely a cognitive process but also involves significant interpersonal dynamics.	5	4	3	2	1
20. I facilitate a collaborative problem-solving environment where diverse perspectives are considered, and solutions are more comprehensively developed.	5	4	3	2	1

C). Communication skills					
11. I bridge the gap, when necessary, between individuals and groups through the flow of information/complaints.	5	4	3	2	1
12. I disseminate the information needed by all members of the committee to understand and get things done.	5	4	3	2	1
13. I ensure to build relationships of trust and commitment to handle complaints accurately.	5	4	3	2	1
14. I help on building relationships and facilitating the achievement of goals efficiently.	5	4	3	2	1
15. I demonstrate excellent communication styles and practices that fuel communication satisfaction among students, teachers, parents, and community partners.	5	4	3	2	1
16. I emphasize that clear, articulate, and persuasive communication between and among members of the school committee is crucial in handling complaints and delivering guidance.	5	4	3	2	1
17. I demonstrate verbal communication to effectively convey expectations and provide constructive feedback within the group.	5	4	3	2	1
18. I show mindfulness in using non-verbal cues, such as body language, facial expressions, and eye contact, which significantly impact how messages are received and interpreted by staff and students during the call of handling complaints.	5	4	3	2	1
19. I practice active listening to fully engage with the members of the school committee and understand each other's point of view, which makes them more successful in handling complaints.	5	4	3	2	1
20. I demonstrate active listening to respond more appropriately to the needs of their school community and make informed decisions based	5	4	3	2	1

on comprehensive input.					

Part III – School Heads' Counseling Skills

11. I demonstrate empathy and the ability to understand and share the feelings of others with students and staff.	5	4	3	2	1
12. I build strong relationships with students and staff while addressing their complaints.	5	4	3	2	1
13. I establish a trust and confidence to create a supportive school culture.	5	4	3	2	1
14. I emphasize the importance of active listening as a key counseling skill.	5	4	3	2	1
15. I use active listening techniques to fully understand the issues or complaints faced by students, teachers, staff, parents, and community partners.	5	4	3	2	1
16. I encourage all members of the school committee to practice active listening to be more successful in handling complaints, providing meaningful support, and fostering a collaborative environment.	5	4	3	2	1
17. I explore various strategies to be used to manage and resolve complaints among students, staff, and parents.	5	4	3	2	1
18. I create more harmonious school environment and improves relationships within the school community.	5	4	3	2	1
19. I explore how to support the mental health and well-being of the students and teachers.	5	4	3	2	1
20. I monitor progress after initial counseling sessions, checking in with individuals to ensure ongoing support and adjustment of strategies	5	4	3	2	1

Part IV - Structured Interview on the experience of school heads in handling complaints.

1. What procedures did you apply to gather those involved in handling complaints?
2. What approaches did you apply in handling school complaints?
3. How many complaints /problems have you handled in school?
4. How many years have you engaged in handling school-related complaints?

APPENDIX E

Transcript of the Interview

Participants: 6

Male: 2 Female: 4

Total Interview Time: 00:20:10

Researcher: Good morning! How are you, ma'am and sir? I just want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for participating in this interview despite your hectic schedules, a big help for me as a researcher. Before we start, I just want also to inform you that this interview is a part of my research study entitled Managerial Skills of Mathematics-Specialized School Heads in Cotabato City. Your answer and identity will remain confidential. There is no right or wrong answer. You may skip the questions if they make you uncomfortable. To provide accuracy in assessing the data later, I would like to record your answer if it is okay for you, sir and ma'am. Do I have your consent to proceed? So, let's start.

Researcher: No. 1 Question. What procedures did you apply to gather those involved in handling complaints?

Respondents 1: When handling complaints, I apply a structured process to involved relevant parties. This includes establishing clear communication on channels and assessing that needs to be involved based on the complaints nature.

Respondent 2: I follow a structured process by gathering statements from all involved parties, consulting relevant school personnel, and ensuring confidentiality.

Respondent 3: I inform each party that I will conduct a meeting or forum with them to discuss matters. It could be through text or personal.

Respondents 4: We follow the structured school procedures in addressing every complain with respect to its level.

Respondent 5: Protocol procedures. Utilizing grievance committee.

Respondents 6: The Procedures I apply to gather those involved in handling complaints is to gather initial information on how and why the complaints were made and where it took place to have prior knowledge before facing the complaints.

Researcher: No. 2 Question. What approaches did you apply in handling school complaints?

Respondent 1: My approach involves listening problem-solving and refreshing to school policies. I also use complaints as educational opportunities and analyse them to prevent future issues.

Respondent 2: I apply a fair and transparent approach through policy-based, decision-making, and restorative positive principles.

Respondent 3: I utilize consultative approach. I listen to both sides and try to weigh things. I ensure that I arrive at a decision.

Respondent 4: I always listen first to different parties as needed and apply the school policies respectively.

Respondent 5: Conduct observation to proper investigations and solicit operations from the experts/ higher ups.

Respondents 6: As a grade level chairperson, I have various approaches in handling school complaints. First, I gather initial information on the matters of concerns through knowing the root cause of the event without any hint of falsification. Second, I respond quickly to the complaints and listen carefully to the complaints concerns without interruptions to clearly understand their perspectives. Lastly, being open for reasonable solutions to meet the both sides in between.

Researcher: No. 3 Question. How many complaints/problems have you handled in school?

Respondent 1: I handled about 20 to 30 formal complaints annually along with many informal concerns.

Respondents 2: I have handled approximately three school-related complaints, ranging from academic concerns to behavioural issues.

Respondent 3: Mostly I encounter 1 to 2 problems monthly or weekly. There is no definite number.

Respondent 4: I cannot count either, perhaps more than 30 or 40 annually.

Respondent 5: There are so many complaints that I have handled.

Respondents 6: As a grade level chairperson, complaints/problems inside my class or in my grade level responsibility may be considered in normal numbers of complaints for the school year. I cannot give the total number to avoid data privacy and child protecting policy.

Researcher: No. 4 Question. How many years have you engage in handling school-related complaints?

Respondent 1: Over 10 years as Department Head.

Respondent 2: I have been managing school-related complaints for 2 years, ensuring a balanced and student-centered resolution process.

Respondent 3: I have been engaged for 7 years in handling school-related complaints.

Respondent 4: More than a decade, starting from being an adviser, coordinator, and up to being a school head.

Respondent 5: I have been engaged for 18 years in handling school-related complaints.

Respondent 6: I have been handling complaints for 6 years now as an adviser and a grade level chairperson.

Educational Attainment

Graduate Studies:	Master of Science Education major in Secondary Mathematics
	Mindanao State University – Maguindanao Institute of Management
	Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao del Norte, Philippines 9601
	2024 – 2025
Master's Thesis:	Managerial Skills of Mathematics-specialized School Heads in Cotabato City Division

Tertiary	Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Mathematics
	Cotabato City State Polytechnic College
	Sinsuat Avenue, Cotabato City
	2016
Secondary	Datu Piang National High School
	Buayan, Datu Piang, Maguindanao Del Sur
	2011
Elementary	Macasendeg Elementary School
	Macasendeg, Midsayap, Cotabato
	2007