

Unpacking Ethical Leadership Practices and Governance Strategies of Public Elementary School Principals in the Fourth Congressional District of Quezon: Teachers' Empirical Insights and Learner Outcomes

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Abstract

This study examined the ethical leadership practices and governance strategies of public elementary school principals in the Fourth Congressional District of Quezon and their influence on learner outcomes. Employing mixed-methods research design, the study involved a total of 181 teachers who participated in the survey, while 10 teachers were involved in in-depth interviews for the qualitative phase. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation, while qualitative data were thematically analyzed. Findings revealed that teachers perceived their principals' ethical leadership practices in terms of integrity and fairness, professional role modeling, and accountability and transparency to be at a high level. Governance strategies, particularly in instructional supervision, stakeholder engagement, and resource management, were also widely practiced. Furthermore, teachers reported that ethical leadership significantly influenced learner outcomes, including academic performance, behavior and discipline, and motivation and participation. Correlation analysis confirmed that ethical leadership practices and governance strategies were significantly related to learner outcomes. Qualitative findings supported these results, highlighting that school heads demonstrate fairness, transparency, and adaptability in addressing challenges, though they also encounter constraints such as limited resources, policy ambiguities, and stakeholder pressures. Ethical decision-making was found to be grounded in policy adherence, consultation, and open communication. The study concludes that strong ethical leadership and effective governance practices contribute to improved learner outcomes and positive school climate. It recommends strengthening leadership development programs, enhancing policy clarity, and promoting collaborative governance to further improve educational quality in public elementary schools.

Keywords: ethical leadership, governance strategies, teacher perceptions, learner outcomes, mixed-methods research

1. Introduction

The importance of ethical leadership in shaping the day-to-day operations of schools cannot be overstated. Within the Philippine public school context, particularly at the elementary level, the role of the principal encompasses a wide range of responsibilities, including school management, policy implementation, and the cultivation of a school climate grounded in equity, mutual respect, and collaboration. However, fulfilling these responsibilities is far from straightforward, as decision-making affects not only organizational structures but also the individuals within them. Drawing from experiences within school environments, the need to understand what truly transpires within these institutions becomes increasingly evident.

Under Republic Act No. 9155, school heads are mandated to serve as both instructional leaders and administrative managers (Republic Act No. 9155, 2001). This means they are accountable not only for school performance but also for how they guide teachers and support learners. This role is further defined by the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads, which emphasizes ethical leadership, participatory governance, and learner-centered practices (Department of Education [DepEd], 2020). In addition, the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers highlights the importance of integrity, fairness, and professionalism among educators (Professional Regulation Commission [PRC], 2000). These frameworks provide clear guidance, and as teachers, we are familiar with them. However, applying these principles consistently in real

school situations can be challenging.

In actual school settings, there are times when policy expectations do not fully align with practice. Some teachers may feel that decision-making lacks transparency, or that their participation is limited despite the emphasis on collaboration. Based on my observations and informal conversations with colleagues, these situations are often influenced by practical constraints such as heavy workloads, limited resources, and tight deadlines. Because of this, school leaders may focus more on completing tasks and meeting requirements, sometimes leaving less room to fully consider the ethical dimensions of leadership, such as fairness and inclusivity.

This concern is also supported by empirical studies which found that although school heads recognize the importance of ethical leadership, its consistent application is often limited by insufficient training, lack of mentoring, and competing administrative demands (Aguan & Rivera, 2022; Mercado & Lopez, 2023). These findings reflect what many teachers experience on the ground—there is awareness, but there are also barriers that affect practice.

Against this backdrop, the present study focuses on the Fourth Congressional District of Quezon, where public elementary schools operate under varied conditions and challenges. Some schools have more access to resources, while others continue to adjust and make do with what is available. This study aims to examine how principals practice ethical leadership and how this influences teachers, school processes, and perceived learner outcomes. By using both surveys and interviews, the study gathers not only numerical data but also the lived experiences of teachers, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of school leadership in context.

The rationale for conducting this study is rooted in the need to bridge the gap between policy and practice. While ethical leadership is clearly emphasized in national frameworks, its actual implementation at the school level still varies. By identifying common challenges as well as effective practices, the study can provide useful insights for improving leadership development programs and strengthening school-based management. The findings may also contribute to enhancing existing DepEd initiatives related to leadership training and professional development.

Ultimately, this study aims to support the development of ethical, transparent, and participatory school leadership. From my own experience in the classroom, when teachers feel respected and included in decision-making, they become more motivated and committed to their work. This positive environment then extends to the learners, who benefit from more engaged and supportive teaching. In this way, strengthening ethical leadership is not only about improving management practices—it is also about creating better learning experience for every child.

2. Methodology

The study used an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. In practice, this means the research started with numbers first, then followed with interviews to better understand what those numbers actually mean in real school settings. This approach was chosen because school leadership and governance cannot be fully explained by statistics alone. In public elementary schools like those in the Fourth Congressional District of Quezon, there are lived realities behind every rating or response, and these need to be heard and understood.

The quantitative phase came first. This part focused on gathering measurable data from teachers to identify general patterns in how they perceive ethical leadership and governance practices in their schools. It helped show the “big picture” across respondents—what is commonly experienced, and what trends appear consistent. However, while the numbers were useful, they could not fully explain why teachers feel or respond the way they do in actual school situations. After this, the qualitative phase followed. This stage focused more on teachers’ voices and experiences. Interviews were used to explore the reasons behind the results from the survey. In school terms, this is where the study tried to understand the “stories behind the answers”—how leadership is experienced in daily interactions, meetings, supervision, and decision-making processes. The integration of both phases occurred during the interpretation stage. Qualitative responses were used to explain and contextualize the quantitative findings. For instance, when certain indicators yielded higher or lower ratings, interview data helped clarify the underlying school conditions that shaped these perceptions. In some cases, teachers’ explanations corroborated the survey results; in others, they provided deeper insights not readily captured by the numerical data.

The study used two main research instruments: a structured survey questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide. Both were carefully prepared to match the explanatory sequential mixed-methods

design, where numerical data are first gathered and then supported with deeper qualitative explanations from teachers' experiences. For the quantitative phase, a survey questionnaire was used. This instrument was adapted from established tools and guided by Ethical Leadership Theory, Distributed Leadership Theory, and Transformational Leadership Theory. In practical terms, the questionnaire focused on three main areas. The first was Ethical Leadership Practices, which included integrity and fairness, professional role modeling, and accountability and transparency. The second focused on Governance Strategies, such as instructional supervision, stakeholder engagement, and resource management. The third part looked at how these practices relate to Learner Outcomes, including academic performance, learner behavior, and engagement. Responses were measured using a four-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

For the qualitative phase, a semi-structured interview guide was used with 10 selected teachers. The questions focused on how ethical leadership and governance are carried out in schools and how teachers personally experience these practices in their daily work. This part of the instrument allowed teachers to share their stories more freely, while keeping the discussion focused on the key areas of the study. Follow-up questions were also asked when needed, depending on the participants' responses, to better understand their experiences in depth.

The data gathering procedures were conducted in a systematic and ethically guided manner to ensure the reliability and credibility of results. The first phase involved administering a survey questionnaire to 181 public elementary school teachers from selected schools in the Fourth Congressional District of Quezon. Depending on convenience and school context, some participants completed printed questionnaires, while others responded through online forms. They were given approximately three to five days to complete the instrument to avoid disrupting their teaching responsibilities. The researcher then collected the responses either personally or through designated school coordinators. All data were subsequently organized and encoded for analysis. After looking at the survey results, the next step was the interviews. Ten teachers were selected based on their responses in the survey to help explain the findings more deeply. The interviews were arranged at a time that was most convenient for them, considering their classroom schedules and workload. Some were done face-to-face in a quiet room in school, while others were conducted online when needed. Each interview lasted around 15 to 25 minutes and was recorded with permission. Short notes were also taken during the conversation to make sure important points were not missed. After both the survey and interviews were completed, the results were combined during analysis. The survey provided the general patterns, while the interviews helped explain the reasons behind those patterns. In real school situations, numbers alone cannot fully describe what teachers experience, so the interview part helped "fill in the gaps." Some responses confirmed the survey results, while others gave deeper explanations that made the findings easier to understand in context.

The respondents of the study comprised a total of 181 public elementary school teachers from the Fourth Congressional District of Quezon under the Division of Quezon. These teachers participated in the quantitative phase, providing their perceptions on the ethical leadership and governance practices of their respective school principals. Complementing this, the qualitative phase involved in-depth interviews with 10 teachers within the district, who shared their experiences regarding leadership approaches, ethical decision-making, and management of school operation where they also provided further qualitative insights. For the quantitative phase, 181 teachers, representing 30 to 35 percent of the total teaching population in the district, participated in the survey. The 30 to 35 percent sampling rate was determined using Slovin's formula with a 95 percent confidence level, ensuring a reliable yet manageable sample size. The study employed a stratified random sampling technique within a defined sampling frame consisting of central schools from selected municipalities in the Fourth Congressional District of Quezon. The selection of central schools served as a clustering and delimitation strategy to ensure comparability of school contexts. Within these schools, teachers were stratified based on grade level assignments and school size, and proportional allocation was applied to ensure balanced representation across subgroups. This approach allowed the study to capture variability in instructional contexts while maintaining methodological rigor and representativeness. Each stratum's sample size was computed proportionally based on the total number of teachers per central school category to achieve balanced representation of teacher perceptions across varied school contexts. For the qualitative phase, ten (10) elementary teachers were selected through purposive sampling from the initial quantitative respondents. This sampling strategy ensured that the interviewees were representative of the survey participants, thereby strengthening the alignment and triangulation of data across methods. The inclusion criteria for teachers were having at least one year of teaching experience under their current principal, active involvement in school programs or governance-related committees, and willingness to provide informed consent for participation.

The exclusion criteria included non-teaching staff, assistant principals, teachers with less than one year in service, and those from private or non-participating schools. Participants were also informed that they could withdraw voluntarily at any point without penalty or consequence.

The study was conducted in public elementary schools within the Fourth Congressional District of Quezon, under the Schools Division of Quezon, comprising of seven public elementary central schools. This locale was selected because it presented a diverse educational landscape composed of schools, creating an ideal environment for examining ethical leadership across varied contexts. The district was known for its unique governance dynamics, where principals managed schools with differing levels of resources, community engagement, and socio-economic conditions. This variation made it a rich site for exploring how ethical dilemmas emerged and were addressed in everyday school leadership.

3. Results and Discussions

Part I. Teachers' Perceptions of Principals' Ethical Leadership Practices in Public Elementary Schools in the Fourth Congressional District of Quezon

Table 1 presents the teachers' overall perceptions on the extent of ethical leadership practices of their school principal across three key dimensions: integrity and fairness, professional role modeling, and accountability and transparency. With a general average of 3.50, and standard deviation of 0.486 interpreted as Strongly Agree, the findings indicate that teachers consistently perceive their principals as demonstrating ethical leadership behaviors in a holistic and observable manner. This suggests that ethical practices are not confined to a single domain but are integrated across various aspects of school leadership, contributing to a positive organizational climate and reinforcing professional standards within the school.

Among the three dimensions, Integrity and Fairness obtained the highest mean of 3.56, and SD of 0.496 followed closely by Professional Role Modeling at mean 3.55 and SD of 0.485. These results imply that teachers particularly recognize their principal's ability to act justly, make unbiased decisions, and serve as a positive example for both staff and learners. Such perceptions indicate that principals are seen as credible and trustworthy leaders who embody the ethical values they promote. Teachers are more likely to emulate leadership behaviors when they observe consistency between what is expected and what is practiced, thereby strengthening a culture of professionalism and mutual respect within the school.

On the other hand, Accountability and Transparency obtained the lowest mean of 3.38 and SD of 0.634 although it still falls within the Strongly Agree range. This suggests that while teachers acknowledge the principal's efforts to maintain openness and responsibility, there may be areas where transparency and participatory decision-making could be further enhanced. The relatively lower score indicates opportunities to strengthen communication mechanisms, ensure consistent information sharing, and provide more avenues for teacher involvement in governance processes.

Triangulating these results, it becomes evident that ethical leadership is strongly manifested through fairness and role modeling, which serve as foundational elements in building trust and credibility. Meanwhile, accountability and transparency, though positively perceived, require continuous reinforcement to ensure that ethical practices are consistently experienced by all stakeholders. The alignment of these dimensions reflects a comprehensive approach to ethical leadership, where values, actions, and governance practices are interconnected.

The results highlight some crucial lessons for improving ethical leadership as an all-encompassing practice in school management. In terms of practical significance, the very good ratings mean that when principals demonstrate qualities such as integrity, objectivity, and proper role-modeling skills, there are established solid bases for trust, credibility, and professionalism at the school level. This means that the aforementioned factors are the critical elements of the creation of a positive environment where teachers would be able to follow suit and exhibit those qualities themselves as well, contributing to a culture of respect, accountability, and cooperation. However, the less favorable score for accountability and transparency implies that although ethical behavior is observable in schools, its positive effects could be amplified with better communication and involvement in decision making.

In terms of theory and policy, the findings indicate that the concept of ethical leadership is indeed multi-faceted. The integrity and the aspect of role modeling provide the moral authority of the leadership. Accountability and transparency contribute to the sustainability of leadership legitimacy by ensuring that leadership activities are open, participative, and intelligible. This means that ethical leadership involves the

combination of value-based leadership and system-based approaches to ensure continued engagement between personal behavior and organizational practices. Therefore, policies and leadership training should take a step further to emphasize the importance of participatory governance and communication systems. In doing so, the school leaders will be able to adopt a more holistic view of ethical leadership.

These findings are supported by existing literature. Studies have shown that leaders who demonstrate integrity and fairness foster trust and organizational commitment among teachers (Bautista et al., 2025). Similarly, effective role modeling has been identified as a critical factor in influencing teacher behavior and promoting ethical standards within educational institutions (Perez, 2022). Furthermore, transparency and accountability have been linked to increased teacher engagement and collaborative decision-making, which enhance overall school effectiveness (Tan & Gonzales, 2022). The results of this study align with these perspectives, confirming that ethical leadership contributes significantly to both professional relationships and institutional performance.

Overall, the data indicates that teachers hold a highly positive view of their principal's ethical leadership practices, particularly in demonstrating fairness and serving as a role model. While accountability and transparency are also strongly evident, strengthening these areas can further enhance trust, participation, and shared governance within the school.

In inference, the findings suggest that a balanced and consistently practiced ethical leadership framework—anchored on integrity, role modeling, and accountability—positively shapes teacher perceptions and professional engagement. Sustaining high levels of ethical practice across all dimensions can further promote a culture of trust, collaboration, and continuous improvement, ultimately benefiting both teachers and learners.

Table 1

Teacher's Overall Perceptions of the Ethical Leadership Practices of School Principals

Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Integrity and Fairness	3.56	0.496	Strongly Agree
Professional Role Modeling	3.55	0.485	Strongly Agree
Accountability and Transparency	3.38	0.634	Strongly Agree
General Average	3.50	0.486	Strongly Agree

Legend: 3.26 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree 2.51 – 3.25 = Agree
1.76 – 2.50 = Disagree 1.00 – 1.75 = Strongly Disagree

Part II. Governance Strategies Commonly Employed by School Principals in the Fourth Congressional District of Quezon

Table 2 presents the teachers' overall perceptions of their school principals' governance strategies, consolidating the three dimensions of Instructional Supervision, Stakeholder Engagement, and Resource Management. With a general average mean of 3.53, and standard deviation of 0.478 interpreted as Strongly Agree, the table indicates that teachers consistently view their principals as effective in guiding instruction, involving stakeholders, and managing resources to support school improvement. These findings suggest that governance practices are experienced not as isolated administrative tasks but as interrelated strategies that uphold ethical leadership, foster collaboration, and enhance operational efficiency, ultimately facilitating positive learner outcomes.

Among the three dimensions, Stakeholder Engagement received the highest mean of 3.62, and SD of 0.467 followed closely by Instructional Supervision at 3.60 mean and SD of 0.474. Teachers highlighted that principals actively involve parents, community members, and external partners in school activities and decision-making. Key informant seven shared, "Our principal always updates parents and community leaders about our school projects, and they feel their voices are heard in planning school programs," while key informant four noted, "There is constant encouragement for teachers to collaborate and try innovative teaching

methods, and the principal provides support whenever we ask for help.” These statements reinforce quantitative data, showing that participatory governance and proactive instructional oversight are recognized and appreciated by teachers, enhancing their sense of agency and professional growth.

The Resource Management dimension, while still strongly agreed upon, had the lowest mean at 3.38 and SD of 0.639. Teacher comments reflected minor challenges in equitable allocation and transparency of resources. Key informant two explained, “Learning materials are sometimes distributed at different times for each grade level, so we have to adjust,” while key informant three noted, “Financial details are shared generally, but not always fully, so we rely on the principal’s guidance to understand fund usage.” These observations suggest that although principals are generally effective in resource governance, there is room for improving the detailed communication and uniformity of distribution to ensure complete fairness and trust among staff.

Triangulation of quantitative and qualitative findings indicates that principals’ governance strategies are generally effective, particularly in promoting stakeholder engagement and strengthening instructional supervision. Teachers’ accounts reveal that participatory practices, mentoring, collaboration, and community outreach reinforce ethical and strategic leadership. At the same time, minor concerns regarding resource transparency point to the need for ongoing monitoring and refinement. Overall, these governance practices cultivate a supportive professional environment that enhances teaching effectiveness and, in turn, contributes to improved learner outcomes.

These findings align with prior research emphasizing the positive effects of ethical, distributed, and participatory leadership on school performance. Mendoza and De Jesus (2024) and Del Rosario and Aquino (2022) showed that principals who implement participatory planning, collaborative supervision, and inclusive decision-making strengthen teacher trust, institutional transparency, and instructional quality. Similarly, Ortega and Sumalde (2024) found that effective stakeholder engagement and resource management increase teacher satisfaction and school accountability. The teacher feedback in this study corroborates these insights, highlighting the practical manifestation of these strategies in Philippine elementary schools.

The data indicate that principals effectively integrate ethical leadership principles into their governance strategies, particularly in mentoring teachers, engaging stakeholders, and managing school operations. Although overall perceptions are highly positive, greater attention to resource allocation and more detailed financial transparency could further strengthen teacher trust and institutional effectiveness.

Triangulation of quantitative results and qualitative teacher feedback further shows that these governance strategies promote professional collaboration, instructional innovation, and community engagement. Collectively, they foster a school climate characterized by fairness, accountability, and participatory leadership—enhancing teacher performance and indirectly supporting holistic learner outcomes. These findings highlight the pivotal role of ethical governance in linking leadership practices to effective school functioning and improved learner success (Del Rosario & Aquino, 2022; Mendoza & De Jesus, 2024; Ortega & Sumalde, 2024).

The findings of this study offer valuable insights into how governance can be strengthened as an integrated function of school leadership. When viewed in the context of actual school operations, the high mean ratings suggest that principals who can balance instructional supervision, stakeholder engagement, and resource management are more effective in creating an environment that supports teachers’ work. In everyday practice, this kind of leadership is felt when the principal is not only visible during formal observations but is also actively involved in guiding instruction, checking on classroom needs, and encouraging collaboration among teachers. It is also seen when parents, community members, and other stakeholders are given opportunities to participate in school activities and decision-making processes. These combined efforts help create a sense of shared responsibility, where teachers feel supported not only in their teaching but also in achieving the broader goals of the school.

The high ratings in stakeholder engagement and instructional supervision are particularly telling. In many schools, when teachers are given space to collaborate, share strategies, and receive instructional support from the principal, there is a noticeable improvement in both morale and performance. Teachers tend to be more motivated when they know that their efforts are recognized and that they are not working in isolation. At the same time, active engagement with stakeholders—such as parents and the community—adds another layer of support that reinforces school programs. From actual experience, activities like regular meetings with parents, community outreach programs, and collaborative school projects help strengthen relationships and build a more supportive learning environment for learners.

However, the relatively lower mean of resource management points to a challenge that is commonly encountered in many public schools. While programs and initiatives may be well-planned and supported in principle, the availability and distribution of resources are not always consistent. Teachers may experience

delays in receiving instructional materials, or there may be perceptions that resources are not distributed equally. In practice, this can affect not only classroom instruction but also teachers' sense of fairness and trust in the system. This finding highlights the need for clearer and more transparent processes in resource allocation. Establishing well-defined guidelines, openly communicating how resources are prioritized, and ensuring that distribution is based on actual needs can help address these concerns. When teachers see that resources are managed fairly and efficiently, it strengthens their confidence in school leadership.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings reinforce the idea that governance is inherently multi-dimensional. It is not limited to a single function but involves the interaction of various domains—instructional leadership, participatory practices, and resource management—all of which influence one another. In the school context, it becomes clear that strong instructional leadership and active stakeholder participation can drive positive outcomes, but these gains can be limited if resource management is weak or inconsistent. This supports the view that effective governance requires balance and alignment across all areas. Ethical and participatory leadership play a critical role in legitimizing governance practices, as they help build trust and encourage collective involvement. At the same time, systematic and transparent management of resources ensures that these efforts are sustained and supported over time.

In terms of policy, the results suggest the need to strengthen frameworks that promote a more holistic approach to school governance. While existing policies often emphasize instructional leadership and stakeholder engagement, there is a need to give equal attention to financial and resource management practices. Based on actual school experience, policies become more effective when they are translated into clear, actionable guidelines that school heads can consistently implement. This may include standard procedures for resource allocation, monitoring systems to ensure accountability, and capacity-building programs that equip school leaders with the necessary skills in both instructional and administrative management. By addressing all dimensions of governance, policies can better support school leaders in managing their responsibilities in a balanced and effective way.

Overall, the findings indicate a strong convergence in the effectiveness of principals' governance strategies. School heads are widely perceived as competent in fostering collaboration, providing instructional support, and engaging stakeholders—areas that are highly visible in day-to-day school operations. However, achieving more consistent and optimal outcomes requires strengthening resource management practices and ensuring alignment across all governance dimensions. In practice, even well-designed programs may fall short when resources are not managed effectively or when processes lack clarity in communication.

In sum, school governance should be understood as a continuous, integrated process rather than a set of discrete functions. Enhancing consistency, transparency, and balance across all areas—particularly in resource management—can further improve leadership effectiveness. When these elements are firmly in place, they help create a more organized, equitable, and supportive school environment that benefits both teachers and learners.

Table 2

Teacher's Overall Perception on the Governance Strategies of their School Principals

Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Instructional Supervision	3.60	0.474	Strongly Agree
Stakeholder Engagement	3.62	0.467	Strongly Agree
Resource Management	3.38	0.639	Strongly Agree
General Average	3.53	0.478	Strongly Agree

Legend: 3.26 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree
1.76 – 2.50 = Disagree

2.51 – 3.25 = Agree
1.00 – 1.75 = Strongly Disagree

Part III. The Perceptions of Teachers in the Fourth Congressional District of Quezon on the Influence of Principals' Ethical Leadership Practices on Learner Outcomes

Table 3 presents the teachers' overall perceptions of the influence of their school principal's ethical leadership on learner outcomes, capturing academic performance, behavior and discipline, and motivation and participation. The general average of 3.59, with standard deviation of 0.469 interpreted as Strongly Agree, indicates a strong consensus among teachers that principled leadership positively affects multiple dimensions of learners' development. This comprehensive view highlights that ethical leadership in elementary schools is

not limited to policy enforcement or teacher management but has a tangible and holistic impact on students' academic, behavioral, and motivational experiences.

The highest mean score of 3.61 and SD of 0.474 for Academic Performance reflects teachers' perception that ethical leadership creates a supportive and success-oriented environment. Key informant two expressed, "Our principal ensures that academic goals are clear and that we have the guidance needed to help students achieve them." This statement emphasizes that ethical leadership fosters structured learning conditions where students understand expectations, feel supported, and are encouraged to perform at their best. Similarly, statements regarding Motivation and Participation and Learner Behavior and Discipline, both at 3.58 and SD of 0.484 and 0.479, though slightly lower, indicate that principals' actions in modeling integrity, promoting inclusivity, and engaging students in meaningful school programs have a substantial effect on students' attitudes, conduct, and engagement. Key informant three remarked, "When the principal recognizes students' efforts and listens to their ideas, learners become more active in class and extracurricular activities." This insight shows that ethical leadership extends to shaping school culture and student interactions.

Triangulating the quantitative and qualitative data, principals' ethical leadership practices—including fairness, transparency, role modeling, and participatory decision-making—create a holistic educational environment where academic, behavioral, and motivational outcomes are simultaneously enhanced. Teachers' narratives demonstrate that learners respond positively when school leaders embody ethical principles, providing guidance, encouragement, and consistent reinforcement of school values. This aligns with international literature indicating that ethical leadership fosters organizational climates that promote engagement, responsibility, and performance among subordinates (Al Halbusi, Ruiz-Palomino, & Williams, 2023; Jia et al., 2022; Cheng et al., 2022). Local studies similarly support this finding, showing that ethical, participatory leadership in Philippine elementary schools increases learner engagement, reduces behavioral problems, and improves academic achievement (Bautista, Espinosa, & Ramos, 2025; Del Rosario & Aquino, 2022; Villanueva & Santos, 2023).

The indications from this triangulated analysis suggest that ethical leadership operates as a multi-dimensional mechanism that shapes a wide range of learner outcomes, including academic performance, motivation, participation, and behavioral development. In the actual school setting, this becomes evident when principals consistently demonstrate integrity, fairness, and participatory governance in their day-to-day leadership practices. Teachers observe that when school heads are transparent in decision-making, considerate of teacher and learner needs, and open to collaboration, learners tend to feel more secure and valued within the school environment. This sense of being valued is not superficial—it gradually influences how learners engage in academic tasks, how they behave in class, and how actively they participate in both curricular and co-curricular activities. As a result, ethical leadership becomes a guiding structure that supports learners not only in achieving academic goals but also in developing positive attitudes and behaviors.

The findings highlight the importance of ethical leadership in achieving holistic learner outcomes, where academic success, behavior, motivation, and participation are all interconnected rather than separate dimensions. In practical terms, the consistently high mean scores across all four aspects of ethical leadership suggest that when principals practice ethical and participatory leadership, they are able to create a structured and supportive school environment. In real school experience, this is reflected in classrooms where learners are more attentive, more willing to participate in discussions, and more cooperative with both teachers and peers. It is also observed in school-wide activities where students show enthusiasm and willingness to engage. This indicates that ethical leadership contributes to a learning environment that is not only academically focused but also emotionally supportive and socially engaging. However, the slight differences in mean scores also suggest that sustaining high levels of motivation and consistent behavioral development requires continuous reinforcement and deliberate effort from school leaders, particularly in maintaining engagement across different contexts and time periods.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings support the understanding that ethical leadership is a multi-dimensional and integrative construct that connects leadership behavior with learner outcomes through both relational and organizational pathways. The results reinforce the idea that ethical leadership does not operate in isolation but instead influences the overall school climate while also serving as a mediating factor between governance processes and educational outcomes. In this sense, ethical leadership shapes how policies are implemented, how relationships are formed, and how learning environments are experienced by teachers and learners alike. It also highlights that leadership effectiveness is not only measured by administrative efficiency but also by its capacity to foster environments where learners can develop cognitively, socially, and emotionally. This dual influence—on both organizational systems and interpersonal relationships—underscores the complexity and depth of ethical leadership in educational settings.

In terms of policy implications, the findings emphasize the need to integrate ethical leadership more

intentionally into both governance frameworks and leadership development programs. School policies should not only focus on academic performance indicators but also explicitly recognize the role of ethical decision-making, learner-centered governance, and participatory leadership practices in achieving holistic educational outcomes. In practical application, this may involve strengthening leadership training programs to include modules on ethical reasoning, inclusive decision-making, and strategies for fostering student engagement across multiple domains. It may also involve designing school policies that support consistent implementation of ethical practices in classroom management, student participation, and school governance. When these elements are effectively institutionalized, school leaders are better positioned to promote not only academic excellence but also positive behavior and meaningful student involvement.

In sum, the findings clearly demonstrate that ethical leadership is a critical determinant of holistic learner outcomes. Teachers' lived experiences indicate that when principals consistently embody fairness, integrity, and participatory leadership, these practices translate into tangible gains in academic performance, student behavior, motivation, and engagement. This underscores the role of ethical leadership as both a relational influence and a systemic driver of school effectiveness.

Ultimately, the study affirms that embedding ethical leadership within governance practices is essential to cultivating a balanced educational environment—one that supports not only learners' academic achievement but also their social and emotional development (Al Halbusi et al., 2023; Bautista et al., 2025; Del Rosario & Aquino, 2022; Villanueva & Santos, 2023).

Table 3

Teacher's Overall Perception on the Influence of Ethical Leadership on Learner Outcomes

Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Academic Performance	3.61	0.474	Strongly Agree
Learner Behavior and Discipline	3.58	0.484	Strongly Agree
Motivation and Participation	3.58	0.479	Strongly Agree
General Average	3.59	0.469	Strongly Agree

Legend: 3.26 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree
1.76 – 2.50 = Disagree

2.51 – 3.25 = Agree
1.00 – 1.75 = Strongly Disagree

Part IV. The Significant Relationship Between Principals' Ethical Leadership Practices, Governance Strategies, and Learner Outcomes in the Fourth Congressional District of Quezon Public Elementary Schools

Table 4 presents the relationship between teachers' perceptions on ethical leadership practices in terms of Integrity and Fairness and their perceptions on the governance strategies of school principals. The table examines how teachers' perception of principals' integrity and fairness aligns with the ways principals manage instructional supervision, stakeholder engagement, and resource management. The correlation coefficients, all statistically significant at the 5% level, indicate that there is a meaningful and positive relationship between ethical leadership and governance practices as perceived by teachers.

Focusing on the non-extreme mean dimensions, Stakeholder Engagement shows a correlation coefficient of 0.794, interpreted as a strongly positive relationship, suggesting that principals who act with integrity and fairness tend to foster participatory collaboration with parents, community members, and other stakeholders. Key informant two qualitatively noted, "*Our principal makes us feel included in decision-making and ensures that parents are regularly informed about school activities,*" highlighting that fairness in leadership translates into more inclusive governance. Similarly, Resource Management, with a coefficient of 0.675, demonstrates a moderately strong positive relationship, indicating that principled behavior also aligns with how resources are allocated, utilized, and communicated. Key informant two expressed, "*Our principal explains how funds and materials are used, making us trust that resources are distributed equitably,*" reflecting that ethical conduct strengthens transparency and accountability in resource management.

The data illustrates that Integrity and Fairness in ethical leadership is not only a personal trait but a driver for governance effectiveness. Principals' commitment to fairness, honesty, and consistency cultivates trust among teachers, enabling smoother execution of governance strategies and fostering a culture of

professional collaboration. These findings are supported by literature which posits that ethical leadership enhances institutional trust and participatory engagement, creating an environment conducive to both teacher and learner success (Ahmed, 2023; Ortiz Jr. et al., 2025; Wu & Dapat, 2024).

The indications from this triangulated analysis show that when principals demonstrate ethical behavior, particularly in integrity and fairness, there is a clear positive impact on governance strategies beyond mere policy compliance. Teacher narratives confirm that consistent ethical leadership encourages collaboration, transparent resource use, and active participation from stakeholders, emphasizing the relational dimension of governance.

There are important implications from the results regarding the improvement in the linkage between ethical leadership and sound governance practices among schools. In terms of practice, the statistically significant and positive correlations suggest that those principals who are characterized by their fairness and integrity will be in a better position to engage themselves in governance activities that are participative, transparent, and responsive to stakeholder needs. There is also a very strong correlation with the dimension of stakeholder engagement, which demonstrates the impact of fairness on leadership, encouraging collaboration and involvement, where teachers, parents, and community members can effectively become involved in school practices. Another positive correlation with resource management shows that being ethical leads to improved management of resources through increased trust and certainty in the way resources are managed.

From a theoretical and policy perspective, these findings support the concept that ethical leadership represents a basic instrument that connects leadership values to organizational procedures and impacts. Such high correlations show that the efficiency of the governance process depends on the moral legitimacy of school managers in which the principles of integrity and fairness function as motivators that foster trust-building, cooperation, and transparency. This means that it is necessary to consider ethics and governance as parts of the same whole rather than two separate concepts while discussing any leadership models. In this regard, there is a possibility for more attention to being paid to ethics within governance-related policies and training programs to develop ethical competencies of school managers, including such qualities as honesty, consistency, and fairness.

In sum, the study confirms a significant and positive interplay between ethical leadership in integrity and fairness and governance strategies in schools. Principals who embody these ethical qualities not only inspire trust and cooperation among teachers but also enhance the functionality of governance systems, demonstrating that moral leadership is instrumental in achieving effective school administration and ultimately supports better outcomes for learners.

Table 4

Significant Relationship Between Teachers’ Perceptions on Ethical Leadership Practices in Terms of Integrity and Fairness and Their Perceptions on the Governance Strategies of School Principals

Variable	Integrity and Fairness and Governance Strategies of School Principals		Decision
	Correlation (r) (p-value)	Degree of Relation	
Instructional Supervision	0.856* (< 0.001)	Very Strong Positive Relationship	Reject Ho
Stakeholder Engagement	0.794* (< 0.001)	Strong Positive Relationship	Reject Ho
Resource Management	0.675* (< 0.001)	Strong Positive Relationship	Reject Ho

Note: Significant at 5% level of significance; Range: 0.00–0.19 Very Weak, 0.20–0.39 Weak, 0.40–0.59 Moderate, 0.60–0.79 Strong, 0.80–1.00 Very Strong; *Significant at 0.05 level.

Table 4.1 presents the significant relationship between teachers’ perceptions on ethical leadership practices in terms of Professional Role Modeling and their perspectives on the governance strategies of school principals. The table illustrates how principals’ ability to influence, motivate, and model professional behavior

correlates with teachers' perceptions of instructional supervision, stakeholder engagement, and resource management. The correlation coefficients, all significant at the 5% level, reveal that teachers perceive a meaningful positive relationship between principals' role modeling and governance effectiveness.

Examining the non-extreme dimensions, Instructional Supervision exhibits a correlation coefficient of 0.745, indicating a moderately strong positive relationship. This suggests that when principals demonstrate professional role modeling, teachers perceive stronger support in curriculum implementation, lesson planning, and classroom guidance. Teachers' qualitative feedback reinforces this observation, key informant ten noted *"Our principal leads by example, showing dedication in lesson planning and actively coaching us when we need help,"* which emphasizes how modeling professionalism enhances instructional support. Resource Management, with a coefficient of 0.633, also shows a moderately strong positive relationship, suggesting that principals' professional conduct influences teachers' perception of how resources are allocated and utilized. Key informant six commented, *"We trust that our principal's example of careful planning and accountability extends to how funds and materials are managed,"* indicating that ethical role modeling promotes transparency and efficiency in resource utilization.

The findings highlight that professional role modeling serves as both an ethical and practical mechanism for governance. Principals who consistently exhibit professionalism, integrity, and dedication create a school culture in which teachers feel guided and supported, which enhances collaboration and participation in school activities. These results align with prior studies emphasizing that ethical leadership through role modeling fosters teacher motivation, institutional trust, and accountability, which ultimately strengthen governance practices (Ahmed, 2023; San Roque & Valle, 2025; Torres & Mariano, 2024).

The indications drawn from this analysis suggest that principals' demonstration of professional behavior directly impacts teachers' perception of governance effectiveness. By modeling high standards of conduct and consistently engaging in ethical decision-making, principals enhance instructional supervision, encourage stakeholder participation, and foster responsible resource management. Teachers' narratives underscore that visible professional role modeling reinforces their own commitment to ethical and effective practice within the school.

Based on the results, there is great significance in the need for enhancing role modeling as one of the main aspects for fostering effective school governance. In a realistic view of the matter, the significant positive correlations imply that professional behavior, dedication, and ethics by principals increase their potential ability to influence the way in which teachers understand and perceive governance approaches. The correlation with instructional supervision shows that through role modeling, principals are in position to build the confidence of the teacher in instructional supervision and coaching. The same applies to resource management where the correlation with role modeling indicates the importance of professionalism in building the trust of teachers towards resource management.

From a theoretical and policy standpoint, the study's results further strengthen the notion that role modeling by professionals represents a way in which not only ethics but also the operations of leaders and leadership are connected to good governance. The results demonstrate that the impact of leadership on a school environment can be further improved through role modeling, wherein school leaders themselves model the behaviors and principles that they expect from the members of their communities. It follows that the issue of role modeling needs to be considered in relation to leadership and its development through appropriate educational and policy approaches. Specifically, reflective practice, ethical considerations, and modeling of professional conduct need to become standard features in leadership education for school administrators.

Overall, the study confirms that ethical leadership expressed through professional role modeling significantly correlates with governance strategies. Principals who embody professionalism inspire trust and cooperation among teachers, strengthen institutional processes, and contribute to more efficient and transparent governance, demonstrating that ethical leadership is instrumental in achieving both administrative and educational goals.

Table 4.1

Significant Relationship between Teacher's Perceptions on the Ethical Leadership Practices in Terms of Professional Role Modeling and their Perceptions on Governance Strategies of School Principals

Variable	Professional Role Modeling and Governance Strategies of School Principals		Decision
	Correlation (r) (p-value)	Degree of Relation	
Instructional Supervision	0.745* (< 0.001)	Strong Positive Relationship	Reject Ho
Stakeholder Engagement	0.775* (< 0.001)	Strong Positive Relationship	Reject Ho
Resource Management	0.633* (< 0.001)	Strong Positive Relationship	Reject Ho

Note: Significant at 5% level of significance; Range: 0.00–0.19 Very Weak, 0.20–0.39 Weak, 0.40–0.59 Moderate, 0.60–0.79 Strong, 0.80–1.00 Very Strong;
 *Significant at 0.05 level.

Table 4.2 presents the significant relationship between teachers' perceptions on ethical leadership practices in terms of Accountability and Transparency and their perspectives on the governance strategies of school principals. This table highlights how principals' adherence to openness, justification of decisions, and responsible reporting correlates with teachers' perceptions of instructional supervision, stakeholder engagement, and resource management. All correlation coefficients are significant at the 5% level, indicating that teachers perceive a meaningful positive relationship between principals' transparency and governance effectiveness.

Focusing on the non-extreme dimensions, Instructional Supervision shows a correlation coefficient of 0.714, reflecting a moderately strong positive relationship. This implies that principals who communicate decisions clearly and acknowledge mistakes foster a supportive environment for classroom observation, lesson planning, and teacher mentoring. Teachers' qualitative feedback supports this finding, key informant one stated: *"Our principal always explains the reason behind every policy and gives constructive feedback during classroom visits, which helps us improve our teaching,"* emphasizing that transparency enhances instructional guidance. Similarly, Stakeholder Engagement, with a correlation of 0.702, demonstrates a moderately strong positive relationship, suggesting that teachers perceive principals' transparent communication as promoting trust and participation among parents, community members, and teaching staff. Key informant one remarked, *"The principal involves us and the parents in decisions and makes sure we understand how our inputs affect school programs,"* indicating that openness strengthens collaborative governance.

The strongest correlation appears in Resource Management, with a coefficient of 0.847, indicating a strongly positive relationship. This shows that principals' accountability in managing finances, resources, and materials has a substantial impact on teachers' perception of equitable and efficient resource allocation. Key informant two commented, *"We know that the principal keeps us informed about fund usage and prioritizes resources based on our school needs,"* which illustrates how ethical transparency fosters trust and effective management of school resources.

These findings reinforce the idea that accountability and transparency are essential ethical dimensions that underpin governance strategies. By openly communicating decisions, providing justifications, and responsibly managing resources, principals create a culture of trust and fairness that enhances instructional supervision, stakeholder collaboration, and resource utilization. Prior studies corroborate these results, showing that transparent and accountable leadership increases teacher morale, participation, and institutional performance (Alcantara & Reyes, 2022; Bautista et al., 2025; Garcia & Ching, 2024).

The indications from this analysis suggest that principals' ethical behavior in accountability and transparency directly influences governance outcomes. Teachers perceive and respond positively to leaders who demonstrate openness, justify decisions, and maintain clear communication channels, leading to improved instructional support, stakeholder involvement, and efficient resource management.

The results highlight the importance of accountability and transparency as fundamental aspects that drive successful school governance. As a matter of fact, the substantial correlations show that school leaders

who regularly communicate decisions, justify decisions, and remain open to discussion create an atmosphere of trust, clarity, and responsibility in schools. It also becomes evident that there is a high correlation between transparency and resource management, suggesting that school principals who maintain transparency in financial operations and use resources effectively inspire confidence in teachers regarding the equal distribution and efficiency of resource utilization. Moreover, the substantial relationship with instructional supervision and stakeholder collaboration reveals that the openness of school leaders makes teachers feel empowered to conduct instructional activities and engage in collaboration with parents and other stakeholders in the local community.

The study's theoretical and policy implications are reinforced by findings that highlight the integrative role of transparency and accountability in linking ethical leadership with organizational trust and performance. The effectiveness of governance appears to depend not only on the quality of leadership decisions but also on how these decisions are communicated, justified, and interpreted by stakeholders. Transparency strengthens the legitimacy of decision-making processes, while accountability ensures that such decisions align with established ethical standards and organizational principles.

Ethical leadership characterized by accountability and transparency is significantly related to governance strategies in schools. Principals who consistently model ethical conduct in their administrative and managerial roles strengthen teachers' trust, enhance school collaboration, and ensure optimal resource utilization, demonstrating that ethical leadership is integral to both organizational effectiveness and learner-centered outcomes.

Table 4.2

Significant Relationship between Teacher's Perceptions on the Ethical Leadership Practices in Terms of Accountability and Transparency and their Perceptions on Governance Strategies of School Principals

Variable	Accountability and Transparency and Governance Strategies of School Principals		Decision
	Correlation (r) (p-value)	Degree of Relation	
Instructional Supervision	0.714* (< 0.001)	Strong Positive Relationship	Reject Ho
Stakeholder Engagement	0.702* (< 0.001)	Strong Positive Relationship	Reject Ho
Resource Management	0.847* (< 0.001)	Very Strong Positive Relationship	Reject Ho

Note: Significant at 5% level of significance; Range: 0.00–0.19 Very Weak, 0.20–0.39 Weak, 0.40–0.59 Moderate, 0.60–0.79 Strong, 0.80–1.00 Very Strong; *Significant at 0.05 level.

Table 4.3 presents the significant relationship between teachers' perceptions on ethical leadership practices in terms of Integrity and Fairness and their perspectives on its influence on learner outcomes. This table highlights how principals' fairness, consistency, and commitment to ethical conduct correlate with academic performance, learner behavior and discipline, as well as student motivation and participation. All correlation coefficients are significant at the 5% level, demonstrating that teachers perceive a meaningful positive relationship between principals' integrity and the educational outcomes of their learners.

Regarding the non-extreme dimensions, Learner Behavior and Discipline shows a correlation coefficient of 0.735, reflecting a moderately strong positive relationship. This indicates that when principals consistently demonstrate fairness, respect, and ethical decision-making, teachers observe improvements in student behavior and classroom management. Key informant one noted *"Because our principal treats everyone fairly and addresses issues with honesty, learners behave better and respect the rules,"* illustrating that integrity at the leadership level cascades into positive behavioral outcomes among learners. Similarly, Motivation and Participation, with a correlation of 0.732, reveals a moderately strong positive relationship, suggesting that ethical leadership encourages learners to be more engaged and take an active role in school activities. Key informant two remarked, *"Students are more willing to participate in class and school programs because the principal leads by example and values everyone's contribution,"* emphasizing that

fairness fosters motivation and inclusivity.

The strongest correlation appears in Academic Performance, with a coefficient of 0.770, indicating a strongly positive relationship. This suggests that principals' integrity and fairness significantly influence students' learning outcomes. Teachers provided narratives such as, *"When the principal ensures that policies are applied equally and supports our teaching, students perform better academically because instruction is consistent and fair,"* demonstrating how ethical conduct in leadership translates directly to higher student achievement.

These findings align with prior literature, which emphasize that ethical leadership, particularly integrity and fairness, enhances learner outcomes by fostering a positive school climate, professional teacher support, and a culture of accountability (Bautista et al., 2025; Da'as, 2025; Villanueva & Santos, 2023). Principals who model fairness and consistency create conditions where learners thrive academically, behave responsibly, and actively participate in learning experiences.

The results point out the important part played by integrity and fairness in creating ethical leadership that can positively impact the performance of learners. In practice, the results show that a significant positive relationship means that leaders who are always perceived to be fair and respectful of others and who make decisions based on ethics help develop a secure environment where learners will do well, exhibit good behavior, and participate in class and other school activities. The significant relationship with academic success shows that equality and consistency in terms of instructional guidance improve the teaching process, which leads to improved academic results. The significant relationship with learner's behavior and motivation means that students who feel they are treated fairly at school will behave accordingly, learn well, and participate actively in school activities.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings support the view that ethical leadership—particularly its core elements of integrity and fairness—serves as a critical link between leadership and learning. Ethical and equitable leadership fosters a positive school climate that supports both cognitive and socio-emotional development among learners. This underscores the importance of embedding ethical leadership within educational systems, as it plays a central role in promoting students' holistic growth. From a policy and leadership standpoint, it is therefore essential to emphasize fairness, inclusivity, and responsiveness to stakeholders in governance processes. Doing so not only advances academic achievement but also cultivates positive learner behavior and sustains engagement in the educational process.

In sum, ethical leadership grounded in integrity and fairness is strongly associated with improved learner outcomes. Principals who demonstrate principled conduct, model fairness, and uphold consistent standards strengthen teacher trust and instructional quality while enhancing students' academic performance, behavior, and participation. These findings affirm the integral role of ethical governance in shaping holistic educational success.

Table 4.3

Significant Relationship Between Teacher's Perceptions on the Ethical Leadership Practices in Terms of Integrity and Fairness and their Perceptions on its Influence to Learner Outcomes

Variable	Integrity and Fairness and Learner Outcomes		Decision
	Correlation (r)	Degree of Relation	
	(p-value)		
Academic Performance	0.770* (< 0.001)	Strong Positive Relationship	Reject Ho
Learner Behavior and Discipline	0.735* (< 0.001)	Strong Positive Relationship	Reject Ho
Motivation and Participation	0.732* (< 0.001)	Strong Positive Relationship	Reject Ho

Note: Significant at 5% level of significance; Range: 0.00–0.19 Very Weak, 0.20–0.39 Weak, 0.40–0.59 Moderate, 0.60–0.79 Strong, 0.80–1.00 Very Strong; *Significant at 0.05 level.

Table 4.4 presents the significant relationship between teachers' perceptions on ethical leadership practices in terms of Professional Role Modeling and their perspectives on its influence on learner outcomes. This table illustrates how principals' behavior as ethical exemplars—through dedication, professionalism, and moral conduct—relates to academic performance, learner behavior and discipline, and student motivation and participation. All correlation coefficients are significant at the 5% level, indicating that teachers perceive a meaningful and positive connection between the way principals model professionalism and the educational outcomes of their learners.

Focusing on Motivation and Participation, which has a correlation coefficient of 0.755, this reflects a strongly positive relationship. Teachers reported that when principals actively demonstrate professionalism, commitment, and ethical conduct, learners become more engaged in school activities and feel encouraged to participate. Key informant six commented, *"Our students see how the principal works hard and treats everyone with respect, so they are motivated to get involved and do their best in class and extracurricular programs,"* demonstrating that role modeling by the principal fosters a culture of engagement and active participation.

Similarly, Learner Behavior and Discipline shows a correlation of 0.782, the highest among the three dimensions, indicating a strongly positive relationship. Teachers noted that ethical role modeling by the principal sets behavioral expectations for students. As key informant one observed, *"Because the principal handles conflicts calmly and treats students fairly, students imitate that behavior and respect school rules,"* highlighting how professional conduct at the leadership level translates into improved student discipline and positive interactions within the school environment.

Academic Performance also exhibits a strong correlation of 0.771, suggesting that learners' academic success is influenced by the principal's demonstration of professionalism. Teachers reported that consistent ethical modeling encourages them to enhance instructional quality, which in turn positively impacts student learning outcomes. Key informant one shared, *"When our principal models dedication and continuous improvement, we are inspired to deliver better lessons, and our students achieve higher academically,"* reflecting the cascading effect of professional role modeling on teaching and learning.

These findings align with existing literature emphasizing that ethical leadership through role modeling strengthens teacher efficacy, school climate, and student outcomes (Bautista et al., 2025; Cheng et al., 2022; Guo, 2022). Principals who demonstrate professionalism and ethical behavior not only earn teacher respect but also indirectly influence learners' motivation, behavior, and academic achievement.

These results illustrate the great effect of the role model professional approach as an instrument used in transferring ethical leadership to learners through their positive outcomes. As far as practical application is concerned, the significant positive correlations prove that those principals who constantly display professionalism and ethics create a learning environment where both teachers and students get inspired by their attitude. Motivation, behavioral, and academic indicators reveal the fact that learners' behavior is determined not only by established rules at school but also by observing the behavior of school leaders themselves. If principals demonstrate respect and commitment to their work, they encourage teachers to do the same thing in the classroom, thus positively affecting learners, who become more motivated, well-behaved, and academic successful.

The outcomes serve to support the notion of the professional role model as a bridge that connects leadership style and performance in the context of education. The outcomes reveal that the greatest influence can be brought about through leading by example; thus, ethics should be seen for it to be learned and practiced by others. In this light, it becomes clear that the process of leadership is based on the principle of imitation, whereby both teachers and students emulate behaviors set by trustworthy leaders. As such, reflective practices and professionalism are important skills in the training of school leaders. By implementing effective role modeling practices, schools create an atmosphere conducive to learning and motivation.

Finally, professional role modeling by school principals has a strongly positive impact on learner outcomes. Teachers perceive that the ethical and professional behaviors modeled by leaders directly shape instructional quality, classroom management, and student engagement, underscoring the essential role of principled leadership in fostering both teacher effectiveness and student success.

Table 4.4

Significant Relationship Between Teacher's Perceptions on the Ethical Leadership Practices in Terms of Professional Role Modeling and their Perceptions on its Influence to Learner Outcomes

Variable	Professional Role Modeling and Learner Outcomes		Decision
	Correlation (r) (p-value)	Degree of Relation	
Academic Performance	0.771* (< 0.001)	Strong Positive Relationship	Reject Ho
Learner Behavior and Discipline	0.782* (< 0.001)	Strong Positive Relationship	Reject Ho
Motivation and Participation	0.755* (< 0.001)	Strong Positive Relationship	Reject Ho

Note: Significant at 5% level of significance; Range: 0.00–0.19 Very Weak, 0.20–0.39 Weak, 0.40–0.59 Moderate, 0.60–0.79 Strong, 0.80–1.00 Very Strong

Table 4.5 presents the significant relationship between teachers' perceptions on ethical leadership practices in terms of Accountability and Transparency and their perceptions of its influence on learner outcomes. This table highlights how the principal's consistent demonstration of fairness, openness, and clear communication impacts academic performance, learner behavior and discipline, and student motivation and participation. All correlation coefficients are significant at the 5% level, showing that teachers perceive a meaningful connection between transparent leadership practices and positive educational outcomes for learners.

Looking at Learner Behavior and Discipline, which has a correlation coefficient of 0.736, this indicates a moderately strongly positive relationship. Teachers noted that when principals are transparent about rules, consistently acknowledge mistakes, and fairly implement policies, students respond with improved behavior and respect. Key informant six shared, *"Because the principal explains policies clearly and treats everyone fairly, students understand expectations and follow them without confusion,"* illustrating that transparency in leadership fosters a positive and orderly school environment.

In terms of Academic Performance, the correlation coefficient is 0.726, also reflecting a moderately strongly positive relationship. Teachers described that clear communication of academic goals, coupled with accountability in monitoring progress, encourages better teaching and learning practices. Key informant ten emphasized, *"When our principal shares updates on programs and gives feedback on student progress, we can adjust our instruction accordingly, and students perform better,"* showing how accountability mechanisms translate into improved student achievement.

Motivation and Participation has a slightly lower correlation coefficient of 0.699, yet still indicates a moderately strongly positive relationship. Teachers observed that ethical transparency promotes learner engagement by creating a supportive and predictable school environment. Key informant six mentioned, *"Pupils are motivated to join activities because they see the principal valuing fairness and recognizing effort,"* reinforcing the link between transparent governance and learner involvement.

These findings align with prior research suggesting that principals' accountability and transparent leadership enhance school climate, teacher motivation, and ultimately student outcomes (Al Halbusi et al., 2023; Da'as, 2025; Tan & Gonzales, 2022). When ethical leadership is operationalized through clarity, fairness, and openness, teachers feel empowered to implement effective instructional strategies and maintain orderly classrooms, positively influencing learners.

The findings illustrate that the concepts of accountability and transparency as elements of ethics in leadership are the most important instruments in promoting the success of learners. It is evident that when principals show honesty, integrity, and clarity in their actions, learners know what is expected from them, adhere to all school rules, and participate actively in the learning process. Moderately strong positive correlations found between learner behaviors, performance, and motivation suggest that transparent leadership leads to not only good classroom behavior and respect for school regulations but also more efficient teaching and successful educational results.

In terms of the wider context of education, the findings clearly highlight the need to incorporate accountability and transparency within the leadership approach as crucial components of school governance. Ethical transparency facilitates better teacher-principal relationships, allowing educators to employ instructional approaches effectively while creating a conducive environment for teaching. In such an environment, learners develop holistically by gaining academic, social, and behavioral skills. Therefore, future professional development programs and school leadership initiatives must consider educating school administrators on ethical leadership, specifically in making decisions, communicating with others, and being accountable.

In sum, ethical leadership demonstrated through accountability and transparency significantly shapes learner outcomes, albeit at a moderately strong level. Teachers perceive that these practices foster trust, fairness, and clarity, which in turn enhance academic performance, reinforce discipline, and stimulate learner motivation and participation, confirming the vital role of transparent governance in achieving quality education.

Table 4.5

Significant Relationship between Teacher's Perceptions on the Ethical Leadership Practices in Terms of Accountability and Transparency and their Perceptions on its Influence to Learner Outcomes

Variable	Accountability and Transparency and Learner Outcomes		Decision
	Correlation (r) (p-value)	Degree of Relation	
Academic Performance	0.726* (< 0.001)	Strong Positive Relationship	Reject Ho
Learner Behavior and Discipline	0.736* (< 0.001)	Strong Positive Relationship	Reject Ho
Motivation and Participation	0.699* (< 0.001)	Strong Positive Relationship	Reject Ho

Note: Significant at 5% level of significance; Range: 0.00–0.19 Very Weak, 0.20–0.39 Weak, 0.40–0.59 Moderate, 0.60–0.79 Strong, 0.80–1.00 Very Strong

Table 4.6 presents the significant relationship between teachers' perceptions on governance strategies in terms of Instructional Supervision and their perceptions of how ethical leadership influences learner outcomes. This table demonstrates that the extent to which principals actively monitor, guide, and support instructional practices is strongly associated with academic performance, learner behavior and discipline, and motivation and participation. All correlations are significant at the 5% level, suggesting that teachers recognize a meaningful link between supervisory governance and the ethical influence of leadership on student outcomes.

Regarding Academic Performance, the correlation coefficient of 0.807 indicates a strongly positive relationship. Teachers emphasized that principals who provide consistent coaching, constructive feedback, and guidance directly impact student learning. Key informant three explained, *"Our principal frequently observes lessons and offers helpful suggestions, which improves how we teach, and our students' grades have noticeably improved,"* illustrating how supervisory engagement reinforces both instructional quality and learner achievement.

For Learner Behavior and Discipline, the correlation coefficient of 0.760 also reflects a strongly positive relationship. Teachers reported that consistent classroom monitoring and guidance by the principal help maintain a positive and orderly learning environment. Key informant six noted, *"Because our principal checks on classroom practices and encourages respectful interactions, pupils behave better, and disciplinary issues are minimized,"* indicating that instructional supervision under ethical leadership nurtures student self-regulation and cooperation.

Motivation and Participation shows a correlation coefficient of 0.726, suggesting a moderately strongly positive relationship. Teachers observed that principals who actively supervise and support instructional activities also motivate students to participate more in learning experiences. Key informant eight

stated, “Learners are more eager to join activities and participate in lessons because they see teachers guided and encouraged by the principal,” emphasizing how instructional supervision indirectly boosts learner engagement.

These results align with existing literature which underscores that instructional supervision is a critical mechanism through which ethical leadership influences student outcomes (Mendoza & De Jesus, 2024; Reyes & Lagdameo, 2022; Velasco et al., 2023;). Principals’ active involvement in teaching processes fosters accountability, mentorship, and high expectations, which collectively enhance learner performance, behavior, and motivation.

The findings emphasize that instructional supervision is an important means through which ethical leadership impacts learners positively. Principals who engage themselves in classroom observations and feedback to teachers regarding their instruction not only improve the quality of teaching but also develop instructional structures for achieving better academic success. The high correlation between academic success, learner behaviors, and motivation reveals that supervisory intervention not only promotes instructional quality but also contributes significantly to holistic student development. It is clear from the views expressed by teachers that regular observation and mentoring by principals lead to disciplined classroom settings as well as improved learner interaction and participation.

From a wider viewpoint, the above analysis reveals that good governance by instructional supervision goes beyond management to act as an ethical device. Principals who combine instructional supervision with good leadership practices will create a school environment in which teachers will be guided and motivated, while learners will be well disciplined and perform well academically. This is why schools should put emphasis on ethical and practical instructional leadership when formulating their policies and professional development programs.

In sum, instructional supervision significantly strengthens the positive influence of ethical leadership on learners, as teachers perceive that principled, hands-on support enhances academic achievement, promotes disciplined behavior, and motivates participation. This underscores the integral role of supervisory governance in translating ethical leadership into tangible learner outcomes.

Table 4.6

Significant Relationship Between Teacher’s Perceptions on the Governance Strategies in Terms of Instructional Supervision and their Perceptions on the Influence of Ethical Leadership to Learner Outcomes

Variable			Instructional Supervision and Influence of Ethical Leadership on Learner Outcomes		Decision
			Correlation (r) (p-value)	Degree of Relation	
Academic Performance			0.807* (< 0.001)	Very Strong Positive Relationship	Reject Ho
Learner Discipline	Behavior	and	0.760* (< 0.001)	Strong Positive Relationship	Reject Ho
Motivation and Participation			0.726* (< 0.001)	Strong Positive Relationship	Reject Ho

Note: Significant at 5% level of significance; Range: 0.00–0.19 Very Weak, 0.20–0.39 Weak, 0.40–0.59 Moderate, 0.60–0.79 Strong, 0.80–1.00 Very Strong

Table 4.7 presents the significant relationship between teachers’ perceptions on governance strategies in terms of Stakeholder Engagement and their perception of the influence of ethical leadership on learner outcomes. This table highlights how principals’ efforts to involve parents, community members, and other stakeholders in school programs meaningfully correlate with academic performance, learner behavior and discipline, and student motivation and participation. All correlations are significant at the 5% level, demonstrating that teachers recognize stakeholder engagement as a critical governance strategy that enhances the ethical influence of school leadership on students.

In terms of Academic Performance, the correlation coefficient of 0.826 indicates a strongly positive

relationship. Teachers shared that principals who actively involve stakeholders create a supportive environment that facilitates learning. Key informant one expressed, *“When our principal invites parents to participate in school programs and shares updates on student progress, it motivates us to teach better, and our students’ performance improves,”* illustrating how community involvement reinforces instructional efforts and positively impacts learner achievement.

For Learner Behavior and Discipline, the correlation coefficient of 0.824 also reflects a strongly positive relationship. Teachers observed that when stakeholders are engaged and aware of school values and expectations, learners’ conduct improves. Key informant three stated, *“Pupils behave responsibly because parents and community members are involved, and the principal consistently communicates expectations and encourages collaboration,”* highlighting that ethical leadership paired with stakeholder engagement nurtures a culture of discipline and positive social behavior.

Regarding Motivation and Participation, the correlation coefficient of 0.797 demonstrates a strongly positive relationship. Teachers indicated that students show higher engagement when the school actively includes parents and the community in activities. Key informant four shared, *“Our learners are excited to join school projects and participate in programs because they see the school working closely with parents and the community,”* emphasizing that inclusive governance fosters student motivation and active involvement.

These findings corroborate prior research suggesting that stakeholder engagement under ethical leadership enhances school performance and learner outcomes (Dizon & Mallari, 2023; Ortega & Sumalde, 2024; Tan & Gonzales, 2022). Principals who cultivate partnerships with parents, barangay officials, and community organizations not only promote transparency and accountability but also create environments that support academic growth, behavioral development, and student engagement.

The results indicate that stakeholder engagement acts as an effective channel through which ethical leadership can exert positive effects on the learners’ success. Principals who engage parents, members of the community, and outside organizations foster collaboration and support the achievement of academic, behavioral, and motivational objectives. As explained by the teachers’ accounts, stakeholder engagement increases accountability and conveys the values of the school to motivate the learners, proving that the education of the students is not merely up to the educators but also to the entire community.

Moreover, these results imply that governance strategies emphasizing inclusivity and collaboration extend the reach of ethical leadership beyond the classroom. By integrating stakeholder input and maintaining transparent communication, principals cultivate trust, reinforce ethical practices, and enhance school culture, thereby supporting holistic student development. The strong positive correlations across academic performance, learner behavior, and motivation underscore that meaningful stakeholder engagement is essential for sustaining a school climate where ethical leadership translates into measurable improvements in student learning, conduct, and active participation.

In sum, principals who consistently engage stakeholders enhance the ethical climate of the school, which positively affects learners’ academic performance, behavior, and motivation, demonstrating that participatory governance is essential for holistic student development.

Table 4.7

Significant Relationship of Teacher’s Perceptions on the Governance Strategies on Stakeholder Engagement and Their Perceptions on the Influence of Ethical Leadership to Learner Outcomes

Variable	Stakeholder Engagement and Influence of Ethical Leadership on Learner Outcomes		Decision
	Correlation (r) (p-value)	Degree of Relation	
Academic Performance	0.826* (< 0.001)	Very Strong Positive Relationship	Reject Ho
Learner Behavior and Discipline	0.824* (< 0.001)	Very Strong Positive Relationship	Reject Ho
Motivation and Participation	0.797* (< 0.001)	Strong Positive Relationship	Reject Ho

Note: Significant at 5% level of significance; Range: 0.00–0.19 Very Weak, 0.20–0.39 Weak, 0.40–0.59 Moderate, 0.60–0.79 Strong, 0.80–1.00 Very Strong

Table 4.8 presents the significant relationship between teachers' perceptions on governance strategies in terms of Resource Management and their perception of the influence of ethical leadership on learner outcomes. This table underscores how principals' ability to allocate, utilize, and communicate resources effectively contributes to academic performance, learner behavior and discipline, and student motivation and participation. All correlations are significant at the 5% level, indicating that teachers recognize proper resource management as an essential governance practice that amplifies the ethical impact of school leadership on learners.

For Academic Performance, the correlation coefficient of 0.733 indicates a moderately strongly positive relationship. Teachers shared that principals who prioritize resources based on school needs and ensure equitable distribution of learning materials create an environment where students can achieve better academically. Key informant one stated, *"When our principal makes sure we have enough textbooks, learning materials, and teaching aids, it is easier for us to deliver quality instruction, and our learners' performance improves,"* demonstrating that strategic resource management directly supports instructional effectiveness and learner achievement.

In terms of Learner Behavior and Discipline, the correlation coefficient of 0.677 reflects a moderately strongly positive relationship. Teachers observed that well-managed resources contribute to an organized and structured learning environment, reducing conflicts and promoting discipline. Key informant four explained, *"Learners follow rules better when classrooms are well-equipped and materials are accessible; it helps the principal maintain order and fairness,"* indicating that resource management indirectly fosters positive student behavior by supporting ethical leadership practices.

Regarding Motivation and Participation, the correlation coefficient of 0.712 demonstrates a moderately strongly positive relationship. Teachers noted that when resources are used efficiently and creatively, learners are more engaged in school activities and projects. Key informant two remarked, *"Pupils participate eagerly in class and extracurricular activities because the school provides the tools and materials they need, showing that the principal values their learning and growth,"* highlighting that resource allocation under ethical leadership encourages active student involvement.

These results align with existing literature emphasizing that ethical and strategic resource management strengthens school governance and supports learner outcomes (Binasoy, 2025; Dizon & Mallari, 2023; Ortega & Sumalde, 2024). Principals who manage resources transparently and equitably foster fairness, accountability, and a supportive learning environment, which in turn enhances students' academic, behavioral, and motivational outcomes.

From the findings, it becomes evident that resource management is an essential tool used by ethical leadership to impact learner performance. When principals use their skills in managing, allocating, and communicating resources, the learners find themselves in favorable conditions for learning and become academically successful. The teachers confirm that learners perform better academically, adhere to the rules, and engage in classwork when the learning resources are available and properly managed.

Moreover, these results suggest that resource management extends the ethical impact of school leadership beyond administrative efficiency, shaping school culture and student experiences. Transparent and fair use of resources signals to both teachers and learners that the principal values equity, accountability, and inclusivity, reinforcing trust and modeling ethical behavior. Consequently, well-managed resources not only support instructional quality but also cultivate a motivating and orderly school environment, demonstrating that principled governance practices are essential for holistic learner development.

The findings indicate that resource management is a critical mechanism through which ethical leadership translates into improved learner outcomes, as it ensures that students have the necessary tools for learning while promoting fairness and institutional trust.

Table 4.8

Significant Relationship of Teacher's Perceptions on the Governance Strategies on Resource Management and Their Perceptions on the Influence of Ethical Leadership to Learner Outcomes

Variable	Stakeholder Engagement and Influence of Ethical Leadership on Learner Outcomes		Decision
	Correlation (r) (p-value)	Degree of Relation	
Academic Performance	0.733* (< 0.001)	Moderately Strongly Positive Relationship	Reject Ho
Learner Behavior and Discipline	0.677* (< 0.001)	Moderately Strongly Positive Relationship	Reject Ho
Motivation and Participation	0.712* (< 0.001)	Moderately Strongly Positive Relationship	Reject Ho

Note: Significant at 5% level of significance; Range: 0.00–0.19 Very Weak, 0.20–0.39 Weak, 0.40–0.59 Moderate, 0.60–0.79 Strong, 0.80–1.00 Very Strong

The findings reveal that teachers in the Fourth Congressional District of Quezon perceive their principals as exemplifying ethical leadership and good governance in managing school operations and addressing challenges. Teachers consistently highlighted fairness and equity as central to ethical leadership. Key Informant 1 described how their principal ensures fairness in decision-making: “...*pagiging fair... nakikinig sa opinyon ng bawat isa... base sa ikabubuti ng lahat...*” [*...being fair... listening to everyone's opinions... based on what is best for everyone...*]. This illustrates that ethical leadership is not only about following rules but also about valuing the input of all stakeholders to ensure decisions benefit the entire school community. From the researcher's perspective, this inclusive approach fosters trust and engagement among teachers, reinforcing the school's collaborative culture. This aligns with Leithwood et al. (2021), who argue that ethical school leaders demonstrate fairness and transparency, creating an environment where stakeholders feel respected and included in decision-making.

Teachers also emphasized the importance of neutrality and policy-based governance. Key Informant 2 noted that the principal “*remains neutral and objective... grounded in DepEd manuals and official policies.*” This reflects that teachers view ethical leadership as guided by formal frameworks that ensure impartiality and consistency, even under pressure. The researcher reflects that reliance on established policies safeguards school operations from bias and promotes accountability. This finding supports Hallinger and Wang (2021), who highlight that adherence to policy frameworks underpins effective and ethical school governance.

In addition, teachers described principals as demonstrating integrity, professionalism, and accountability. Key Informant 4 observed, “...*fair and transparent decisions... treated with respect and professionalism...*” and Key Informant 10 emphasized that decisions are made with “...*accountability and integrity...*” These statements indicate that teachers perceive ethical leadership as a combination of moral judgment, professional conduct, and personal responsibility. From the researcher's viewpoint, integrity and accountability enhance the credibility of leadership and encourage teachers to align their practices with the school's ethical standards. Bush and Glover (2021) similarly note that integrity and accountability are fundamental to ethical leadership, shaping trust and cohesion within educational institutions.

Regarding communication and transparency, teachers highlighted that principals ensure open dialogue and clarity of decisions. Key Informant 7 stated, “...*she explains her decisions clearly...*” and Key Informant 6 noted the importance of open communication: “...*there is always open communication within the school personnel.*” These responses suggest that teachers value leaders who communicate rationales behind their decisions, thereby minimizing misunderstandings and promoting trust. The researcher reflects that transparency is a critical mechanism for building a positive school climate, as it enhances teacher confidence in leadership decisions. UNESCO (2022) similarly identifies transparency and open communication as essential dimensions of ethical school leadership.

Collaborative and participatory leadership emerged strongly in teachers' descriptions. Key Informant 5 described the principal's approach to conflicts: “...*nakikipag coordinate... teachers, parents and*

stakeholders... decisions base sa facts...” Meanwhile, Key Informant 9 highlighted community engagement: “...organized a fundraising... coordinated with teachers, parents, and community members...” These examples show that ethical leadership involves not only internal consultation but also the mobilization of external stakeholders to solve problems collectively. From the researcher’s perspective, such practices strengthen school governance by distributing responsibility and promoting shared ownership of solutions. Recent literature emphasizes that participatory leadership fosters both organizational trust and community support, contributing to more effective problem-solving (Domingo, 2023; Netolicky, 2021).

Teachers further described principals’ adaptive and crisis-responsive practices. Key Informant 8 shared: “...temporary learning spaces... very challenging... she remains calm... helps us feel at ease...” Similarly, Key Informant 2 recalled “coordination with the Local Government Unit to secure temporary classrooms”. These responses indicate that teachers view principals as resilient, composed, and proactive when navigating operational challenges. The researcher reflects that adaptive leadership in crisis demonstrates moral and practical responsibility, ensuring continuity of learning despite structural or environmental constraints. Harris and Jones (2021) and Hallinger and Wang (2021) argue that effective school leaders maintain stability and motivation in schools through adaptive, solution-oriented approaches during crises.

Finally, teachers highlighted evidence-based and consultative decision-making practices. Key Informant 6 stated, “...listened to our ideas then came up with a fair plan...”, and Key Informant 5 emphasized “decisions based on factual information.” These accounts suggest that teachers perceive ethical leadership as rational, informed, and participatory, ensuring decisions are both effective and just. From the researcher’s perspective, integrating evidence and consultation enhances fairness, promotes accountability, and fosters stakeholder trust. Leithwood et al. (2022) similarly underscore that ethical school leaders rely on evidence, consultation, and structured planning to guide responsible governance.

In summary, teachers in the Fourth Congressional District of Quezon describe their principals’ ethical leadership and governance practices as characterized by fairness, transparency, accountability, collaboration, participatory decision-making, and adaptability. At the same time, these practices are exercised in the context of resource limitations, operational challenges, and external pressures, highlighting the dynamic and context-dependent nature of ethical school leadership. The researcher reflects that effective principals integrate moral judgment, stakeholder engagement, and evidence-based practices to maintain school operations and address challenges ethically and efficiently. These findings align with contemporary research emphasizing that ethical and effective leadership is both principled and responsive, integrating fairness, integrity, transparency, and adaptability to achieve positive outcomes for teachers and learners (Bush & Glover, 2021; Hallinger & Wang, 2022; Leithwood et al., 2022; Netolicky, 2021).

Table 5
Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Data on Ethical Leadership and Governance Practices

Research Area	Theme	Sub-Theme	Key Informant	Verbatim Response	Researcher’s Reflection
Ethical Leadership in School Operations	Fairness and Equity	Inclusive Decision-Making	KI 1	“...pagiging fair... nakikinig sa opinyon ng bawat isa... base sa ikabubuti ng lahat...” (“...being fair... listening to everyone’s opinions... and focusing on what is best for everyone...”)	Teachers describe principals as fair and inclusive, ensuring that decisions consider the welfare of all stakeholders.
		Neutrality and Objectivity	KI 2	“She remains neutral and objective... grounded in DepEd manuals...”	Ethical leadership is perceived as rule-based and impartial, ensuring fairness in resolving conflicts.
	Integrity and Professionalism	Respect and Professional Conduct	KI 4	“...fair and transparent decisions... treated with respect and professionalism...”	Teachers associate ethical leadership with integrity, professionalism, and respect in governance.
		Accountability and Responsibility	KI 10	“...decision with accountability and integrity... takes responsibility...”	Highlights that accountability is a core component of ethical leadership practices.
Governance	Transparency	Open	KI 6	“...there is always open	Teachers perceive

Practices in Managing Operations	and Communication	Communication		<i>communication within the school personnel."</i>	transparency through consistent and open communication among stakeholders.
		Clarity of Decisions	KI 7	<i>"...she explains her decisions clearly..."</i>	Clear communication strengthens trust and understanding of leadership decisions.
		Organizational Management	Systematic Operations	KI 6	<i>"...ensures school activities are properly organized..."</i>
Collaborative and Participatory Leadership	Stakeholder Engagement	Resource Management	KI 7	<i>"...using school resources wisely... accountable for every decision..."</i>	Teachers view principals as responsible stewards of school resources.
		Consultation and listening	KI 7	<i>"...she listens, gather information... consider every detail..."</i>	Ethical leadership is described as participatory, valuing stakeholder input.
		Coordination with Stakeholders	KI 5	<i>"...nakikipag coordinate... teachers, parents and stakeholders..."</i> ("Coordinates with teachers, parents, and stakeholders.")	Governance is strengthened through collaboration and shared responsibility.
Adaptive Leadership in Addressing Challenges	Community Involvement	Collective Problem-Solving	KI 9	<i>"...organized a fundraising... coordinated with teachers, parents..."</i>	Teachers describe principals as mobilizing the community to address school challenges.
	Crisis-Responsive Leadership	Calm and Composed Leadership	KI 8	<i>"...remains very calm... helps us feel at ease..."</i>	Teachers perceive principals as emotionally stable and reassuring during crises.
		Problem-Solving and Initiative	KI 2	<i>"...coordinated with LGU... secured temporary learning spaces..."</i>	Reflects proactive and solution-oriented leadership in challenging situations.
Ethical Decision-Making Practices	Evidence-Based Decision-Making	Conflict Resolution	KI 5	<i>"...kinausap... pinakinggan ang sides... naresolve..."</i> ("...discussed, listened to both sides, resolve it.")	Ethical leadership is demonstrated through fair and systematic conflict resolution.
		Data-Driven Decisions	KI 5	<i>"...nagdedesisyon base sa facts..."</i> ("Makes decisions based on facts.")	Teachers perceive decisions as rational and grounded in evidence.
		Consultative Decision-Making	KI 6	<i>"...had a meeting... listened to our ideas..."</i>	Collaborative decision-making strengthens fairness and acceptance.
Challenges in Leadership Context	Policy-Based Leadership	Adherence to Guidelines	KI 2	<i>"...grounded in DepEd manuals and policies..."</i>	Ensures consistency, legality, and fairness in governance practices.
	Operational Constraints	Resource Limitations	KI 1	<i>"...kakulangan ng learning materials... ginagawan ng paraan..."</i> "	

Urgent
Financial
Decisions

KI 10

“...MOOE... managed to
allocate... within short period...”Highlights the need for timely
and accountable financial
decision-making.

The findings suggest that ethical leadership behaviors of principals in schools are evident not only through quantitative measures from survey results but also qualitatively via interviews. In fact, there is a clear agreement between both types of results and indicators, with no discrepancies observed in any aspect. The qualitative evidence strongly corroborates the findings on high integrity and fairness, exemplary professional conduct, instructional support, stakeholder involvement, student academic success, learner behavior, and motivation obtained via quantitative measures (10 out of 10 participants). These similarities show that the aspects captured numerically are perceived and felt by educators in real schools, hence making results highly valid.

Integrity and fairness show full convergence, where both quantitative and qualitative data strongly agree and reinforce each other. The survey results show a high mean 3.56, particularly in fair policy implementation and equal treatment. This is reinforced by qualitative data since all ten respondents agreed that the principals treated the teachers with equality and implemented policies fairly. The statement, *“Pantay-pantay ang trato ng principal sa amin, at malinaw ang pagpapatupad ng policies,”* [*“The principal treats us equally, and the policies are clearly implemented.”*] clearly reflects this alignment. The agreement between high quantitative ratings and unanimous qualitative responses confirms that fairness is both measurable and consistently experienced, strengthening trust and stability within the school.

Professional role modeling also reflects full convergence, where survey data and interview narratives mutually reinforce each other. With a quantitative mean of 3.55, it can be established that principals have significant behavioral impacts on teachers. This is supported by qualitative findings from all 10 respondents, who cited the devotion of the principal as motivation for improved performance. The statement, *“Nakikita namin ang dedication ng principal kaya nae-engganyo kaming galingan din,”* [*“The principal’s dedication motivates us to do better as well.”*] illustrates this shared perception. Both data sources clearly agree that principals serve as role models, and this consistency confirms that leadership influence is both behavioral and motivational.

Accountability and transparency reflect partial convergence, both data sources agree on the presence of the practice but differ in strength and consistency. Quantitative data reveal an average score of 3.38, indicating moderate transparency. This observation was reinforced by the qualitative results, where nine out of ten participants agreed that the principal explains his/her decision and welcomes criticism. Yet, some of the participants observed that there were unexplained decisions. The statement, *“Ipinapaliwanag sa amin ang mga decisions at open siya sa feedback,”* [*“The decisions are explained to us, and he/she is open to feedback.”*] reflects agreement in practice, but the slightly lower mean and minor variation in responses indicate that transparency, while present, may not be fully participatory in all situations.

The supervision of instruction clearly depicts full convergence, as both quantitative and qualitative data converge strongly with each other. The mean of the survey comes out to be quite high at 3.60, which shows that there exists a very good level of instructional leadership, which is clearly backed by qualitative data. The statement, *“Ginaguide kami ng principal sa strategies at nagbibigay ng feedback para gumanda ang teaching namin,”* [*“The principal guides us with strategies and gives feedback to improve our teaching.”*] reflects this agreement. The consistency between very high ratings and unanimous teacher experiences confirms that instructional supervision is both structured and actively practiced.

Stakeholder engagement exhibits total convergence, meaning that there is agreement between both sets of data, which also reinforces one another. From the quantitative average of 3.62, stakeholder engagement is seen to be strong within parent and community sectors. This is evidenced qualitatively by the ten respondents who highlighted engagement as crucial. The statement, *“Active ang principal sa pakikipag-ugnayan sa parents at community,”* [*“The principal actively engages with parents and the community.”*] confirms this shared experience. The agreement across data sources indicates that participatory governance is consistently implemented and strengthens school-community relationships.

Resource management illustrates partial convergence since both quantitative and qualitative data point to the existence of the practice but differ in their degree of consistency. The mean score of 3.38 from the survey suggests relatively effective practice, which is backed up by qualitative data showing that eight out of ten participants recognize the appropriate management of resources. The statement, *“Maayos ang paggamit ng resources at ipinapaliwanag kung saan napupunta ang budget,”* [*“Resources are used properly, and it is explained where the budget goes.”*] shows agreement, but the lower consensus and moderate mean suggest that improvements in consistency and transparency are still needed.

Academic performance demonstrates full convergence, where both quantitative and qualitative data

strongly agree and reinforce each other. The survey mean of 3.61 indicates a positive impact on learning outcomes. This is fully supported by qualitative responses from all 10 participants, who observed improved learner engagement and performance. The statement, *"Mas nagiging engaged ang mga bata at gumaganda ang performance nila,"* ["The pupils become more engaged, and their performance improves."] confirms this alignment. The agreement indicates that ethical leadership directly contributes to improved academic outcomes.

Learner behavior also shows full convergence, with strong agreement between quantitative and qualitative data. The mean score for the quantitative findings of 3.58 represents positive learner behaviors concerning disciplinary development. This has been attested to by all 10 respondents, who noted improved behaviors in learners. The statement, *"Mas disiplinado at respectful ang mga bata dahil sa culture ng school,"* ["The children become more disciplined and respectful because of the school culture."] supports this finding. Consistency confirms that ethical leadership significantly influences school culture and student behavior.

Motivation and participation demonstrate full convergence, where survey data and interview narratives clearly agree and reinforce each other. The quantitative mean 3.58 indicates high learner engagement. This is supported by all 10 participants, who noted increased enthusiasm and participation among learners. The statement, *"Mas ganado pumasok ang mga bata at sumali sa activities,"* ["The pupils are more eager to go to school and join activities."] reflects this shared experience. The alignment confirms that ethical leadership enhances learner motivation and active participation.

Overall, the integration of findings shows that quantitative survey data and qualitative interview narratives consistently agree and reinforce each other, with most indicators demonstrating full convergence supported by strong consensus (10 out of 10 participants). Areas such as accountability and transparency, and resource management show partial convergence, where both data sources still agree on the presence of practices but indicate variability in implementation. This strong alignment across data sources enhances the credibility and validity of the study and confirms that ethical leadership practices are not only statistically evident but also deeply experienced by teachers in real school contexts.

Table 6
Integration of Quantitative Findings and Qualitative Data on Ethical Leadership and Governance Practices

Findings	Quantitative Result	Qualitative Result	Interpretation
Integrity and Fairness	High mean (M = 3.56), particularly fair policy implementation (M = 3.58) and equal treatment (M = 3.57).	With strong consensus: 10 out of 10 participants agreed, as expressed in the statement, <i>"Pantay-pantay ang trato ng principal sa amin, at malinaw ang pagpapatupad ng policies."</i> ("The principal treats us equally, and the policies are clearly implemented.") Theme: Fairness and Equity	Full Convergence. Both quantitative results (high mean scores) and qualitative narratives consistently confirm that fairness and equity are strongly practiced.
Professional Role Modeling	High mean (M = 3.55), especially influencing others through positive behavior (M = 3.58).	With strong consensus: 10 out of 10 participants agreed, as one participant shared, <i>"Nakikita namin ang dedication ng principal kaya nae-engganyo kaming galingan din."</i> ("The principal's dedication motivates us to do better as well.") Theme: Role Modeling and Professionalism	Full Convergence. The high quantitative ratings and strong qualitative agreement both demonstrate that principals serve as effective role models.
Accountability and Transparency	Strong mean (M = 3.38), including clear communication and justification of decisions (M = 3.42).	With general consensus: 9 out of 10 participants agreed, as expressed, <i>"Ipinapaliwanag sa amin ang mga decisions at open siya sa feedback."</i> ("The decisions are explained to us, and he/she is open to feedback.") Theme: Transparency and Open Communication	Partial Convergence. While both quantitative and qualitative data confirm that transparency and open communication are present, the relatively lower mean score suggests that these practices may not be consistently experienced at a deeper participatory level
Instructional Supervision	Very high mean (M = 3.60), especially innovative teaching strategies (M = 3.65) and	With strong consensus: 10 out of 10 participants agreed, as one stated, <i>"Ginaguide kami ng principal sa strategies at</i>	Full Convergence. Very high quantitative results and strong qualitative agreement

	coaching (M = 3.64).	<i>nagbibigay ng feedback para gumanda ang teaching namin.</i> "	both affirm that principals actively support instructional improvement through coaching and feedback.
		("The principal guides us with strategies and gives feedback to improve our teaching.") Theme: Instructional Support and Development	
Stakeholder Engagement	High mean (M = 3.62), especially school-community relations (M = 3.64).	With strong consensus: 10 out of 10 participants agreed, as stated, <i>"Active ang principal sa pakikipag-ugnayan sa parents at community."</i> ("The principal actively engages with parents and the community.") Theme: Collaborative Governance	Full Convergence. Both data sources consistently indicate that principals actively engage parents and the community.
Resource Management	Mean (M = 3.38), including strategic allocation and transparency in funds.	With general consensus: 8 out of 10 participants agreed, as expressed, <i>"Maayos ang paggamit ng resources at ipinapaliwanag kung saan napupunta ang budget."</i> ("Resources are used properly, and it is explained where the budget goes.") Theme: Accountable Resource Management	Partial Convergence. Quantitative and qualitative data both confirm that resource management practices are present and generally effective.
Academic Performance	High mean (M = 3.61), including conducive learning environment (M = 3.62).	With strong consensus: 10 out of 10 participants agreed, the statement, <i>"Mas nagiging engaged ang mga bata at gumaganda ang performance nila."</i> ("The pupils become more engaged, and their performance improves.") Theme: Improved Academic Outcomes	Full Convergence. High quantitative ratings and strong qualitative observations both indicate improved learner engagement and performance.
Learner Behavior	Strong mean (M = 3.58), especially values formation (M = 3.62).	With strong consensus: 10 out of 10 participants agreed, as shared, <i>"Mas disiplinado at respectful ang mga bata dahil sa culture ng school."</i> ("The children become more disciplined and respectful because of the school culture.") Theme: Positive School Climate and Discipline	Full Convergence. Both data sources consistently show that ethical leadership promotes discipline, respect, and positive values among learners.
Motivation and Participation	Strong mean (M = 3.58), particularly learner-centered atmosphere (M = 3.62).	With strong consensus: 10 out of 10 participants agreed, as expressed, <i>"Mas ganado pumasok ang mga bata at sumali sa activities."</i> ("The pupils are more eager to go to school and join activities.") Theme: Learner Engagement and Motivation	Full Convergence. Quantitative and qualitative findings both confirm that learners are more motivated and actively participating in school activities

Teachers in the Fourth Congressional District of Quezon perceive their principals as strong exemplars of ethical leadership, demonstrating integrity, fairness, accountability, and professional role modeling. Principals' consistency, honesty, and respect in decision-making foster trust and establish clear behavioral norms, while their professionalism and moral conduct inspire teachers' dedication and commitment. These findings suggest that ethical leadership is not merely aspirational but embedded in the school culture, functioning as a stabilizing and guiding force that promotes coherence, credibility, and professional respect across the school community.

The governance strategies employed by principals reveal a values-driven and systematic approach to school leadership. Instructional supervision, stakeholder engagement, and transparent resource management are carried out not as isolated administrative tasks but as integrated processes guided by ethical principles. By mentoring teachers, fostering collaboration, and promoting participatory decision-making, principals operationalize ethics into actionable governance practices. This demonstrates that effective school governance emerges when leadership combines moral grounding with structured systems, ensuring both relational trust and operational efficiency.

Teachers perceive that principals' ethical leadership positively influences learner outcomes across multiple dimensions. Ethical practices enhance academic performance by creating supportive, goal-oriented learning environments; improve learner behavior through values formation and restorative approaches; and

increase motivation and participation by fostering inclusive, engaging, and learner-centered school climates. These findings suggest that learner success is contextually and socially constructed, with ethical leadership shaping the conditions that allow teachers and learners to thrive.

Statistical analysis confirms that ethical leadership, governance strategies, and learner outcomes are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. High ethical standards strengthen governance practices, which translate values into measurable improvements in teaching and learning. This alignment underscores sustainable school development depends on the integration of values, management processes, and educational outcomes, highlighting a clear pathway where principled leadership informs effective governance, which in turn enhances both teacher performance and learner achievement.

Qualitative narratives reveal that ethical leadership is experienced in everyday school interactions and decision-making processes. Teachers describe principals as approachable, fair, and collaborative, integrating ethics into daily operations, addressing challenges through participatory decision-making, and providing mentorship that supports both instructional quality and professional growth. These lived experiences confirm that ethical leadership shapes school culture, fosters trust, and amplifies the impact of governance practices on both teacher and learner development.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings demonstrates a coherent and mutually reinforcing pattern, showing that ethical leadership and governance practices are both measurable and experienced in practice. Quantitative data reveal strong teacher perceptions of principals' integrity, fairness, and accountability, alongside high engagement in governance strategies such as instructional supervision, stakeholder involvement, and transparent resource management. These results are reinforced by qualitative narratives, with teachers describing principals as approachable, fair, and collaborative—mentoring teachers, engaging the community, and modeling ethical behavior. Both data sources converge in illustrating that ethical leadership positively impacts learner outcomes, creating school environments where students are motivated, disciplined, and academically engaged. Together, these findings confirm that ethical leadership and participatory governance operate as integrated mechanisms, translating values into actions, shaping school culture, and promoting holistic learner development.

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