

Administrators Skills, Resilience, Challenges, Coping Strategies and Live Experiences on Leadership

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ABSTRACT

The study examined relationships between leadership skills, resilience, challenges, coping strategies, and lived experiences of public-administrators in Bohol Division. Anchored on Resilience Theory, Transformational leadership Theory, and Digital Learning Theory, the study employed a convergent parallel mixed-method design. Quantitative data were gathered from 150 administrators across three congressional districts during the School Year 2024-2025 using validated instruments, including the CORE Resilience Framework and leadership and digital leadership scales. Qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews with 15 administrators and analyzed using Clarke and Braun's thematic analysis.

Descriptive statistics, Chi-square test, and Spearman rho correlation were used for quantitative analysis. Findings revealed that administrators demonstrated high levels of resilience and leadership skills and competent to effective digital leadership skills. A significant positive relationship was found between leadership and resilience. However, no significant relationship emerged between resilience and digital leadership skills, nor between traditional leadership skills and digital leadership competencies. Training participation and educational attainment showed significant associations with digital leadership skills.

Qualitative findings supported the quantitative results, highlighting resilience practices, emotional intelligence, and adaptive coping strategies, while also revealing persistent challenges related to infrastructure limitations, connectivity issues, and data management. These results suggest that while administrators possess strong leadership and resilience capacities, these strengths do not automatically translate into digital leadership effectiveness. The study recommends targeted professional development initiatives aligned with Department of Education programs to strengthen administrators' digital competencies, infrastructure management, and data-driven decision-making.

Keywords: Leadership Skills, Resilience, Digital leadership, Coping Strategies, School Administrators, School-Based Management.

INTRODUCTION

The role of school administrators has evolved significantly in response to rapid digital transformations and educational reforms. Beyond traditional administrative responsibilities, school leaders are now expected to navigate technological integration, manage digital infrastructures, and support teachers and learners in technology-mediated environments. In the Philippine context, these demands are intensified by the implementation of the Department of Education's MATATAG Curriculum and policies emphasizing school-based management under Republic Act 9155.

Leadership skills and resilience are widely recognized as critical attributes for effective school administration. Leadership skills- conceptual, administrative and interpersonal- enable administrators to plan strategically, manage resources efficiently, and foster collaborative school cultures. Resilience, defined as the capacity to adapt and thrive amid adversity, allows leaders to sustain performance despite stressors such as policy changes, limited resources, and crises. However, the increasing reliance on digital technologies introduces new challenges that may not be adequately addressed by traditional leadership competencies alone.

Emerging studies suggest that while school administrators may demonstrate strong leadership and resilience, these strengths do not automatically translate into digital leadership effectiveness. Persistent issues related to infrastructure, digital literacy, data management, and cybersecurity continue to challenge educational leaders, particularly in developing context such as the Philippines. Prior studies (Garmezy 1991; Masten 2014; Alvarez 2021; Mallillin 2014) link high resilience/leadership to effective governance, yet Philippine context reveal gaps in digital leadership integration (Santos 2023; Reyes 2023) with limited local data on interconnections with coping strategies. Despite this, empirical research examining the interplay between leadership skills, resilience, digital leadership challenges, and coping strategies among school administrators remains limited.

This study addresses this gap by examining the relationship among leadership skills, resilience, digital leadership challenges, and coping strategies of public-school administrators in the Division of Bohol. Specifically, it investigates whether traditional leadership skills and resilience are associated with digital leadership competencies and how administrators cope with challenges arising from digital transformation.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design integrated quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of administrators' leadership skills, resilience, digital leadership challenges and coping strategies.

Participants and Research Setting

The quantitative component involved 150 public elementary school administrators randomly selected from Bohol Division's three congressional districts, S.Y. 2024-2025). The qualitative included 15 purposively selected administrators who participated in in-depth interviews to explore lived experiences related to leadership, coping and resilience.

Research Instruments

Instruments included demographic profiles, CORE resilience questionnaire (Stoltz), 18- item Northouse leadership skills scale (conceptual, administrative and interpersonal), Digital Technology Literacy Assessment (Infrastructure and Resources, Digital Literacy and Training, Data Management and Security, Integration and Implementation, Communication and Collaboration), and researcher-designed interviews validated by adviser; data collection involved DepEd-approved transmittals, on-sites survey, and thematic analysis used Clarke and Braun's method. Analysis used percentages for profiles, weighted means (1-5 scales: e.g., 4.50-5.00=Exceptional/Very High), Chi-square for profile links, Spearman rho for correlations, integrating quantitative themes.

Data Collection Procedures

Survey questionnaires were administered following approval from the relevant Department of Education authorities. Interviews were conducted with informed consent and audio-recorded for the transcription.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Chi-square test, and Spearman rho correlation. Qualitative data were analyzed using Clarke and Braun's thematic analysis, with findings integrated during interpretation.

RESULTS

Quantitative Results

This study assessed resilience, leadership skills, digital leadership skills, and coping strategies among administrators to inform DepEd leadership development. Key findings show exceptional resilience (overall mean

4.59: control 4.49, ownership 4.66, reach 4.64, endurance 4.59), highly skillful leadership (overall 3.58: conceptual 3.45, administrative 3.54, interpersonal 3.74), and competent to effective digital skills (overall-2.55: Infrastructure and Resources 2.70, Digital Literacy and Training 2.68, Data Management and Security 2.53, Integration and Implementation 2.62, Communication and Collaboration 2.21), with Chi-square revealing significant profile links (educational attainment $\chi^2=365.77$ $p=0.006$ to resilience/digital leadership) and Spearman rho positive leadership-resilience tie (0.666 $p=0.001$) but insignificant resilience/digital (-0.064 $p=0.433$) or leadership/ digital (-0.075 $p=0.360$).

Variable	Grand Mean	Interpretation	Significant Links
Resilience (CORE)	4.59	Exceptional	Edu/training to resilience
Leadership Skills	3.58	Highly Skillful	Positive to resilience ($r=0.666$)
Digital Leadership	2.55	Competent - Effective	Training only ($\chi^2=975.22$ $p=0.001$)

Qualitative Results

Thematic analysis revealed three majors' themes:

1. **Resilience practices**, including emotional intelligence, adaptability and perseverance;
2. **Coping Strategies**, such as collaboration, self-care and continues learning; and
3. **Digital leadership challenges**, particularly unreliable connectivity, limited infrastructure, and varying levels of staff digital competence.

Participants' narratives reinforced quantitative findings, emphasizing that digital leadership requires specialized skills and institutional support despite strong leadership and resilience.

DISCUSSION

Leadership, Resilience and Digital Leadership

The findings indicate that administrators in the Division of Bohol possess strong leadership skills and high resilience, consistent with both Philippine and international literature. The significant relationship between leadership skills and resilience supports theories that effective leadership fosters adaptive capacity.

However, the absence of significant relationship between resilience, traditional leadership skills and digital leadership competencies highlights the critical gap. These results suggest that resilience and conventional leadership strengths do not automatically translate into digital leadership effectiveness, underscoring the distinct nature of digital leadership competencies.

The significant association between training participation and digital leadership skills emphasizes the importance of targeted professional development, particularly in context where infrastructure and resources constraints persist.

Contextualization within Philippine and International Literature

Philippine Studies

Studies by Tanucan et.al. reveal persistent gaps in digital infrastructure and uneven access to training within the Philippine public-school system. These findings align with the present study's results, particularly the competent-level ratings in infrastructure and the significant influence of training participation ($p=0.001$) on digital leadership skills. Navarro (2022) further demonstrated that principals' digital leadership positively

influences teacher motivation, reinforcing the importance of modeling digital competence and providing sustained instructional support.

International Perspectives

International literature, including Schiuma (2024), emphasizing that digital transformation requires cultural and capability shifts beyond technical adoption. This perspective helps explain why traditional leadership skills and resilience were not significantly related to digital leadership competencies in the present study.

Policy and Programmatic Alignment

The findings support the goals of the MATATAG Curriculum and DepEd Digital Rise Program, both of which emphasize system strengthening, digital literacy, and data-driven learning decision-making. Aligning leadership development initiatives with these programs can help bridge existing digital leadership gap.

CONCLUSION

Public-School Administrators in the Division of Bohol demonstrated strong or exceptional resilience/highly skillful traditional leadership as buffers against digital challenges, justifying targeted DepEd interventions like training in data-driven/tech management to enhance competent digital skills toward effectiveness. Furthermore, resilient leaders sustain school performance despite inequities (e.g. infrastructure), enabling MATATAG and RA 9155 goals.

It is recommended that future studies should longitudinally test interventions across division of Bohol and include the teacher outcomes.

Implications for Practice and Policy

The study supports the development of phased professional development initiatives aligned with Department of Education programs, focusing on digital literacy, data management and infrastructure support. Institutionalizing continuous digital leadership training in line with RA 9155 and RA 10533 may enhance administrators' readiness for ongoing digital transformation.

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