

Navigating the Maritime School's Management of Human Resources: A Prospective of School Leaders

Jae Philip S. Dagle, MSM^{1*}, John Erwin P. Pedroso, PhD²

¹Iloilo Merchant Marine School, Pavia, Iloilo, Philippines

²West Visayas State University, La Paz, Iloilo City, Philippines

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100600978>

Received: 22 June 2026; Accepted: 27 June 2026; Published: 09 July 2026

ABSTRACT

This descriptive-qualitative research explores how school leaders in a maritime institution navigate the complexities of managing human resources to provide insights into their perspectives and practices. Grounded in social constructionism, symbolic interactionism, and human relations theories, this study employs a naturalistic inquiry design. Data were gathered through interviews with six purposively selected informants and analyzed using Saldaña's (2016) two-cycle coding framework. Results revealed that maritime school leaders perceived their roles as supervisors, monitors, and auditors of their subordinates' different tasks and responsibilities. However, they faced several challenges while performing their functions, including personality differences, issues in faculty compliance with document submission, limited resources and personnel scarcity, and volatility of the maritime industry. To address these issues, leaders employed flexible leadership styles, empower their subordinates, and emphasize the need of professional expertise. Moreover, to promote organizational effectiveness and employee well-being, leaders utilized strategies in creating a positive work environment such as encouraging open dialogue, building personal connections with the faculty and staff, conducting regular meetings, and making their subordinates feel welcome. Based on these outcomes, maritime institutions should consider adopting a Competency-Based HR Model to enhance their human resource management systems and better support their leadership teams.

Keywords: maritime education, school management, human resource management, educational leadership, naturalistic inquiry

INTRODUCTION

Human Resource Management (HRM) is a strategic framework designed to manage people within an organization to enhance its growth and success (Nandhini & Vimala, 2020). By focusing on activities such as recruitment, training, and employee well-being, effective HRM is vital for attracting and retaining top talent, which creates a positive work environment that improves productivity and reduces personnel turnover (Gomathy et al., 2023). In educational institutions, these practices are particularly important, as high-quality management is strongly associated with better academic outcomes (Bloom et al., 2015; Bryson et al., 2020). Additionally, schools with autonomous status have significantly higher management quality than regular government or private schools.

However, managing human resources becomes more challenging in specialized fields such as the maritime sector. Maritime education is highly dynamic industry which requires a unique set of technical skills and adaptability (Mallam et al., 2019; Tahera, 2023). Because of this specialization, regulatory bodies like CHED-MARINA mandate strict HRM requirements for maritime programs, including the employment of faculty with extensive seagoing and supervisory experience, aligned with international standards like the 1978 STCW Convention (CHED-MARINA, 2023a, 2023b). Despite this importance, there is a knowledge gap on how HRM is actually practiced in these niche industries (Miles, 2017). While HRM in general education has been widely studied, the unique challenges and industry-specific standards of maritime schools are underexplored.

To bridge this gap, this study explores how maritime school leaders navigate these management challenges. Grounded in social constructionism, symbolic interactionism, and human relations theory, this research aims to understand the narratives of these school leaders and determine a prospected management model that can further enhance their HRM practices. This approach assumes leadership styles and the unique nature of maritime industry, including its fluctuating demands and cultural norms, which can influence how human resources are managed.

Existing literature has emphasized that school leaders act as the human resource managers, who are responsible for various aspects of personnel administration, from staff development to handling resource shortages (Norton, 2017). In the education sector, more particularly in maritime settings, these leaders face specific challenges, such as shortage of teachers, retention of top educators, lack of training and career development, barriers in communication, and endless paperwork. Previous research suggests that while intensive HRM generally improves school performance, various strategies like team-based participation and rigorous hiring differ from those used in corporate sectors (Bryson et al., 2020). Since effective leadership can improve faculty and student outcomes, the specific practices and perspectives of leaders within a maritime institution are explored to provide insights for enhancing the organizational effectiveness in specialized education.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive-qualitative research design grounded in naturalistic inquiry. It involves exploring and describing a particular phenomenon or setting in-depth, in its natural behavior, without manipulating variables (Cutler et al., 2021). It also allows the researchers to immerse themselves in the natural setting to generate rich, detailed insights into the complexities and nuances of HRM within maritime education.

Research Context

The study was conducted at a newly CHED-recognized maritime schools in the province of Iloilo, Philippines. Established in 2015, the school has expanded to offer full degree programs in marine transportation and marine engineering, alongside maritime-specialized senior high school (SHS) strands.

Despite considered as one of the youngest maritime schools in Iloilo, the institution has experienced a drastic change in its school leaders, faculty, and staff. This unique environment, characterized by frequent transitions and a faculty composed largely of seafarers, provided a specialized context for exploring challenges in modern leadership.

Data Sources

The participants of this study were selected using purposive sampling based on their roles as management personnel overseeing policies and practices within the maritime institution. The six (6) informants considered were the president, college dean, program heads, and SHS principal. These leaders hold relevant academic qualifications in fields such as maritime studies, education, human resource management, or related disciplines, and possess experiences to provide authoritative narratives on institutional practices.

Data were gathered from both primary and secondary data sources to ensure triangulation and credibility. The primary data consisted of transcripts derived from semi-structured face-to-face interviews. Secondary data, including peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and relevant reports on human resource management, educational leadership, and the maritime school were used to provide comprehensive framework and ground the findings in the established international standards.

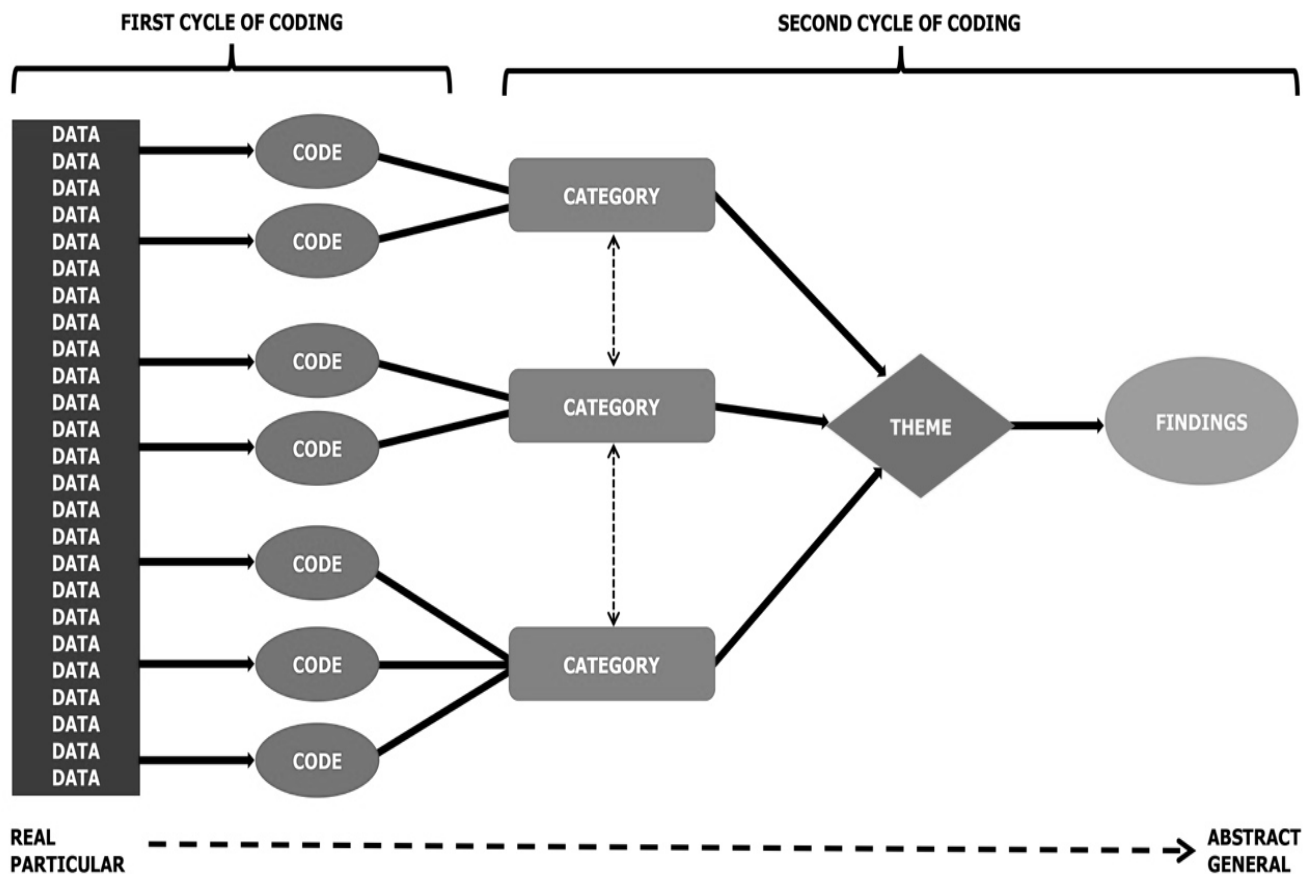
Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection followed a systematic ethical protocol. After securing informed consents, one-on-one interviews, lasting between 30 and 120 minutes, were audio-and-video-recorded to ensure accuracy. To maintain confidentiality, all digital files were stored on a PIN-protected flash drive and informants were assigned unique codes to mask their identities.

The data gathered was inductively analyzed using thematic analysis based on Saldaña's (2016) coding manual. Analysis was undertaken in two distinct cycles, as illustrated in Figure 1. The first cycle of coding involved assigning codes to the transcribed data units, in which in vivo coding was utilized incorporating the actual language of school leaders to create a preliminary codebook. Meanwhile, the second cycle was done through pattern coding whereas initial codes were grouped into categories based on the similarities, differences, frequency, sequence, correspondence, or causation of the codes.

Emerging themes were then derived from the interconnectedness of these categories to form the findings of the study. All research materials, including interview transcripts audio recordings, and other confidential files, were securely archived for five to seven years, adhering to the ethical principles of beneficence and respect for human dignity (White, 2020).

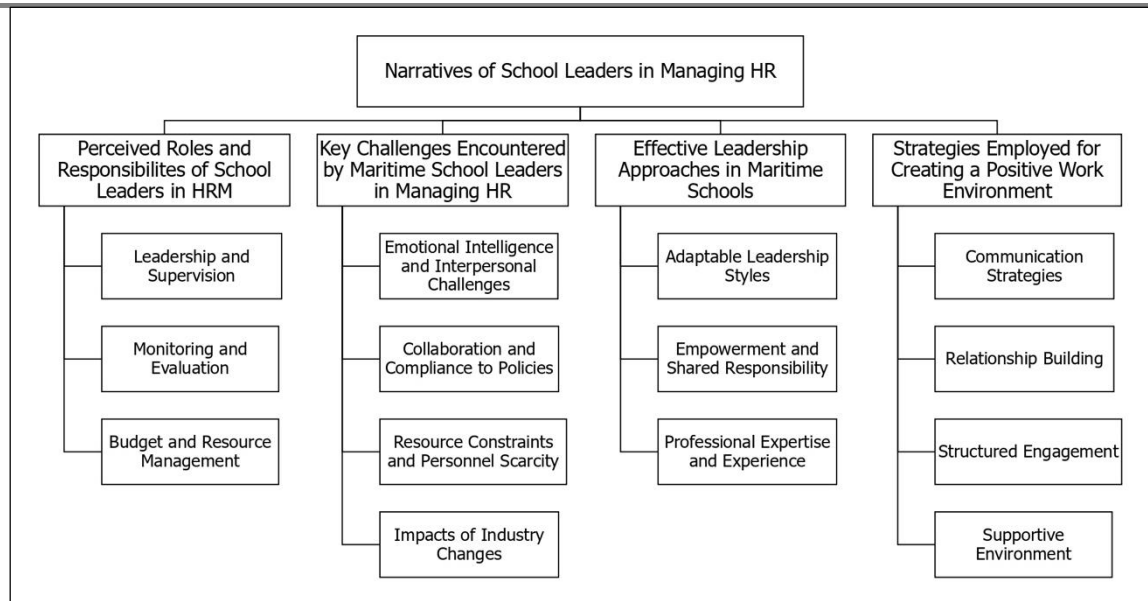
Figure 1. The First and Second Coding Cycles by Saldaña (2016)



RESULTS

Four pre-determined themes emerged from this study through inductive analysis, following Saldaña's (2016) coding manual to categorize raw data into a structured thematic framework. These emerging themes, as illustrated in Figure 2, shows an overview of how maritime school leaders navigate human resource management.

Figure 2. Visual Representation of the Emerging Themes



Source: Authors.

The first theme, Roles and Responsibilities of School Leaders in HRM, revealed how maritime school leaders perceived their roles and responsibilities, specifically focusing on leadership and supervision, monitoring and evaluation, and budget and resource management. This was followed by the second theme, Key Challenges Encountered by Maritime School Leaders in Managing Human Resources,” which emphasized the practical difficulties of managing human resources. These challenges include emotional intelligence and interpersonal challenge, collaboration and compliance to policies, resource constraints and personnel scarcity, and impacts of industry changes.

To address these complexities, the third theme, Effective Leadership Approaches in Maritime Schools, provided different ways maritime school leaders use to respond to the dynamics of HRM within the institution. This involves adaptable leadership styles, empowerment and shared responsibility, and professional expertise and experience. Lastly, the fourth theme, Strategies Employed for Creating a Positive Work Environment, laid down proactive measures taken to ensure a welcoming and safe working environment. These strategies emphasized communication strategies, relationship building, structured engagement, and a supportive environment.

All these themes provided a holistic view of the leadership experiences shared by six informants. Renz, the School President, uses her administrative background to lead strategic growth, while Charles, a Program Head, applies his mechanical engineering expertise and HR experience to bridge technical gaps. Clark, also a Program Head, applies his seafaring experience to align training with global standards, and Derek, a retired Chief Engineer and former Dean, contributes his industry expertise to mentor future engineers. Nick, the Assistant Dean, draws from his Chief Officer background to manage faculty while, Prince, the SHS Officer-in-Charge, uses his teaching experience to manage people through standard procedures.

Roles and Responsibilities of Maritime School Leaders in HRM

Maritime leaders recognized managing human resources as essential for creating a positive learning environment and developing future maritime professionals. Their insights suggest that their roles and responsibilities in HRM covered various aspects, including leadership and supervision, monitoring and evaluation, and budget and resource management.

Leadership and Supervision. This aspect involves overseeing instructional practices, ensuring compliance with educational standards, and creating a supportive environment for both instructors and students. Leadership and supervision involve guiding and monitoring how instructors deliver their lessons and engage with students, which includes evaluating teaching methods, aligning the curriculum, and assessing the overall effectiveness of

classroom instruction (Basilio and Bueno, 2021). In an educational environment, it is also essential to adhere to local, national, and sometimes international educational standards and policies (Chankseliani et al., 2020). Leadership and supervision ensure that instructors follow these standards, which might include curriculum guidelines, assessment requirements, and quality assurance processes. Informants perceived their roles as a combination of administrative “directioning” and frontline mentorship.

Renz and **Nick** described a structured approach to leadership, emphasizing strategic delegation and direction. Renz focused on scaling her governance through “top-to-bottom” communication, while **Nick**, stressed a technical supervision:

Renz: “We’re talking about “directioning.” I get the direction from the board of directors then after that, disseminate it to the... *Parang* (Like) it’s from the top to bottom kind of leadership where you disseminate everything. But after disseminating of course you have to monitor if these people whom you entrusted to do the task are also doing this kind of thing.”

Nick: “I’m the supervisor. I’m the one who delegates the tasks, both to the program heads and both to the faculties, especially on the technical aspects. And, of course, I have my own responsibility. I have my own role. But my major role is to supervise, supervise my subordinates, supervise the people behind me....”

Meanwhile, **Clark and Derek** viewed their roles through the lens of maritime and institutional compliance, likening school leadership to that of a shipboard supervisor. They also emphasized policy internalization and operational alignment in their roles.

Clark: “It’s no different from being a supervisor [on a ship]. As a program head, you are a supervisor of the people under you. Meaning to say, the faculty under you... you supervise them when it comes to classroom delivery, classroom instruction...”

Derek: “All I have to do is to familiarize the policy... just to make sure that it is being implemented. Actually, as a dean, I supervise the program heads, I supervise the teachers. At the same time, I have to... getting familiarize the... and comprehend the policy... school policy.”

On the other hand, **Charles and Prince** expanded the definition of supervision to include faculty motivation and the creation of a supportive work environment.

Charles: “Of course, my role here is... as a head, of course, to prepare the load of my instructors and also, I have to motivate them also to do their tasks as an instructor. And of course, to remind them also of their responsibilities *kay* (because)... in every organization, you cannot perfect that everything is smooth.”

Prince: “I am the one also uhm... in responsible in the retention of my employees if they are capable of hiring or for promoting. And also, uhmm... I am also responsible in giving advice or supervise my subordinates just in case they need so.”

The narratives shared by these educational leaders emphasized the comprehensive nature of leadership and supervision in maritime education, where effective integration of guidance, delegation, and compliance is essential for navigating the complexities of managing both academic and administrative domains. By balancing the need for adherence to standards with a commitment to motivating faculty and retaining top talent, these leaders demonstrate that their role is not merely about issuing directives, but also a dynamic process of inspiring collaboration, cultivating excellence, and steering the organization toward a shared vision of quality maritime education.

Monitoring and Evaluation. School leaders should be responsible for monitoring and evaluating both academic performance and operational effectiveness within the maritime education institution. For continuous improvement and accountability, it is necessary to conduct regular assessments of instructional quality, monitor student outcomes, and evaluate overall school performance. In research conducted by McBrayer et al. (2020),

they found that school leaders must implement monitoring and evaluation to continuously track the effectiveness of instructional programs and measure student outcomes through classroom observations, peer reviews, and feedback sessions. Additionally, identifying gaps in teaching and providing professional development opportunities for instructors is crucial in keeping pace with evolving industry standards and technologies (Padillo et al., 2021). Monitoring and evaluation are important processes in ensuring that maritime education institutions achieve both academic and operational excellence. The narratives of the informants reflect these theoretical foundations through their practical application of monitoring and evaluation:

Renz and Clark pointed out the importance of physical presence and structured tools in the evaluation through direct observation and systematic assessment. Renz focused on real-time classroom observation as well the operational effectiveness of the institution, while Clark emphasized the collaborative nature of formal institutional reviews:

Renz: “It’s also my task to go around... I have to visit classrooms from time to time. In that way, I observe... some of the classes of the teachers so right there and then I rated them based *sa ila* (on their) teaching performance. When it comes *naman sa* (to the) staff, since there are only few of them, and I also know what they’re doing, what they are going accomplish, so I base my grade or my scoring from there. According to the responsibilities that they [are] performing, to their performance as well as their outputs.”

Clark: “After each semester... we are doing the evaluation together with human resource. We have this form that we need to fill out that we have to evaluate each and every faculty under my department. I rate them honestly based on their performance because every now and then we are monitoring them inside their classes.”

Meanwhile, **Derek and Nick** viewed monitoring and evaluation not just as grading system, but as a diagnostic tool to identify the weak points and turn them into opportunities for professional development through targeted training:

Derek: “I have the strong points of person and also the weak point. I always put... of course you evaluate... you give a score for his strong side and you have to make sure if you give low points on that side... *sa* (the) weak side, you have to make sure that you have equivalent recommendations how we could grow from that and then what kind of training is needed.”

Nick: “We are doing the analysis, where is the part that the instructor is weak or his weakness. Then [from] there, we can provide the training that he needs to improve his weak part. So, the human resource tabulate... collect that all the evaluation from the supervisors and from students. And there, we can submit the training needs for that instructor, if ever.”

Monitoring and evaluation served as essential mechanisms in ensuring the sustained academic and operational success of maritime schools. By consistently assessing instructional quality and operational effectiveness, school leaders like Renz, Clark, Derek, and Nick create a strong foundation for accountability and growth. Through classroom observations, feedback sessions, and staff evaluations, they demonstrate a commitment to meeting industry standards. Moreover, by specific training or professional development needs, they can enhance both individual faculty competence and the institution overall competitiveness in the global maritime sector.

Budget and Resource Management. Another essential responsibility of school leaders as shared by the informants is the effective management of the budget and allocation of resources within the maritime education institution. Because maritime education relies heavily on practical skills, such as navigation simulations, engine operations, safety drills, and vessel maintenance, leaders must ensure that specialized equipment, facilities, and technologies are both available and maintained (Mallam et al., 2019).

Renz explained that budget and resource management is an intricate process that must align with the strategic goals and direction set by the board of directors. She detailed the collaborative nature of this task:

“At the start of the school year... we allow the people to make their budget. Then I have to check based from the budget that they have, plus in coordination with the amount that is allowed to be used for that certain year. Then I have to go through it, check whether they are including the specific, like including programs for each office. If they miss out then you have to place there the activities that they missed out or point [it] out. Well, actually we call for the officer in charge or the person in charge of the office and we talk about the budget together with the accounting. Then whether we slash or we add the budget. But then after that, total it, check it, then let the board approve the budget for the whole school year.”

Maritime school leaders consider HRM as essential for fostering a positive learning environment and shaping future maritime professionals. Their responsibilities integrate leadership, supervision, communication, collaboration, evaluation, and resource management across both academic and administrative functions. By ensuring compliance with educational standards while delegating tasks, supervising staff, and creating a supportive work environment, these leaders drive institutional quality. Regular performance assessments of faculty and staff further enable continuous improvement, relating faculty evaluations directly to targeted professional development. With the alignment of budget and resources with strategic goals, maritime leaders balance these responsibilities to uphold standards and promote institutional growth.

Key Challenges Encountered by Maritime School Leaders in Managing Human Resources

As informants performed their roles within the maritime school, they identified various challenges that affected their ability to perform their duties and responsibilities effectively, most importantly in managing human resources. Some of these challenges are emotional intelligence and interpersonal challenges, collaboration and compliance to policies, resource constraints and personnel scarcity, and the impacts of industry changes.

Emotional Intelligence and Interpersonal Challenges. The ability to manage interpersonal relationships and demonstrate emotional intelligence is an important aspect of effectively managing human resources. According to Valdes (2022), workplace conflicts often stem from personality differences and resistance to new processes. These conflicts can disrupt team dynamics and lower productivity (Rasool et al., 2021). The informants' narratives emphasized that workplace friction is often less about technical skill and more about "soft skill" management.

Renz and **Charles** emphasized the difficulty of harmonizing diverse backgrounds and adjusting to a new institutional culture. Renz noted that while technical competence is easy to find, behavioral consistency is harder to manage:

Renz: “Actually. I have no problem with the responsibilities that I have. The problem really is with the people, because you cannot control people. When they enter the institution, they are also bringing their own culture, their own backgrounds with them... I have noticed that if there are some disagreements, very little disagreements, they all erupt. Just like when you drop something in the water. Like one drop only, then it will cause a ripple. But if they know how to take hold of their emotions and be patient, that thing will not happen.”

Charles: “*Amo lang na galing kay kung bag-o ka pa lang, damo gid mga challenges nga makwan mo... Una, ginhawa mo ka adust kay di mo kilala ang tawo, mga upod mo sa job. Kag number two, you study also ang mga policies of the schools, mga lifestyle of the people here, including the students. Kay man iba-iba man ang environment sa school compared the other schools... It's more on adjustment in the environment and culture. Kag gatuon pa ako kung ano kinahanglan pa dira sa office.*” (That's just how it is because when you're new, there are so many challenges you'll encounter... First, you need to adjust your mindset because you don't know the people, your colleagues at work. And second, you also study the school's policies, the lifestyle of the people here, including the students. Because the environment in this school is different compared to other schools... It's more about adjusting to the environment and culture. And I'm still learning what else is needed here in the office.)

Prince shared that contrary to the challenges of other school leaders, where they have to synchronize the different personalities of their subordinates, his challenge is more on the personal aspect, where people around him doubted his capacity to lead a department because of his young age.

“A big challenge is to manage the people itself, because my people is very diverse. Uhm... There are some instances [where] they said that I am not capable yet, or I’m not capable enough in this position because I’m too young or I’m too early for this position.. Second thing is uhm... Some people say that I’m not qualified in this position even though I am appointed.”

Emotional intelligence plays a pivotal role in addressing the diverse challenges that arise in managing human resources and navigating interpersonal dynamics within institutions. While some leaders face hurdles in harmonizing cultural differences and personalities, others encounter difficulties stemming from personal perceptions and biases. These challenges, though varied, highlight the importance of fostering empathy, adaptability, and open communication in the workplace. By cultivating emotional intelligence and embracing strategies to address interpersonal issues, organizations can create an environment where individuals feel valued, supported, and empowered to contribute effectively to the institution’s success.

Collaboration and Compliance With Policies. Collaboration among faculty and staff and compliance with school policies is a major concern in managing human resources. Several issues in faculty compliance with document submission, information dissemination, and collaboration across departments are observed among faculty and staff by the informants. They also emphasized the necessity for clear understanding and strict adherence to school policies, as these aspects can affect the efficiency of the operation. They added that faculty and staff must be well-informed of these policies to uphold institutional standards. According to Pamphilon (2024), the importance of a clear understanding and adherence to policies cannot be overstated. Policies provide a framework that guides the institution’s operations. When faculty and staff do not fully understand these policies or fail to comply, it can compromise the quality and efficiency of the school’s operations. Ensuring that policies are communicated, expectations are set, and compliance is consistently enforced helps to uphold institutional standards.

Derek revealed that with the semi-regimental discipline program of the school, employees and students are not allowed to engage outside the school context. However, there are still few faculty members who would engage with students outside of official school duties.

“Also, the previous... we had instructors which already have experience from the other schools but they have that kind of activities outside the school with the students. So, actually, one of my... how to tell the guy what he’s doing is against the policy of the school. But, if he’s not listening—he don’t listen, then that is the time that I have to make commendations. Actually, it happens.”

Clark and **Nick** shared similar frustrations regarding "systemic friction," where faculty struggle to meet the fast-paced administrative demands of maritime education:

Clark: “The submission and the compliance with the required documents... [is] the major challenges in my part because some... I don’t know if during the orientation or during the briefing they are listening or not... some failed to comply the required documents and also classroom performance.”

Nick: “They are instructors that ... cannot ride the system. Even though how many times you train them, how many times you advise them ... they don’t listen, they have their own [way]. Even you set the deadlines, they will not comply... we are fast-paced, [and] they cannot get along on our speed. That’s why you need give allowance because... they will give you the requirements after a week.”

Collaboration and compliance with school policies are essential components of effective human resource management. However, as evidenced by the shared experiences, challenges persist in areas such as document submission, information dissemination, and adherence to institutional rules. These challenges highlight the

importance of clear communication, consistent enforcement of policies, and continuous guidance to ensure alignment with institutional goals.

Resource Constraints and Personnel Scarcity. The maritime school encountered persistent challenges in human resource management due to limited resources and personnel scarcity. Informants stated that the school often struggles with attracting and retaining qualified faculty and staff, which can lead to increased workload and pressure on existing employees. Attracting qualified personnel is a major challenge for the maritime school, primarily due to its limited financial resources. According to See et al. (2020), competitive salaries and benefits are crucial for recruiting skilled professionals, but budget constraints often prevent the school from offering compensation packages that match industry standards or those of other educational institutions. This challenge is further compounded by the specialized nature of maritime education, which requires instructors with both academic qualifications and practical maritime experience (Lloyd, 2022). The scarcity of such highly qualified professionals further limits the available talent pool, making it even harder for the school to fill teaching and administrative positions.

Derek noted that because active, high-ranking officers remain at sea, the school often relies on retired seafarers who, while experienced, may struggle with modern educational technology:

“In maritime, it’s always the scarcity of the personnel because most of the qualified and high-regards instructors are still sea-going, which means that those are the persons who could work now, they work [well] on computers. Sometimes, there are retired persons, they are good but slow in this kind but they are willing to learn of course.”

Nick and **Prince** described how a lack of manpower leads to "exhausted" staff and administrative gaps that delay institutional progress:

Nick: My people are already exhausted because of a lot of jobs... if you're already too much exhausted, it is also the reason why you resign. Sometimes, it feels people toxic if they're already over exhausted with their jobs.”

Prince: “There are some offices or departments *nga kulang* (that are lacking)... especially lack of manpower. There are some instances that we don't have enough people uhm... *nga i-address ang amon* needs or concerns especially in terms of academics. Example if *may ara* problems *nga ma* encounter *namon sa* academics, *wala sya sang* personnel *nga ga tindog* as a VPAA to consult and to suggestion or advice... to cater our concerns. (There are some instances when we don’t have enough people, uhm... to address our needs or concerns, especially in terms of academics. For example, if there are problems we encounter in academics, no dedicated person is acting as a VPAA to consult with and provide suggestions or advice... to address our concerns.)”

Personnel scarcity also affects the focus of the school leaders, according to **Charles**. They cannot perform their duty efficiently, such as addressing the concerns of the faculty and students, because they still have to do clerical work, which adds up to their existing functions as school leaders.

“*Isa mga kulang diri is mga staff bala sa kada offices kay ti ang amon ubra supposed to be, mga ubra sa mga staff dira. Kami pa da ma kung ano... Tanan-tanan... ti tapos pati ubra sang clerk, ubra pa namon... Hindi ka na ka kwan bala sa mga estudyante masyado... Indi mo masyado makwan kay ti focus na focus ka... sa imo na ubra dira, sa mga files. Once nga ma... I mean bala nga madisrupt, gautod imo nga continuity bala sang imo na mind. Gasala kaw kung ano naman to, ano naman to. ‘Diin nako gane.’... Unlike kung may staff ka tani, madali lang. Nadelegate mo ang imo na ubra. (One of the issues here is the lack of staff in each office because the work we’re doing is supposed to be handled by staff. But for us, we end up doing it ourselves... We’re not as effective because we’re doing everything. Even the clerk’s work, we’re also doing it... You can’t focus much on the students, because you’re so focused on your office tasks and the files. Once you’re disrupted, your train of thought gets cut off. You get confused about what you were working on or where you left off. ‘Where was I again?’... Unlike if you had staff, it would be easier. You could delegate the tasks.)”*

The maritime school faces significant challenges due to resource constraints and personnel scarcity, which adversely impact its operations and effectiveness. Transitioning from these challenges to potential solutions, it

is clear that the lack of competitive compensation packages, and the limited pool of qualified maritime educators, create a persistent hurdle in attracting and retaining skilled staff. Furthermore, insights from Derek, Nick, Prince, and Charles highlight how these challenges translate into increased workloads, hindered decision-making, and inefficiencies in both academic and administrative functions.

Impact of Industry Changes. The maritime industry is rapidly evolving due to technological advancements and regulatory changes. This situation calls for a proactive approach to human resource management, with institutions leading the charge in adapting to industry changes and equipping their graduates with the skills required in the modern maritime world. Maritime education institutions must stay ahead of industry trends, incorporating emerging technologies and regulatory requirements into their curricula (Kumar & Rajini, 2024). Training programs need to be continuously updated to reflect the latest industry standards, ensuring that graduates are proficient in using new technologies such as digital navigation systems, automated machinery, and environmental monitoring tools.

Renz expressed that the maritime industry is peculiar in the sense that change is very abrupt. Since maritime institutions are highly governed by international standards, the school must always be ready for the volatility of the industry.

“Isa pagid gali ang akon problem. Because having the maritime education, they are complying to the international standards. So from time to time ang international industry or ang maritime industry grabe ang change. So, dapat masabay kita unlike ya for example in the school that I was in before, education lang sya for elementary. So kun ano subong, subaybayan mo lang sya. Ang change not very abrupt. But in maritime world, change is very abrupt because the industry mismo... the real industry is also changing. So if we do not change sa school, not really change but if we'll not going to.. parang at par with what they are doing, then our students... the graduates naman will have a problem with that. So, dapat ma comply man namon. Kag kun anong mga changes, dapat bal-an man namon. Daw amo na sya. Maka at par kami sa ila mga requirements. (One more problem I have is with maritime education, which requires compliance with international standards. From time to time, the international or maritime industry undergoes significant changes. So we need to keep up. Unlike, for example, the school I was in before, which was focused on elementary education, there, you just monitor what's current, and the changes aren't very abrupt. But in the maritime world, changes happen very abruptly because the industry itself, the real industry, is also changing. So if we don't adapt in the school, not necessarily change completely, but if we don't align with what they are doing, then our students, our graduates, will face problems because of that. We need to comply, and whatever changes occur, we need to be aware of them. That's the challenge, keeping up with their requirements.)”

Maritime schools face several challenges in managing human resources, including emotional intelligence, collaboration, resource constraints, and adapting to industry changes. Conflicts due to personality differences and resistance to change can disrupt productivity, as informants highlighted the difficulty in harmonizing diverse cultures and personalities among staff. Additionally, issues with collaboration and compliance with school policies, such as missed deadlines and unauthorized engagements with students, hinder operations. Resource constraints and personnel scarcity further strain the system, leading to overworked employees and limited capacity to address concerns, initiate projects, or provide necessary resources. Finally, the rapid evolution of the maritime industry, driven by technological and regulatory shifts, requires schools to stay updated with international standards to ensure their students' competitiveness in the industry.

Effective Leadership Approaches in Maritime Schools

Several informants indicated that there is a shift in leadership approaches emphasizing a transformative approach that prioritizes inclusivity, flexibility, and emotional intelligence in the management of human resources. In the context of maritime education, effective leadership hinges on several attributes such as adaptable leadership styles, empowerment and shared responsibility, and professional expertise and experience. These aspects help leaders in creating a positive culture focused on shared success and achievement.

Adaptable Leadership Styles. Some informants emphasized that effective leaders in maritime schools must be flexible in their leadership approaches, adapting their styles to fit the specific situation. This may involve employing a blend of democratic, authoritarian, transformational, and transactional approaches as needed. They added that leaders should be aware to recognize the risks associated with authoritarian styles and how to use them judiciously. Adaptable leadership styles are crucial in environments like maritime schools, where the unique demands of the academic, operational, and safety aspects of training call for versatile leadership. According to Wang et al. (2022), democratic leadership fosters participation and collaboration, making it ideal for situations where input from faculty or staff is essential for decision-making, such as curriculum development or problem-solving. In contrast, authoritarian leadership is often required in scenarios demanding strict discipline, particularly in areas of safety or emergency protocols where quick, decisive actions are crucial. Transformational leadership becomes key when guiding the institution toward long-term goals or motivating both faculty and staff to embrace continuous improvement and innovation. Transactional leadership is useful in maintaining day-to-day operations, where leaders focus on clear structures, rewards, and penalties to ensure tasks are completed efficiently. Effective leaders tailor their approaches based on the immediate needs of the school, ensuring that both operational goals and the broader mission of maritime education are met.

Renz shared that she uses several leadership styles depending on the situation. Primarily, she uses a democratic leadership style since she initially had little knowledge of the maritime industry and relies on the expertise of others, like the program heads and the board. She also uses a contingency approach, adjusting her leadership style to fit the personalities and situations of the people she works with to maintain harmony. Also, she emphasizes transformational leadership, believing that middle managers will eventually take over leadership roles.

“Here in our school, mostly I am employing, democratic style. Since first, I have little idea about maritime industry, so I have to listen to the experts. Such as the program heads, the dean, the chairman of the board. Because they know best about their maritime situation. Another thing is contingency style, wherein... I’ve noticed here in the culture of our school, the people here are mixed personality. So, if you stick to authoritative lang (only), they don’t respond to it. So, you employ that kind of leadership based sa (on the) situation, based sa (on the) character man sang (also of the) person. What else... and transformational because I believe nga (that) these people, like in the middle managers, they will replace my position. So, if I don’t transform them, if I don’t help them to become better leaders, leaders bala na (that are) very broad in thinking. It’s for the good of the school. Kay bal-an ko ang akon position.. it’s just passing so sila ang ma sunod (Because I know my position... it’s just temporary, so they will be the ones to follow next). So I have to help them cultivate that kind of leadership.”

Charles, on the other hand, employs a participative type of leadership. Everyone has a role, and it's about teamwork, not working individually. While he prefers to handle tasks by himself when possible, he ensures that each person feels their contribution is part of the shared success. In this approach, success is collective, and failure is shared, which is why he values participative leadership.

“Para sa akon, isa sa manami nga kwan is the participative style of leadership. Each one have a role. Kag indi kanya-kanya, binuligay lang. Ako, kung mahimo pa lang, indi ko na sila pagpaubrahon, mahimo man lang. Ugaling kay they have their own roles. Bali nga... napapabatyag ko man sa ila, indi gid ko maghambal kung amo na kundi sa ways ko nga whatever success we have here, it is a success of all. But your failure is also a failure of the others. So that's why nga amo na para sa akon, natawag nga participative style. (For me, one of the best approaches is the participative style of leadership. Everyone has a role, and it’s not about working individually but helping each other out. As much as possible, I don’t want to make them do tasks that I can handle myself. However, they have their roles to fulfill. In a way, I make them feel that I don’t just tell them what to do, but through my actions, I show that whatever success we achieve here is a success for everyone. But their failure is also a failure of the others. That’s why, for me, it’s called a participative style of leadership.)”

Clark shared that what works for him right now is the diplomatic approach. Patience is also crucial, as instructors vary in their performance—some submit work early, while others struggle with deadlines.

“I think there's no other way that is being effective aside from being so diplomatic for that really works right now. Because if you're not diplomatic in every sense you cannot maintain a faculty in this institution, and patience is very important of course. Because everybody is not equal. There are instructors who can... who submits ahead of time but there are those instructors that are really so lazy, really cannot submit on time. So, what really works in this kind of scenario is being patience and diplomatic.”

Conversely, **Derek** employs an authoritative leadership approach. He emphasizes the importance of clear communication, preferring to give straightforward answers or acknowledge when additional time is needed to respond. Additionally, he highlights the necessity of projecting toughness as an instructor and effectively navigating dynamics in maritime settings, where hierarchy can sometimes undermine authority.

“Although we have a semi-regimental system, it’s just like the same in the seaman’s world, you have that chain of command. And then, sometimes, if there are some mixture of instructors... for the seafarers, we already did that and they are aware of that chain of command, especially on our Gen. Ed. people which they used to have that just like friendly environment. It’s okay to be friendly but always put limitations and if you found that the students commit mistakes, they have that equivalent punishment or equivalent apprehension. So, that’s what I’m trying to tell them. Put a limitation and there’s nothing wrong with being that authoritative or what. Put a limitation and show also your authority with regards to handling students.”

Having a different point of view from Derek, **Nick** shared that for two years already, he has been using the democratic approach to leadership. He believes that although in the maritime industry, you have to be disciplined, it should not be all the time.

“I have already done this for two years as being a democratic leader, and I'm hearing feedback also from my faculty that it is good because they can approach me anytime. I can hear their side. So... on my opinion, I know that you need to be a disciplined person if you are on maritime, but not all the time, that being an authoritarian is necessary, especially when you are dealing with professionals. For me, because I'm dealing with professionals also, so I think being a democratic, the democratic leadership approach is effective also in maritime industry.”

Prince, though not sure if it is effective, uses a transactional approach. He recognizes that there is a loophole in being too kind, leading to possible abuse from subordinates, such as requests for leniency in submitting grades and exams.

“Inde ko paman manahambal nga effective gid ang akon nga approach because wala man gid ako nag pungko pa for a long time, diba. Tungod kay gina hambal ko lang na sya because I think naka cycle ko isa ka academic year kag daw okay sya. Pero one thing nga nakita ko na loophole, if I’m too kind to my subordinates, may possibilities nga i-abuse ko nila. Example, submitting the prescribed requirements like the grades and exams. Inde man ko ka hambal nga effective gid ang akon nga approach nga transactional leadership style, tungod kay 9 months palang gid ako ga pungko. (I can’t say that my approach is really effective because I haven’t been in the position for a long time, right? I only mention it because I think I’ve gone through one academic cycle and it seemed okay. But one thing I noticed as a loophole is that if I’m too kind to my subordinates, there’s a possibility that they might abuse it. For example, in submitting the required documents like grades and exams. I can’t say that my approach, which is a transactional leadership style, is really effective because I’ve only been in this position for 9 months.)”

The insights shared by the various informants highlight the importance of adaptable leadership styles in maritime schools, where diverse situations demand flexibility and responsiveness. As demonstrated by Renz, a blend of democratic, contingency, and transformational leadership is key to fostering collaboration, addressing the unique needs of individuals, and preparing future leaders. Charles’s emphasis on participative leadership further underscores the value of teamwork and shared success, while Clark’s focus on diplomacy and patience addresses the varying performance levels among faculty members.

On the other hand, Derek’s authoritative approach, rooted in clear communication and hierarchy, reflects the discipline and structure necessary in maritime settings, whereas Nick’s democratic style exemplifies the balance

between professionalism and approachability. Finally, Prince's recognition of the potential pitfalls of transactional leadership highlights the importance of striking the right balance to prevent misuse of authority.

Empowerment and Shared Responsibility. To create a sense of shared success, effective leaders empower instructors and staff to take ownership and responsibility. Informants noted that school leaders should delegate responsibilities appropriately and provide the support needed for others to succeed. Nadeem (2024) posits that leadership is not about centralizing control but about distributing it. By sharing responsibility, school leaders encourage a culture where instructors and staff feel a collective sense of ownership over the success of the institution. This creates an environment where everyone feels accountable for both the successes and challenges of the school, leading to more engaged, motivated, and proactive staff. Building upon the preceding idea, leaders must delegate responsibilities thoughtfully, ensuring that tasks are aligned with the skills and strengths of their team members (Nelson, 2024). However, delegation is not enough on its own; school leaders must also provide the necessary support, whether through resources, guidance, or professional development opportunities. By offering ongoing support, leaders ensure that their team members have the tools they need to succeed.

Renz shared that another effective approach to leadership is getting a consensus when making decisions that would affect the employees. She believes that listening to them gives a shared responsibility and a sense of ownership.

“Uhm... *example lang* (for example), there's one teacher whose performance is not really that good. When it comes... not in the academic aspect no... but you know... in the behavior... and there are many clamors about that person. So, I cannot decide immediately that I will do this following sanctions to him without listening to the rest of the committee... yeah to the group. So I have also to listen to their views about after interviewing this person. What's their view, what are your ideas about this? Then from there, I decide what to do, like recommendations for that person.”

In the same aspect, **Prince** mentioned that giving support to his subordinates creates a bond between him and the faculty that fosters a sense of belongingness.

“Uhm.. there are some teachers who are not uhm... what do you call this one, not literate in terms of digital or well known in terms of his profession or the subject *nga i-hatag sa iya* (that he/she will handle). *Kumbaga* (In short), he is not expert in that kind of subject. So, *ang matabo is alalyan mo sya*. *You will take effort, you will exert a lot of effort to help that person*. Especially *inde sya capable nga mag ubra sang amo na nga bagay*. So, one thing I appreciate in my position *nga* just in case *nga may problema gale imo* subordinates, *kun gusto mo palanggaon kanila*, try to give them solution, not give them problem. (So, what will happen is you need to support them. You will put in the effort, you will exert a lot of effort to help that person, especially if they are not capable of doing that particular task. One thing I appreciate in my position is that just in case there's a problem with your subordinates if you want them to like you, try to give them a solution, not create more problems for them.)”

In addition, **Derek** shared that delegating tasks is also crucial for effective leadership as it gives a smooth flow of instruction and avoids overlapping of tasks.

“The delegation of the task is one of my parts also, especially when there is an incoming activities, my first thing to do is that I have to issue an advisory. So from there, the activities is already set on the schedule. Actually, I've seen the logic on this, so it's just avoid overlapping in giving the task. Sometimes, it is just like that the management asked if this one is done. So, I don't have to go directly to the program heads that, 'Hey! You have to do this'. No. I have to ask, 'Yes, Sir. That is the one we already doing to the assistant dean' So, you already had, 'Okay, just proceed'. So, it's really the good hierarchy that you go through the assistant dean.”

Effective leadership in educational institutions hinges on the principles of empowerment and shared responsibility. Building upon this, it is essential for leaders to delegate tasks thoughtfully, ensuring alignment with their team members' strengths and providing the necessary support for their success. As shared by Renz, fostering a sense of shared responsibility can be achieved by actively listening to the input of others when making

decisions, ensuring that all voices are heard. Prince's perspective further emphasized that offering support to subordinates not only helps them succeed but also strengthens the bond between leaders and their teams, creating a sense of belonging. Derek's experience underscored the importance of delegation in maintaining a smooth workflow and preventing task overlap. Ultimately, by empowering others, delegating tasks thoughtfully, and offering continuous support, leaders can cultivate an environment where everyone is motivated, engaged, and invested in the success of the institution.

Professional Expertise and Experience. Some informants suggested that leaders in maritime schools should have substantial professional experience and expertise in the maritime industry. This credibility not only earns the respect of instructors and students but also reinforces effective leadership. Continuous self-assessment and commitment to professional development are important for ongoing growth in this role.

Effective leadership in maritime schools requires flexibility, with leaders adjusting their styles to suit specific situations by employing a mix of democratic, authoritarian, transformational, and transactional approaches. Renz, for example, uses a democratic leadership style, relying on the expertise of others, while also applying a contingency approach to manage different personalities and emphasizing transformational leadership to prepare middle managers for future roles. Similarly, Nick finds democratic leadership effective in fostering approachability with professionals. Charles and Clark illustrate participative and diplomatic styles, respectively, with Charles focusing on teamwork and shared success, while Clark prioritizes diplomacy and patience in managing faculty.

In contrast, Derek employs an authoritative approach, emphasizing clear communication and discipline, though he acknowledges the limitations of strict authority in professional settings, a sentiment echoed by Nick. Prince's transactional style is cautious, as he balances kindness with discipline to prevent leniency from being exploited. Empowerment and delegation are seen as essential, with Renz and Prince highlighting the importance of shared responsibility and support, while Derek stresses task delegation to ensure efficiency.

Lastly, the informants agree that professional expertise in the maritime industry is crucial for earning respect and reinforcing effective decision-making, alongside continuous self-assessment and development for sustained leadership growth.

Strategies Employed for Creating a Positive Work Environment

Creating a positive work environment is essential for enhancing employee satisfaction, productivity, and overall educational success. In the context of maritime education, effective collaboration is also important. This involves not only clear communication but also the development of strong relationships and structured engagement practices. The following emerging themes emphasized the essential aspects that contribute to a thriving positive and collaborative work environment within a maritime school setting, which includes communication strategies, relationship building, structured engagement, and a supportive environment.

Communication Strategies. Informants emphasized the necessity of developing strong communication strategies. This includes setting aside specific time for discussions and updates to keep faculty and staff informed and engaged. Encouraging open dialogue creates an environment where stakeholders feel comfortable sharing their ideas and concerns. Moreover, it is important to establish feedback mechanisms for receiving and implementing inputs to enhance communication effectiveness. Communication strategies are essential tools for leaders, particularly in specialized institutions like maritime schools, where clear and effective communication ensures the smooth operation of educational programs and fosters a positive learning environment (Salamondra, 2021). Well-structured communication strategies are critical for keeping all stakeholders—faculty, staff, students, and external partners—informed and engaged. According to Dobržinskienė (2024), by having a clear plan in place, leaders can efficiently convey important messages, minimizing potential misunderstandings or miscommunications. This is especially important in maritime schools, where safety, precision, and adherence to international standards are top priorities.

Clark shared that for him to foster collaboration and communication among his faculty, he allots thirty minutes to one hour of his time talking with them. This is his way of knowing the needs and challenges that his subordinates encounter as they perform their tasks and obligations.

“Yes sir I think giving... allotting... you have to allot... to give some time everyday... you have to allot even one hour, thirty minutes talking with them. Talking with them Sir before you start your work or after you start your work. I think that's very effective because in that sense when you are together inside the room, you give them time, they can communicate their needs, the challenges they encounter and also what you want on your side as program head out of them. I think for now that works because everyday I always see to it that I allot thirty minutes with them before I start my work. I do not immediately start working or I finish the day without talking to them.”

The same sentiment is shared by **Nick** where even if they don't have a meeting, he goes to each one of his faculty members every morning. He usually asks for the concerns of his subordinates.

“Even if we don't have a meeting, every morning I go to each one of them. *Kinakamusta sila* (I check on them)... ‘Okay, what about your task? What are your pending tasks today? So, what is the status? When are... when it will be going to finish? Can you finish it on that day?’ So, every morning, I walk on every department, on every office, and I talk to them if there are some concerns. So, every morning, I will go to every office, and I'll try also to consult them.”

On the other hand, **Prince** makes sure that every time there is an announcement or advisory released, everyone in his department is aware of and properly understands it. Through this guidance, he was able to establish good communication with them.

“In terms of communication, uhm... to make things more uhm... guided no, accordingly. Uhm.. I posted some advisories. If it is a written form of communication. And let them acknowledge that advisory to assure that they properly read, understand, and comprehend the things that I need to... *gusto ipa lambot sa ila* (I want to convey to them).”

The development and implementation of effective communication strategies are vital for fostering collaboration, addressing challenges, and ensuring smooth operations within specialized institutions such as maritime schools. By prioritizing regular, open dialogue and creating structured feedback mechanisms, leaders can build trust and maintain a positive working and learning environment. Informants like Clark, Nick, and Prince exemplify the importance of consistent engagement, whether through dedicated discussions, personal check-ins, or clear written advisories, in creating an atmosphere where faculty and staff feel supported and informed. Ultimately, these strategies not only enhance day-to-day interactions but also ensure alignment with institutional goals, particularly in settings where precision and adherence to standards are paramount.

Relationship Building. Some informants stated that creating positive relationships in the workplace is important for making a collaborative and supportive environment. This can be achieved by actively working to create connections among faculty and staff through informal interactions, such as celebrations and social gatherings. Maintaining professionalism in all interactions is important for building trust and respect among all parties involved. Relationship building in educational settings, such as maritime schools, is critical for fostering a collaborative and supportive environment. Positive relationships among faculty and staff create an atmosphere where individuals can work together effectively, with leaders playing a key role in emphasizing their importance (Rahmadani et al., 2020). These relationships lay the foundation for improved communication, teamwork, and overall morale, as people who feel connected and valued are more likely to contribute positively to organizational goals. In such environments, collaboration thrives, as staff members willingly share resources, knowledge, and expertise, promoting a team-based approach to education. A supportive atmosphere also ensures that individuals feel comfortable seeking guidance when needed, further strengthening bonds and fostering a sense of community (Wiedermann et al., 2023). Informal interactions, such as social gatherings or celebrations, play a significant role in this process, breaking down hierarchical barriers and fostering camaraderie, which can lead to more efficient professional collaborations.

However, maintaining professionalism is crucial to ensuring that these relationships remain productive. Clear communication, mutual respect, and accountability help build trust within the team, preventing conflicts or a lack of respect from derailing the collaborative environment. According to Lansing et al. (2023), trust and respect are the cornerstones of effective relationship building, cultivated through consistent, transparent communication, integrity, and fairness in all interactions. When staff members trust one another and their leaders, they are more likely to collaborate openly and make better decisions. Respect ensures that everyone feels valued and heard, promoting equality within the team. In maritime schools, where teamwork and collaboration are vital for both academic and operational success, relationship building contributes to creating an environment where innovation, learning, and support can thrive.

Renz expressed that one of her ways of building relationships is through giving praise for the simple achievements that each employees make. In this manner, they feel appreciated and recognized.

“*Tapos if for example they did something good, hambalon mo man sila nga ‘Very good team, well done. Thank you for the success of amo sini.’ Daw amo na. Then of course pamahawan mo sila e. Daw amo na.* (And then, for example, if they did something good, you should also tell them, ‘Very good team, well done. Thank you for the success of this event.’ Something like that. And of course, you should treat them to some snacks. Something like that.)”

In addition to that, **Renz** also organizes team-building activities as well as barbecue parties wherein everybody is given a chance to unwind and relax.

“Actually, we have this kind of socialization activities such as like BBQ party, wherein everybody will be able to unwind for time being. Then aside from that, team building activities and what else. We are also trying to push the plan of having educational tour for our employees and of course like we also have Christmas party or year-end activities. And we celebrate birthdays. We allow our employees to celebrate birthday, or we give a simple birthday party to the employees.”

Prince shared that celebrating birthdays is their means of building relationships with each other among his subordinates. This form of social gathering makes their department more close to each other, making them feel important.

“In terms of collaboration, one thing I appreciate in our department, if *kun sino bi ang may birthday, gina celebrate gid na namon*. For example, each of them will voluntarily bring some food. For example *bi ako* I always bring the cake for the celebrant (In terms of collaboration, one thing I appreciate in our department is that we always celebrate whoever’s birthday it is. For example, each of them will voluntarily bring some food. For instance, I always bring the cake for the celebrant). Some of them like salad, spaghetti, *bihon* or what. Because I believe in that simple gathering, simple celebration, uhm... we create an inclusive environment. A healthy environment for everyone *nga* there’s no hate barrier between them as a subordinate and me as their in-charge in our department.”

Derek also mentioned that his way of building relationships with his subordinates is through having coffee with them where “sometimes we made jokes, sometimes we made serious talk.”

Charles on the other hand emphasizes the importance of building good relationships in the workplace, treating everyone as equals rather than asserting superiority. While acknowledging the difference in job levels, he focuses on maintaining mutual respect, disregarding the "head" position to create a more comfortable and efficient environment. He highlights the need for patience and persuasion when communicating with others, especially when requesting tasks, to avoid creating friction and gaps between team members. Patience is crucial to maintaining harmony and avoiding irritation in the workplace.

“The best strategies that I use, number one, is your relationship. For me, I want them to feel free. Do not look at me as superior, we are just the same. But the only difference there is, of course, the level of the work. Of course, *mataas amon nga... I mean bala nga... kay ti ang ubra ta halin sa babaw paidalum... kung halin sa babaw, we*

just follow it. *Pero* when it comes to relationship, so... *gina-disregard ko* as in head *gid ko, mas mayo ako sa imo*. So, I don't want that. So... *kay nami kung wala kamo gap bala. Para madali. Kag kung kaisa, may mga tawo kung kaisa nga budlay storyahon, 'Sir, ginadalian ta ni. Tani, ipasa mo na.'* Syempre, *kung gulpihon mo ang tawo kaisa, daw medyo indi man manami. Pero kung kabalo ka mag persuade sa iya, ti medyo may palunod ka lang da gamay. Kag isa sa ubra, importanti gid ang pasenya mo. Kung waay pasensya, mairita ka, dali kamo magcreate sang gap sa imo nga subordinates.* (Of course, we have a high level of... I mean, our work is from top to bottom... when it comes from the top, we just follow it. But when it comes to relationships, I don't disregard it. As the head, I don't think I'm better than you. So, I don't want that. It's better when there is no gap between you. It makes things easier. And sometimes, some people are hard to talk to, like 'Sir, we're in a hurry. Please pass this.' Of course, if you pressure people, it doesn't feel good. But if you know how to persuade them, you just need to push a little. And one important thing in work is patience. If you don't have patience, you'll get irritated and easily create a gap with your subordinates.)"

Fostering positive relationships in the workplace is essential for creating a collaborative and supportive environment, especially in educational settings like maritime schools. Through a combination of informal interactions, professional respect, and intentional efforts by leaders, such as team-building activities and inclusive celebrations, employees feel valued, appreciated, and connected. These practices not only strengthen bonds but also promote effective communication, teamwork, and morale, enabling organizations to achieve shared goals. By maintaining professionalism and demonstrating patience, respect, and empathy, leaders and staff alike contribute to a harmonious and productive environment where collaboration thrives and individuals feel empowered to succeed. Ultimately, these relationship-building efforts lay the foundation for an inclusive workplace culture where both personal and organizational growth can flourish.

Structured Engagement. Informants noted the importance of structured engagement practices. Regular meetings including monthly meetings and daily check-ins help maintain continuous communication and collaboration. Additionally, providing orientation and training sessions focused on teamwork and leadership equips the faculty and staff with the necessary skills for effective collaboration. According to Bucăța and Rizescu (2017), by having structured engagement, the school ensures that communication is not just sporadic but continuous. This prevents misunderstandings and allows for real-time adjustments to strategies or practices. For example, daily check-ins may focus on immediate operational concerns, while monthly meetings might be used to review broader progress and long-term goals.

Nick shared that he organizes monthly meetings to get abreast with the issues within their department as well as hear feedback as to the situation of his subordinates.

"We implement that every month we must conduct a monthly meeting to hear the feedback of our faculties. So, room for improvement, of course, we put some agendas, what are the issues during this term, during this month, so that we can address immediately."

In addition to the monthly meetings, **Renz** also shared that at the start of each school year, in-service training is offered for all employees, featuring resource speakers who discuss important topics. For the upcoming training, the focus will be on conflict resolution, with plans to invite a speaker on the subject.

"Yes, we have Sir such as in the in-service training. We have that that every start of the school we offer in-service training so that all those... we invited resource speakers to talk about salient topics that will be of help to all employees. Like this coming in-service training, we are planning to invite a speaker regarding how to resolve like mga conflicts."

Structured engagement practices, including regular meetings, daily check-ins, and in-service training sessions, play a critical role in fostering effective communication and collaboration within schools. These initiatives ensure that communication is consistent and purposeful, preventing misunderstandings and promoting timely responses to challenges. Monthly meetings allow leaders like Nick to gather feedback and address pressing issues, while daily check-ins handle immediate operational concerns. Moreover, in-service training sessions, as highlighted by Renz, provide opportunities for professional growth and equip employees with practical skills,

such as conflict resolution, to enhance teamwork and leadership. By implementing these structured engagement strategies, schools can build a collaborative environment that continuously adapts and improves.

Supportive Environment. Other informants emphasized that creating a supportive environment within the workplace is essential for effective communication and collaboration. Making them feel welcome and involving employees in the decision-making process creates a sense of ownership and commitment to the school's goals.

Renz shared that, to help new employees integrate, she goes beyond the usual HR office introduction by personally introducing them to others. Additionally, she actively listens to concerns from middle managers and responds promptly. If issues require significant resources, she escalates it to the board. She also does regular visits to offices and informal gatherings to foster open communication and a friendly work environment.

“For example, we have this kind of like new marketing personnel. So, in order for her to understand the marketing side, I go out of my way to introduce her to others, aside of course of the HR way of introducing the new employee. I do that one if I think she was not introduced to other people yet. I also listen to them. For example, the middle managers. Like the program heads and the dean regarding their concerns. I immediately respond to it. I mean when I say respond, resolve it. If I can do it in my capacity or sometimes if I cannot because it entails big budget, so I must tell the board about it. What else, I also visited offices and just try to you know, talk to them in a friendly way or invite them for... like eating somewhere else and we just talk.”

On the other hand, **Clark** revealed that to foster a supportive environment, when creating class schedules or assigning faculty workloads, care is taken to ensure faculty members are not overloaded. Additionally, verbal recognition is given to acknowledge and appreciate their good work.

“Every time you know... we create the class schedule or the faculty loading we always see to it that the faculty is not overloaded and every time they make something good from their work we always give credit but that's only verbal that but yeah.”

For **Prince**, creating a supportive environment starts by involving his subordinates in the decision-making process. He wants the voice of his subordinates to be heard in every decision that he makes.

“And also, in terms of collaboration to create a supportive environment, every time I do some decision, *gina upod ko gid na sila* because *inde ko gusto nga* their voice or their insight will be neglected *no. Gusto ko man uhm...* (I always include them because I don't want their voice or insights to be neglected. I also want them to feel that) they belong in whatever decision that I will intake.”

Effective communication is vital for keeping faculty and staff informed and engaged, with leaders like Clark and Nick emphasizing the need for daily interactions to discuss the needs, concerns, and progress of their faculty members. Clark dedicates 30 minutes to an hour daily to converse with his subordinates, while Nick makes morning rounds to check on tasks and deadlines. Additionally, Prince uses written advisories to ensure all announcements are understood. Building positive relationships contributes to a collaborative environment, as Renz suggests celebrating small achievements and organizing social events like BBQ parties and team-building activities, while informal gatherings, such as birthday celebrations, help strengthen connections and create inclusivity. Regularly scheduled meetings and training sessions also provide structured opportunities for communication and collaboration. Nick organizes monthly meetings for feedback, and Renz holds in-service training sessions focused on teamwork and leadership.

Creating a supportive environment involves making employees feel welcomed, valued, and included in decision-making processes. Renz takes a personal approach to introducing new employees and listens to middle managers' concerns, while Clark ensures manageable workloads and provides verbal recognition for good work. Prince emphasizes the importance of including subordinates in decision-making to ensure their voices are heard. Overall, fostering effective communication, building strong relationships, and providing structured engagement opportunities contribute to a supportive and collaborative workplace.

Competency-Based HR Model

After thorough consideration based on the results of the thematic analysis, the Competency-Based HR model can be utilized by the school leaders of the maritime school to improve its management of HR. First developed by McClelland in the early 1970s, the Competency-Based HR model offers a comprehensive framework for addressing the complexities of human resource management within maritime schools.

The Competency-Based HR Model centers on the identification and development of specific competencies, such as knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors, that are crucial for achieving successful job performance. Unlike traditional HR models that rely heavily on education, experience, or credentials, McClelland's approach prioritizes measurable competencies that directly impact performance outcomes. This model ensures that HR practices, including recruitment, training, performance management, and career development, are closely aligned with the competencies necessary to achieve organizational goals.

Central to this model is the process of competency identification. This involves determining the skills, behaviors, and attitudes that predict high performance in specific roles. Such competencies are typically identified using techniques such as behavioral event interviews, job analysis, or critical incident methods. Recruitment and selection under this model focus on evaluating candidates based on their possession of the identified competencies rather than traditional qualifications. Meanwhile, competency-based training and development programs aim to address gaps in employee competencies revealed during performance reviews. Performance management within this framework emphasizes the demonstration of required competencies in achieving organizational objectives. Similarly, career and succession planning are directly tied to an individual's growth in critical competencies, ensuring that career advancements align with the organization's needs.

Competency-Based HR Model aligns effectively with the findings of the study on maritime school leaders' perspectives on managing human resources. This alignment underscores the potential of integrating McClelland's principles to address challenges faced by maritime schools while strengthening their HR strategies. For instance, maritime school leaders perceive their roles as supervisors, monitors, and auditors who ensure tasks are executed effectively to foster a positive learning environment. In this context, role-specific competencies such as supervision, auditing, decision-making, and conflict resolution can be identified and enhanced through methods like behavioral event interviews. Furthermore, competency-based training can refine adaptive leadership and task delegation skills to align leaders' capabilities with institutional goals.

Similarly, the model proves valuable in addressing challenges such as personality conflicts, faculty non-compliance, and resource limitations. By identifying core competencies like conflict resolution and interpersonal communication, maritime schools can implement targeted training programs to address these gaps. Additionally, competency frameworks help allocate limited resources efficiently by focusing on high-impact skills and behaviors. As leaders adopt flexible approaches and empower subordinates to foster shared success, the model supports the development of competencies in flexibility, emotional intelligence, and team empowerment. In addition, recruitment practices can further ensure that leaders with these traits are selected, while professional development initiatives enhance collaboration and supportive work environments.

To promote organizational effectiveness and employee well-being, McClelland's model emphasizes competencies in communication, collaboration, and decision-making. Performance evaluations can assess contributions to a supportive work culture, while tailored training programs bolster open dialogue and team-building skills. Moreover, maritime schools must remain aligned with the volatile demands of the industry by regularly updating competency frameworks to reflect changes in regulations, technologies, and standards like the STCW. Competency-based recruitment and succession planning ensure that staff possess the agility and expertise required to navigate industry shifts.

By systematically applying McClelland's Competency-Based HR Model, maritime schools can address the challenges highlighted in the study. This competency-driven approach equips leaders and staff to meet organizational objectives while adapting to industry dynamics, ultimately enhancing the quality of maritime education and preparing students for successful careers in the field.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the narratives of the maritime school leaders, leadership in the context of specialized education sector functions as a navigational center that incorporates supervision, monitoring, and auditing to ensure institutional compliance. Maritime human resource management is not a static administrative role. Rather, it is a dynamic process where success depends on the leader's ability to remain flexible and professionally credible while navigating personality conflicts, document non-compliance, and industry volatility. Effective maritime leadership requires a deliberate shift from traditional top-down authority to a collaborative environment where empowerment and open dialogue drive organizational resilience. Thus, adopting a Competency-Based HR Model is relevant and important for newly established maritime schools, as it can directly address the compliance gaps and personnel shortages identified in the leaders' narratives. It also provides a structured framework to align recruitment, training, and performance with the rigorous, measurable standards of the international maritime industry.

Moreover, maritime school leaders should institutionalize flexible leadership approaches and digital communication systems to streamline policy implementation and reduce inter-departmental friction. Human Resource Officers should move beyond administrative support to provide targeted workshops in conflict resolution, emotional intelligence, and strategic decision-making specifically for maritime professionals transitioning into academic roles.

REFERENCES

1. Basilio, M. B. & Bueno, D. C. (2021). Instructional supervision and assessment in the 21st century and beyond. *Institutional Multidisciplinary Research and Development Journal*, 4. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED629212.pdf>
2. Bloom, N., Lemos, R., Sadun, R., & Van Reenen, J. (2015). Does management matter in schools? *The Economic Journal*, 125(584), 647–674. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ecoj.12267>
3. Bryson, A., Stokes, L., & Wilkinson, D. (2020). Can human resource management improve schools' performance? *LABOUR*, 34(4), 427–440. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lab.12178>
4. Bucăța, G. & Rizescu, A. M. (2017). The role of communication in enhancing work effectiveness of an organization. *Land Forces Academy Review*, 22(1), 49–57. <https://doi.org/10.1515/raft-2017-0008>
5. Chankseliani, M., Qoraboyev, I., & Gimranova, D. (2020). Higher education contributing to local, national, and Global Development: New Empirical and conceptual insights. *Higher Education*, 81(1), 109–127. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-020-00565-8>
6. CHED-MARINA (2023a). *Guidelines and procedures on joint CHED-MARINA evaluation and inspection of higher education institutions applying for government authority to operate Bachelor of Science in Marine Transportation and/or Bachelor of Science in Marine Engineering program/s, series of 2022, as amended* [JCMMC 02]. Department of Transportation Maritime Industry Authority. <https://stcw.marina.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/JOINT-CHED-MARINA-MEMORANDUM-CIRCULAR-No.-02.pdf>
7. CHED-MARINA (2023b). *Policies, standards, and guidelines for the Bachelor of Science in Marine Transportation and Bachelor of Science in Marine Engineering programs, series of 2022, as amended* [JCMMC 01]. Department of Transportation Maritime Industry Authority. <https://stcw.marina.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/JOINT-CHED-MARINA-MEMORANDUM-CIRCULAR-No.-01.pdf>
8. Cutler, N.A., Halcomb, E., & Sim, J. (2021). Using naturalistic inquiry to inform qualitative description. *Nurse Researcher*. doi:10.7748/nr.2021.e1788
9. Dobržinskienė, R. (2024). The role of the leader's communication in the organization. *Regional Formation and Development Studies*, 42(1), 26–36. <https://doi.org/10.15181/rfds.v42i1.2599>
10. Gomathy, C. K., Samudrala, S. G., & Manohar, S. (2023). Human resource management: Case study with solutions. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Engineering and Management*, 07(08). <https://doi.org/10.55041/ijsrem21509>

11. Kumar, N. & Rajini, G. (2024). Reimagining Maritime Education and training using latest technologies. *Salud, Ciencia y Tecnología - Serie de Conferencias*, 3, 895. <https://doi.org/10.56294/sctconf2024895>
12. Lansing, A. E., Romero, N. J., Siantz, E., Silva, V., Center, K., Casteel, D., & Gilmer, T. (2023). Building Trust: Leadership Reflections on Community Empowerment and engagement in a large urban initiative. *BMC Public Health*, 23(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-023-15860-z>
13. Lloyd, J. (2022). Just being an experienced mariner does not make for a good educator and trainer. *The International Maritime Human Element Bulletin*, 27. <https://www.nautinst.org/static/d7765b06-6639-4bce-b218272616c0172c/Maritime-educator.pdf>
14. Mallam, S. C., Nazir, S., & Renganayagalu, S. K. (2019). Rethinking maritime education, training, and operations in the digital era: Applications for emerging immersive technologies. *Journal of Marine Science and Engineering*, 7(12), 428. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jmse7120428>
15. McBrayer, J. S., Akins, C., de Blume, A. G., Cleveland, R., & Pannell, S. (2020). Instructional leadership practices and school leaders' self-efficacy. *School Leadership Review*, 15(1). https://doi.org/https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/slr/vol15/iss1/13/?utm_source=scholarworks.sfasu.edu%2Fslr%2Fvol15%2Fiss1%2F13&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages
16. Miles, D.A. (2017). A taxonomy of research gaps: Identifying and defining the seven research gaps. *Journal of Research Methods and Strategies*. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319244623>
17. Nadeem, M. (2024). Distributed leadership in educational contexts: A catalyst for school improvement. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 9, 100835. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2024.100835>
18. Nandhini, B. R. & Vimala, B. S. (2020). Imperative role of human resource management in organizational activities. *International Review of Business Economics*, 4(1), 124-129.
19. Nelson, B. (2024, August 22). *The art of delegation: Empowering your team* [Post]. LinkedIn. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/art-delegation-empowering-your-team-bijith-nelson-4wbzc>
20. Norton, M.S. (2019, December 5). *The principal as human resources leader*. MiddleWeb. <https://www.middleweb.com/36417/the-principal-as-human-resources-leader/>
21. Padillo, G., P. Manguilimotan, R., G. Capuno, R., & C. Espina, R. (2021). Professional development activities and teacher performance. *International Journal of Education and Practice*, 9(3), 497–506. <https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.61.2021.93.497.506>
22. Pamphilon, A. (2024). *Engaging ethical standards that can be lived: The importance of Communicating Ethics and compliance within an organization*. Communicate Magazine. <https://www.communicatemagazine.com/features/2024/engaging-ethical-standards-that-can-be-lived-the-importance-of-communicating-ethics-and-compliance-within-an-organisation/>
23. Rahmadani, V. G., Schaufeli, W. B., Stouten, J., Zhang, Z., & Zulkarnain, Z. (2020). Engaging leadership and its implication for work engagement and job outcomes at the individual and team level: A multi-level longitudinal study. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(3), 776. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17030776>
24. Rasool, S. F., Wang, M., Tang, M., Saeed, A., & Iqbal, J. (2021). How toxic workplace environment effects the employee engagement: The mediating role of organizational support and employee wellbeing. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(5), 2294. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18052294>
25. Salamondra, T. (2021). Effective communication in schools. *BU Journal of Graduate Studies in Education*, 12(1), 22-26. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1303981.pdf>
26. Saldaña, J. (2016). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (3rd Edition). Sage Publications.
27. See, B. H., Morris, R., Gorard, S., Kokotsaki, D., & Abdi, S. (2020). Teacher recruitment and retention: A critical review of international evidence of most promising interventions. *Education Sciences*, 10(10), 262. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci10100262>
28. Tahera, F. T. (2023). *Exploring the role of education in addressing the skills gap for seafarers in Bangladesh's maritime industry* [Unpublished master dissertation]. World Maritime University. https://commons.wmu.se/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3260&context=all_dissertations

-
29. Valdes, E. (2022). *Workplace conflicts, causes, and interventions* [Unpublished master thesis]. University of Maine Presque Isle.
 30. Wang, Q., Hou, H., & Li, Z. (2022). Participative leadership: A literature review and prospects for future research. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.924357>
 31. White, M. G. (2020). *Why human subjects research protection is important*. *Ochsner Journal, 20*(1), 16-33. <https://doi.org/10.31486/toj.20.5012>
 32. Wiedermann, C. J., Barbieri, V., Plagg, B., Marino, P., Piccoliori, G., & Engl, A. (2023). Fortifying the foundations: A comprehensive approach to enhancing mental health support in educational policies amidst crises. *Healthcare, 11*(10), 1423. <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare11101423>