

# Exploring Empowerment in Education: Enhancing Efficiency Through Workflow Optimization, Employee Selection, and Training Practice

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## Abstract

This phenomenological study was conducted to explore the critical role of school administrators in creating empowerment and efficiency in educational settings by implementing tactics such as workflow optimization, employee selection, and training practices. It aimed to articulate the lived experiences and characteristics of school principals in fostering empowerment and productivity in educational environments. The participants for this study were the ten school principals, five for focus group discussions (FGD) and the remaining five for in-depth interviews conducted face-to-face within the division of Davao City, who already had five years or more of experience handling schools. The participants were chosen by purposive sampling. The methods utilized in this study include direct observation, interviews, and document analysis. Also important in this study was the utilization of triangulation. Mertler (2006) describes triangulation as an invaluable aspect of qualitative research, allowing the researcher to connect various sources of data and establish trustworthy findings with as little bias as possible. This study was guided by three research questions. The first research question, which had three sub-questions, divulged how optimizing workflows impacts educators' daily experiences and contributes to their sense of empowerment and efficiency in the educational setting. The second research question revealed the lived experiences of teachers regarding the influence of employee selection processes on their empowerment and efficiency within the educational environment. The last research question was able to expose the emerging themes that can be drawn from the ongoing training practices that shape educators' professional identity and confidence. The predominant themes were clarity, driving educator empowerment, improving accountability, clear guidance, and fostering a culture of growth. The findings of this study imply that school principals could benefit from incorporating the themes that have emerged here into their administrations. These themes are regarded as significant and dependable, having been recommended as efficacious by seasoned school principal participants. Moreover, this study could be repeated in the future to evaluate the generalizability of the results in various demographic settings. Doing comparable studies in areas with larger sample sizes would be very fascinating since it would allow future researchers to collect more comprehensive and diverse data on effective school principals.

**Keywords:** School principals; empowerment; efficiency; workflow optimization; employee selection; training practices; educational leadership; phenomenological research; qualitative analysis; and educational policy.

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## 1. Introduction

As school principals are tasked with taking on a leading role in all matters of school development and shaping contextual factors, they have been considered key players for empowerment in schools (Dexter & Richardson, 2020). However, despite their critical role, there is little research that specifically examines how school principals' goals and leadership styles influence development in schools and how their ambitions and educational goals affect their approaches to leadership for transformation as well as in their schools (Khosro, Oad, Ahmad, 2023). This gap often leads principals to prioritize immediate decisions over long-term planning, potentially hindering teacher-student-focused strategies, and planning (Manla, 2023).

In adapting to changing circumstances, school leaders must navigate various challenges. According to Leithwood et al. (2020), school leaders must adjust to the changing circumstances. However, according to Pont (2020), insufficient strategic initiatives and advancements support school leadership and empowerment. School principals with inadequate training on new learning management systems are grappling with significant challenges in managing workflow efficiently, exemplified by bottlenecks in administrative processes such as student enrollment and scheduling (Truong, 2019). Furthermore, there is a lack of inadequate strategies for hiring the most suitable candidates for the position among candidates with varying levels of experience and expertise. Recent research by Khanal, Perry, & Park (2020) has focused on how principals can improve school performance. A lack of robust and comprehensive leadership preparation and insufficient support negatively impact school administrator retention. And, contributing to poor retention rates among school administrators.

Nowadays, all governments around the world are concerned with advancing their educational systems, developing human capital, and achieving strategic goals, yet they are less effective and meaningful. Effective schools rely on competent governance and collaborative partnerships with stakeholders. Education must provide the basis for the development of the skills of the human capital designed to accomplish strategic goals. As such, education must be fundamental. Successful schools are the results of competent governance demonstrated by the school heads in collaborative partnerships with relevant stakeholders (K. Leithwood, A. Harris, and D. Hopkins, 2020). By addressing this gap, our study aims to explore how workflow optimization, employee selection, and training practices empower school administrators and enhance school effectiveness.

The significance of the study is that it provides useful advice on enhancing organizational performance and offers practical suggestions for improving organizational performance and resource management under tight financial conditions. We hope to improve educational efficiency and benefit students, teachers, institutions, and policymakers by influencing practice and policy through our emphasis on distributed decision-making and shared accountability.

In this study, we uncover how school principals experienced the role, impact, and implementation of workflow optimization strategies, employee selection, and training practices. Additionally, this study aims to understand how school leaders evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies' effectiveness in enhancing efficiency and fostering staff empowerment.

As we begin, it investigates school leaders' perceptions of workflow optimization strategies and employee selection and training practices' effectiveness in enhancing efficiency and fostering staff empowerment.

As we delve into our study, exploring the empowerment of school leaders through workflow optimization, employee selection, and training practices, anchored with the Scientific Management Theory developed by Frederick Taylor (1911), we utilize SMT principles in education to enhance workflow processes, improve training practices, and refine employee selection procedures, empowering educators, and stakeholders.

## 1.1 Review of Related Literature

This section outlines the study's prerequisites, reviewing relevant perspectives, existing literature, and research by other scholars. It also details qualitative studies aimed at comprehensively exploring an individual's unfiltered experiences.

### **Optimizing Workflows Impact Educators' Daily Experiences and Contribute to their Sense of Empowerment and Efficiency in the Educational Setting**

Empowerment is essentially an activity to deceive humans through change and development of the human being itself, which is in the form of competency, trust, authority, and responsibility in the context of implementing organizational activities to improve performance and empower individuals within an organization (Kinicki & Williams, 2013; cited by Suharyati, H., Laihad, G. H., & Muslim, 2022). David & Abukari (2019) revealed that the influence of school leaders has a pivotal impact on teachers, students, and school success. Principals can influence the empowerment of teachers through their involvement in decision-making related to their job characteristics. Leithwood et al. (2020) emphasized the importance of clear communication, understanding leadership qualities, and guiding staff to take informed risks, adapting instructions to educational system changes to the efficiency of the leaders and schools as well. Therefore, teacher empowerment is important (Zahed-Babelan et al., 2019).

Moreover, Seyyedamiri & Tajrobehkar (2019) highlighted that public sector organizations are adopting adaptable management theories to enhance services and reduce communication issues. This emphasis on process management helps integrate, be flexible, and be agile, enabling the use of new technologies and facilitating interaction, completed actions across functional areas, and anticipated effectiveness and outcomes. Continuity in this approach ensures that organizations can continually evolve to meet changing demands and remain responsive to emerging challenges. In line with this, worldwide research in school leadership, as noted by David & Abukari (2019), has revealed that school leaders have a pivotal impact on teachers, students, and school success. Leithwood et al. (2020) emphasized the importance of clear communication, understanding leadership qualities, and guiding staff to take informed risks, adapting instructions to educational system changes to the efficiency of the leaders and schools as well.

Consequently, school leaders are prioritizing the development of teachers through different initiatives and requirements (Jackson, 2023). Teachers, in turn, must have a very good ability to create a healthy classroom atmosphere, solve problems among peers, give learning priorities, and determine learning outcomes (Aquino et al., 2021). Teachers must be able to learn, have confidence, and add value to their organization. This circumstance indicates the organizational purpose remains meaningful to teachers, and critical intangible capital resources are generated and leveraged through highly transparent practices and outcomes (Mastio et al., 2020). In the professional environment, teachers can allow them to develop to be effective and efficient in learning and give positively (Tindowen, 2019). The emphasis is on the mindset for teachers to continue learning and to try and develop themselves (Russo et al., 2020).

Additionally, school leaders are tasked with the shift, which involves collaboration to achieve goals and remove obstacles, including teacher mentality, lack of innovation in the defense, and no willingness to follow teacher training and empowerment (Gil et al., 2019). All can improve if they believe they can carry out their duties well (Aziz et al., 2022).

However, teachers have not been involved in decision-making at school. The principal is obliged to involve the teacher in decision-making about essential activities in the school. A structured training program can provide creative thinking opportunities for teachers and students, H., Laihad, G. H., & Muslim (2022). And,

further emphasizing the importance of a growth mindset for teachers to continue learning and to try and develop themselves (Russo et al., 2020).

In connection with this, the involvement of teachers improves teachers' empowerment, learning, and outcomes in organizations (Suharyati, H., Laihad, G. H., & Muslim 2022). In summary, school leaders are responsible for improving schools, staff, and students, having the privilege of owning the unique ability to provide initiatives and strategies for overall efficiency. Additionally, by streamlining processes, and setting clear objectives, they enhance instructional practices through continuous professional development, teacher reflection, class observation, and feedback routines. Additionally, Kwan (2020) highlighted the importance of effective communication and vision creation as key characteristics of instructional leaders. (Shava, Heystek, & Chasara, 2021). Tai and Abdul Kareem (2020) have figured out that effective principals were expert instructional leaders who consistently offered prompt, enhancing efficiency, and constructive feedback to improve educators' instructional practices.

### **The Lived Experiences of School Administrators Regarding the Influence of Employee Selection Processes on their Empowerment and Efficiency within the Educational Environment**

Employee selection in education is a multifaceted process that significantly influences the effectiveness of educational institutions. Selecting qualified and competent educators is crucial for maintaining high teaching standards and fostering a positive learning environment. Abbasi, Tahir, Abbas, and Shabbir (2022) identified that the recruitment process is crucial for selecting the right candidate for the job. They found that skilled and qualified individuals play an essential role in the organization's growth. However, merely selecting and recruiting the right employee is not enough; providing a suitable working environment also boosts employee performance, which directly impacts the organization's productivity and growth. Additionally, retaining motivated employees is vital for reducing job turnover and increasing retention rates.

Moreover, the selection of employees can be characterized as a process influenced by factors unrelated to the principles of fairness and equity (Polymeropoulou & Sorkos, 2024). Therefore, school administrators, as part of the selection committee, must conduct background investigations and orient applicants to the roles they will undertake within the organization. This ensures transparency and alignment between role expectations and candidate qualifications (Taranikanti, Mudunuru, Chunchu, et al., 2024).

Furthermore, recent research has shown a growing interest in examining applicant faking during employment interviews (Bourdage, Roulin, & Levashina, 2017). Despite the reluctance of prior research, it's crucial to acknowledge that many applicants engage in faking tactics during interviews, emphasizing the importance of considering attitude matters in the selection process.

Lastly, Liu, Liu, and Chu (2019) found that program-selected probationers exhibit higher goal congruence with the firm and better job performance compared to non-program-selected individuals. This underscores the importance of systematic selection in finding better-fitting employees. Overall, careful employee selection is essential for organizational improvement, ensuring a regret-free selection process.

In conclusion, employee selection is a critical aspect of effective human resource management in education. Rigorous and strategic selection processes contribute to attracting, retaining, and empowering high-quality educators dedicated to student success. Optimized selection workflows also foster a positive organizational culture and enhance educators' sense of empowerment and efficiency within the educational setting.

## **Ongoing Training Practices Shape Educators' Professional Identity & Confidence and the Ways of Its Contribution to a Sense of Empowerment and Efficiency**

Far from having a static identity, a teacher's professional self is a dynamic dance that constantly evolves through the interplay of experiences, personal beliefs, and interactions with students, colleagues, and the educational system itself (Beijaard et al., 2004). This dynamic process of self-development goes hand in hand with continuous professional development as educators continue to hone their skills and learn how to adapt to an ever-changing educational environment. Similarly, a study by Antonek et al. (1997) emphasizes that continuous training is an important partner in this transformation journey, providing educators with valuable opportunities to critically reflect and explore new pedagogical approaches, and ultimately refining our understanding of effective educational practices. Through continuous professional development, educators are not only consumers of knowledge but also active participants in the formation of their professional identity, constantly striving to improve their practice and become more responsive to the diverse needs of their students. Furthermore, the importance of continuing education extends beyond individual educators and permeates the entire educational ecosystem.

A study by Bandura (2006) argues that the confidence gained through exposure to new strategies and best practices acts as a powerful catalyst for positive change in the classroom. This newfound confidence leads to a more dynamic and engaging presence in the classroom, fostering a collaborative learning environment where students feel empowered to be active participants in their educational journeys. Additionally, empowered educators can navigate the complexities of the education system and advocate for innovative practices and policies that promote student success and holistic development. Continuous training not only increases the efficiency of individual teachers but also contributes to improving the overall educational environment. One of the most significant impacts of continuing education is its ability to foster a culture of continuous improvement in educational institutions. According to Vokatis and Zhang (2016), highlighting the transformative impact of professional development on teacher identity, finding a clear relationship between continuous training and increased confidence, efficiency, and effectiveness in the classroom is emphasized. Educators who regularly pursue professional development opportunities are more likely to adopt a growth mindset and view challenges as opportunities to learn and grow rather than insurmountable obstacles. This shift in thinking not only builds teacher resilience but also fosters collaborative learning communities where teachers support each other in their professional development journey. Additionally, through ongoing training, teachers are encouraged to experiment with innovative teaching strategies, resulting in best practices that benefit the entire educational community. As the educational environment continues to evolve, educators must adapt their practices to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student body. Ongoing training provides educators with the tools and strategies they need to create inclusive learning environments where all students feel valued and supported. By incorporating culturally responsive teaching practices and leveraging technology to enhance instruction, educators can better engage students from diverse backgrounds and ensure equitable access to quality education. As the educational landscape continues to evolve, ongoing training remains important to ensure educators have the necessary knowledge and skills.

### **1.2 Research Objective**

This study aims to explore the empowerment of school leaders through workflow optimization, employee selection, and training practices. It has the following specific objectives:

1. to explore the strategies and challenges experienced by school administrators in implementing empowerment principles to optimize workflow efficiency within educational settings.

2. to investigate how school administrators' experiences with decision-making processes and empowerment techniques during employee selection impact organizational efficiency within educational institutions.

3. to assess the effectiveness of school administrators' experienced approaches and methodologies in integrating empowerment principles into training practices, aiming to improve efficiency and foster a culture of empowerment within educational institutions.

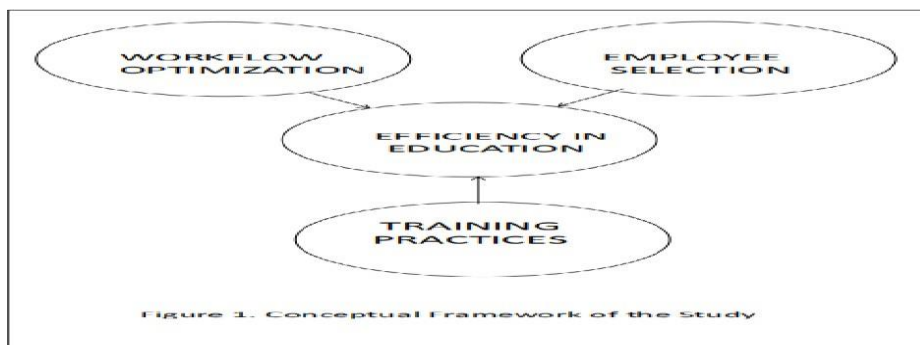
### 1.3. Purpose of the Study

This study investigates the application of empowerment principles within educational settings with a focus on enhancing efficiency, including workflow optimization, employee selection, and training practices. The main goal is to evaluate how empowerment affects these factors. The Department of Education, school administrators, teachers, students, and aspiring researchers are among the stakeholders for whom the research findings are intended to provide practical insights. The Department of Education can use the results to create rules and intervention programs that address problems like irregular monitoring and evaluation practices among school administrators. School administrators will be able to learn a great deal about the difficulties that educators face, which will help to develop kids who have the technical skills that they need. Intervention programs, improved monitoring, and supporting measures that encourage the growth of teaching and research capacities can also be beneficial to teachers. In the end, this research hopes to offer important perspectives for teachers going through comparable situations, adding to the advancement of educational practices.

### 1.4 Theoretical Lens

This study is anchored with the Scientific Management Theory developed by Frederick Taylor, (1911) SMT represents a paradigm shift in organizational management by advocating for the systematic analysis and optimization of workflows, as well as the methodical selection and training of employees to enhance operational efficiency. this theory underscores the importance of employing scientific principles and methods as efficiency to scrutinize work processes or workflow optimization, identify inefficiencies in training practices, and devise standardized procedures on employee selection aimed at maximizing productivity or empowerment

By anchoring the study to the principles of SMT, it is aimed to explore how these principles can be applied within the context of education to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. Specifically, the application of SMT principles seeks to identify opportunities for improving workflow processes, enhancing training practices, and refining employee selection procedures to empower educators, administrators, and other stakeholders within the educational system. Drawing upon the insights provided by SMT, it aims to explore how these principles can be applied within the context of education to enhance efficiency and effectiveness (Dar, S. A. (2022).





## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Research Design

The study's researcher opted for a qualitative approach, particularly phenomenology, as it focused on individuals holding the position of school principal. Phenomenology is known as an educational qualitative research design (Ponce, 2014; Creswell, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2010). This type of inquiry, which has roots in philosophy and psychology, involves the researcher summarizing participants' accounts of their lived experiences with a phenomenon. The substance of the experiences of multiple people who have all witnessed the event is summarized in this summary. Strong philosophical foundations support this design, which usually entails interviewing people (Giorgi, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). Being phenomenological qualitative research in nature, this study is closely anchored to the qualitative study of Faklaris (2013), though from a foreign setting, and is tapped as an exemplar of this present project since it researched how the principals were able to positively impact schools. This study explored the experiences, perceptions, insights, and opinions of the school principals to determine their common educational leadership practices and professional needs as school managers and instructional leaders. Creswell (2008) identified the major procedures for conducting a phenomenological study including identifying the common experience shared by several individuals, acknowledging the philosophical assumptions of the phenomenological tradition, collecting data, analyzing the data, and writing a report. As such, they are powerful for understanding subjective experience, gaining insights into people's motivations and actions, and cutting through the clutter of taken-for-granted assumptions and conventional wisdom. Pure phenomenological research seeks essentially to describe rather than explain and to start from a perspective free from hypotheses or preconceptions (Faklaris, 2013).

### 2.2 Participants of the Study

In this study, ten public school principals from Davao City will participate, with five engaging in a focus group discussion (FGD) and the remaining five undergoing in-depth interviews, which will be conducted face-to-face, adhering to minimum health protocols, including mask-wearing, hand sanitization, and social distancing. Purposive sampling was employed in selecting the participants for the study, aligning with the study's objectives and population characteristics. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method that uses the researchers' knowledge of the participants to obtain a representative sample using sound judgment (Black, 2010). Participants were selected based on the inclusion criteria of having at least five years of experience as a public-school principal, ensuring they can provide insights into work optimization, employee selection, and training practices.

The research instrument comprises a semi-structured interview guide tailored to explore school principals' perceptions and experiences regarding workflow optimization, employee selection, and training practices in public basic education. Utilizing open-ended questions and probing inquiries, the guide aims to extract nuanced insights from five participants in focus group discussions (FGDs) and five participants in individual in-depth interviews (IDIs), totaling ten participants. All interviews will be audio-recorded to facilitate accurate data transcription and analysis. Thematic analysis will be employed to systematically code and analyze the data, identifying patterns, themes, and connections within participants' narratives. Drawing on relevant literature and theoretical frameworks, qualitative research, and evaluation methods, the analysis will offer insights into the factors influencing educational leadership and management practices. The findings will be presented coherently, supplemented by illustrative quotes, and provide implications for educational policy and practice. Hence, the research instrument serves not only as a tool but as a meticulously crafted framework aligned with established methodologies, ensuring the reliability and richness of the collected data for comprehensive analysis.

## 2.4 Ethical Considerations

This study established this ethical aspect in research following the DOST Philippine Health Research Ethics Board (PHREB) mandate. In this study, meticulous attention is paid to upholding ethical principles to ensure the protection and well-being of all participants involved. Central to this commitment is the process of obtaining informed consent, where participants are provided with clear explanations regarding the study's objectives, procedures, and potential risks. Moreover, they are assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without facing any repercussions. Measures are also implemented to safeguard participants' privacy and confidentiality, including secure data storage and anonymization techniques. Additionally, adherence to ethical guidelines mandated by institutional review boards ensures transparency and integrity throughout the research process. By prioritizing ethical standards, this study aims to cultivate an environment of trust, respect, and integrity, fostering a collaborative relationship between researchers and participants. Ultimately, ethical considerations not only safeguard the rights and dignity of participants but also enhance the credibility and validity of the research findings, contributing to the advancement of knowledge in the field of education.

## 2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

The data-gathering process comprised several meticulously planned steps: securing approval from the school principal, formulating guide questions vetted by research professionals, obtaining informed consent from participants, conducting face-to-face individual and group interviews while adhering to health protocols, recording interviews, and safeguarding data confidentiality. For data analysis, Colaizzi's analytic method, in conjunction with descriptive phenomenology, provided a structured framework involving sequential steps: reviewing transcripts, identifying significant statements, deriving codes, and meanings, categorizing into themes, refining themes, synthesizing results into a coherent narrative, validating findings with participants, and consolidating data. This methodological approach facilitated the identification of recurrent themes and categories, the detailed description of theoretical components, and the validation of participants' insights, thereby enhancing the study's validity and aligning it closely with the lived experiences of those involved (Praveena & Sasikumar, 2021).

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1. Optimizing Workflows Impact Educators' Daily Experiences and Contribute to their Sense of Empowerment and Efficiency in the Educational Setting

The evidence presented highlights the critical impact that clarity and leadership have in promoting educator empowerment. School leaders help teachers feel empowered by providing them with clear communication, recognizing the roles of educators, and setting a good example. As the first participant revealed:

*IDI-P1: Well, "Ang akong ginahimo sa mga teachers in optimizing workflows" is that there is a clear structure for their tasks. I see to it that I know their work, and I make sure that I know their tasks and responsibilities before providing guidance. Because I believe, as a school head being the leader should understand the job of teachers, it would be difficult for a teacher to understand what the leader means. As a school head, I believe in leading by example, as understanding teachers' roles facilitates clearer communication and smoother operations. This approach not only saves time but also enhances productivity, empowering teachers to fulfill their duties efficiently.*

Dian et. al., (2022), stated that the main priority of school principals is to improve the quality of learning by improving the performance of teachers who handle it. (Rizal, 2019), teachers have great potential within themselves, but because they are not stimulated and motivated by their superiors as school leaders and



seniors, their potential is not maximally realized in their educational activities. Principal leadership is the ability to influence them to motivate their teachers, give clear communication that gives them empowerment in understanding their roles, and make them realize that they are doing the best of their abilities.

Leaders facilitate educators' effective and confident fulfillment of their obligations by establishing clear procedures and expectations, which in turn improves productivity and job satisfaction. This topic emphasizes how crucial strong leadership is to streamline processes and establish a welcoming workplace where teachers feel empowered to perform to the best of their abilities. As stated by FDG 1-Participant 1:

*FGD-P1: "Akong ginabuhay siguro pareha sad sa ginabuhay sa ubang leader". Streamlining workflows in our school has made my job easier. With tasks organized efficiently, I can focus more on important administrative duties while teachers can dedicate their time to teaching effectively. "Hapsay rajud ang tanan kung klaro ang roles sa matag usa".*

The FGD-P1 is upheld by Dabaja (2023), there are three essential things in the role of the principal as a manager. First, planning means that the principal must be able to prepare things that will be done in the future to achieve the goals that have been set. In the context of planning, the principal must delineate clear roles and responsibilities for teachers to effectively contribute to the attainment of predetermined goals. This entails transparent communication of the school's objectives, assigning specific tasks tailored to each teacher's expertise, and ensuring access to the requisite resources. Second, organizing means grouping the necessary activities. Third, controlling is often also called controlling a management role.

Relative to FGD-P1 Eze et al. (2023), principals as the administrative heads of schools should ensure that teachers' welfare is maintained, provide effective and efficient leadership to the staff, which the subordinates respond to dedicate their work effectively, carry staff along in decision-making, and manage instructional facilities, which will enhance teachers job performance. With these, school leaders can focus and have less burden on the job.

The participants indicate that optimizing workflows in the educational setting has led to clearer roles and responsibilities, making administrative tasks easier to manage. This theme highlights how efficient workflows contribute to the smooth functioning of administrative processes, allowing educators to focus more on their core duties.

The responses' primary focus is on how effective process optimization in education can empower teachers. This theme focuses on how optimizing workflows helps teachers assign work effectively, encouraging teamwork and open communication among employees. As stated by Participant 2:

*IDI-P2: A specific instance where workflow optimization directly influenced my daily tasks as a leader is when it streamlined the process of assigning tasks to teachers. By trusting in their abilities and delegating responsibilities effectively, I could focus more on other aspects of my role, knowing that they were equipped to handle their duties efficiently. Additionally, optimized workflows among teachers not only enhanced productivity but also instilled a sense of empowerment, fostering a more positive and collaborative school environment.*

It is affirmed by the citation that those who are the highest managers in the school have the right to influence other people, so those who are influenced want to cooperate reasonably in achieving school quality. In addition, the principal also guides all components of the school, including teachers, employees, and students, so that they can work together to carry out each task assigned to the person concerned according to their professionalism and capacity and feel empowered by the task given to them (Ilahi & Ilyas, 2019).

Memoranda and pre-school year meetings help to clearly define duties and responsibilities, giving educators the freedom to work efficiently with minimal oversight and fostering a sense of confidence and trust among team members. In the end, this optimization results in a more successful educational experience for all stakeholders by improving accountability and operational efficiency as well as fostering a supportive and cooperative school climate.

"Empowerment" is the recurring theme that shows up in the responses that have been sent. In every single testimony, the emphasis has always been on empowering individuals to take on leadership roles in education. Team members' sense of empowerment is promoted by tactics like trust, clear direction, and workflow optimization. According to what Participant 4 said

*IDI-P4: Actually, with my style of clearly guiding teachers and trusting them with their tasks from the beginning, I've seen increased productivity and trust in their abilities. These changes have significantly improved my efficiency and confidence.*

Participant 4 is fostered by Asmui et al. (2019). The principal creates a conducive school atmosphere, gives motivation, empowers teachers through collaboration, includes teachers in upgrading and trusting their abilities, involves teachers in decision-making, opens two-way communication, provides examples, develops innovative learning models, and organizes the physical environment and work atmosphere. These help teachers be more efficient.

A principal, as a leader of an educational institution, must be responsible for all school activities. A principal has full authority and responsibility for organizing all educational activities within the school environment that he or she leads (Astuti et al., 2019).

This empowerment not only enhances efficiency but also instills confidence, fosters collaboration, and motivates individuals to excel. It represents a cultural shift towards creating an environment where every member feels empowered to contribute, grow, and thrive, ultimately leading to a more harmonious and successful educational community.

Examining how changes affect empowerment and efficiency makes it clear that the main forces behind change are giving teachers defined roles, creating an organized organizational structure, and encouraging a culture of growth through improved workflows. As Focus Group Discussion Participant 5 stated:

*FGD-P5: Implementing optimized workflows has significantly boosted my efficiency and empowerment as a leader. By entrusting teachers with clear tasks and witnessing their capability to excel, it fosters a culture of growth and excellence within our educational environment.*

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*IDI-P3: As a leader, “hmmm sa akoo”, I feel more empowered in my leadership role and confident in the capabilities of my team, leading to a more productive and harmonious working environment through entrusting teachers with clear roles and responsibilities outlined in memorandums. With that I have been able to allocate my time more effectively to other administrative tasks, thus increasing my overall efficiency in optimizing workflow.*

The statement of P3 is assisted by Qistiyah and Karwanto (2020), the role of the school principal as an educational leader requires development because it indirectly influences teacher activities so that there is an increase in teacher performance. The principal has a very complex role. In addition, to playing a role in managing the school to be empowered and efficient, principals in particular must also be able to improve teacher performance and ensure the capabilities of the staff teachers.

In addition, Ajepri et al. (2020) stated that improving teacher performance in learning can be achieved if the principal, as a leader, empowers teachers with clear roles and responsibilities outlined in memoranda and can motivate teachers to improve their performance.

This approach enables them to allocate time effectively to administrative tasks, leading to increased efficiency in managing workflow processes. Moreover, it empowers leaders by allowing them to focus on higher-level responsibilities, thereby enhancing their sense of control and efficacy in their leadership roles.

### **3.2. The Lived Experiences of School Administrators Regarding the Influence of Employee Selection Processes on their Empowerment and Efficiency within the Educational Environment**

The overall main theme that emerges from the responses is strategic employee selection for empowerment and efficiency. This theme encapsulates the strategic approach teachers and leaders take toward the employee selection process, emphasizing the importance of selecting candidates based on a combination of their attitudes, skills, and dedication. As Participant One discussed:

*IDI-P1: In my experience, a strong employee selection process can have a positive impact on both empowerment and efficiency within an educational setting. When hiring, I prioritize candidates who demonstrate a positive attitude toward work ethic rather than intelligence. Before hiring them, I conduct personal but professional interviews, using questions about past challenges or teamwork scenarios to assess their approach to work. Because I believe that the success of the school depends on the attitude that employees possess. This not only translates to a more dedicated and productive team but also fosters a collaborative environment where colleagues feel empowered to share ideas and take ownership of their projects.*

The participant statement is supported by Laumer et al. (2022), who stated that ascertaining how to search for apt and competent professionals and hiring suitable applicants constitutes one of the most significant

responsibilities a hiring manager undertakes. Adopting a structured and comprehensive hiring process like initial resume screening, assessments, interviews, reference checks, and individualized assessment will help the company find and attract the right talent to effectively fulfill any openings, saving the company's time, money, and resources. A qualified candidate with an optimistic outlook and competency-based skills will help build the company culture, promote business, and ultimately position the company as an industry leader.

The focus on meticulous processes, customized evaluations, openness, and matching skills to work requirements is a strategic mentality meant to empower individuals as well as the company. By carefully choosing their team members, leaders hope to increase productivity in the classroom and cultivate a culture of empowerment. This overriding theme emphasizes how crucial the hiring process is in determining how empowered and effective teachers are in classroom settings.

The participants' responses converge around the overarching theme of "Skill-Based Selection for Empowerment and Efficiency." They emphasize the critical importance of selecting candidates based on their skills, dedication, and suitability for the role within the educational environment. As Participant 3 mentioned:

*FGD-P3: Personal experience highlights the importance of selecting candidates willing to contribute holistic manner, matching job requirements with abilities, and empowering leaders to build competent teams for effective education.*

The statement of the participant is upheld by Millet (2022), the organization or company should adopt a more flexible approach to hiring requirements to expand the pool of potential candidates and attract the most qualified individual with aligned qualifications, optimizing skills, being cooperative, creating a cohesive group, being oriented, enthusiasts, productive, truly dedicated, actively participating, with work passion, and being motivated.

Organizations can enable teachers to effectively contribute to organizational success while boosting efficiency by giving priority to these criteria. By carefully selecting candidates based on their skills and abilities, leaders may create cohesive teams, encourage teamwork, and give teachers a feeling of responsibility. This method not only guarantees the best results but also fosters an efficient and empowered culture in the classroom.

It highlights a holistic approach to recruitment and employee empowerment within educational institutions. By prioritizing skills and dedication during the selection process, organizations not only ensure that teachers are well-suited for their roles but also create an environment where individuals feel valued and empowered to contribute meaningfully. As Participant 5 elaborated:

*FGD-P5: Meticulous employee selection fosters dedication and productivity, creating a collaborative environment where colleagues feel empowered to take ownership of their projects, enhancing efficiency in education."*

The statement of the participant is assisted by Clark (2022), the company and organization should ensure comprehensive screening and that people who conducted the interview or selection process are well trained and stay connected with candidates to foster a collaborative workspace, encourage them to take initiative on their tasks, improve their competency in education, and inform them of the hiring progress. Review the hiring and boarding process to keep it up to date with the world.

Furthermore, this strategy encourages educators to take charge of their professional development and cultivate a culture of continual improvement. Through cooperative endeavors and an emphasis on constructing superior teams, academic establishments can optimize efficacy and efficiency, culminating in improved student achievements and comprehensive organizational prosperity. This subject emphasizes how hiring decisions, employee empowerment, and the overarching objectives of high-quality education are all interconnected.

The main theme that emerges from the qualitative data analysis of the responses provided is the emphasis on passion and dedication in the selection processes. Participants consistently highlight how selecting candidates based on their passion for education positively influences educators' sense of empowerment and efficiency. As Participant 5 discussed:

*FGD-P5: From my perspective, valuing passion and dedication in selection processes has been crucial in sustaining my sense of empowerment and efficiency as an educator, which ultimately benefits the educational community in the long run.*

Integrating this emphasis into the selection process leads to more engaging classroom interactions, and vibrant dynamics, ultimately sustaining educators' sense of empowerment and efficiency. This theme underscores the significance of intrinsic motivation in driving effective teaching practices and fostering a positive educational environment. As Participant 3 shared:

*IDI-P3: Reflecting on my experiences with employee selection processes, I've found that my approach has had a positive impact on my sense of empowerment and efficiency as both a leader and educator. Prioritizing sincerity and willingness to be part of the organization has led to a team of committed individuals, enhancing productivity and effectiveness. Additionally, informing applicants about our organization ensures smoother integration and reduces training needs. I'm grateful that I haven't encountered many problematic hires so far; instead, I've mostly hired individuals with great potential, further reinforcing the positive impact of our selection process.*

The focus placed on enthusiasm, commitment, and willingness in the selection process is the primary topic that comes out of the qualitative data analysis of the replies submitted. Participants frequently point out how choosing candidates based on their enthusiasm for teaching along with a track record of readiness and commitment enhances educators' feelings of efficiency and empowerment. Including this emphasis in the selection process promotes lively dynamics and more interesting classroom interactions, which in turn keeps teachers feeling empowered and productive. This theme emphasizes the role that proactive dedication to the field and intrinsic motivation has in promoting successful teaching techniques and a healthy learning environment.

### **3.3. Ongoing Training Practices Shape Educators' Professional Identity & Confidence and the Ways of Its Contribution to a Sense of Empowerment and Efficiency**

The overarching theme evident from the responses is the pivotal role of professional development and continuous learning in shaping educators' professional identity, confidence, and effectiveness. Through ongoing training practices, educators undergo a transformative journey, deepening their understanding of inclusivity, cultural competency, and their roles within the educational system. As FGD-P1 averred:

*FGD-P1: In my experience, ongoing training has been instrumental in shaping my professional identity and confidence. By delving into topics like Indigenous Programs and Special Education, I've gained a deeper understanding of inclusivity and cultural competency, empowering me to support all students effectively. This tailored approach has significantly enhanced my efficiency in teaching.*

A study by Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) corroborates these findings, emphasizing the vital role of continuous professional development in equipping educators with updated teaching strategies, technological expertise, and collaborative abilities. This ongoing learning process enhances educators'

understanding of inclusivity and cultural competency, aligning with their transformative professional journey. By establishing a culture of continuous learning within educational institutions, proficient and empowered educators are cultivated and dedicated to effectively supporting diverse student populations. This emphasis on continuous professional development not only enhances educators' effectiveness but also fosters a supportive environment conducive to student success and overall educational excellence.

Participants also emphasized the importance of ongoing training to keep up with teaching advancements, enhancing effectiveness and confidence. Professional development opportunities empower educators to adapt to new trends, improving student outcomes. Continuous learning fosters efficacy and resilience in the educational environment by cultivating inclusivity and cultural competency among educators, enriching their professional identities. As IDI-P5 elucidated:

*IDI-P5: Continuous learning and staying updated with new trends are essential in our ever-evolving world. Attending ongoing training practices allows me to remain current with new strategies and approaches, empowering me to provide effective management and technical assistance to teachers. This commitment to continuous learning not only enhances my efficiency but also contributes to the improvement of the organization, fostering a sense of empowerment and confidence among educators.*

Research conducted by Washington (2019) aligns with these findings, shedding light on the significance of tailoring learning experiences, fostering a collaborative culture in education, enhancing teacher effectiveness, and nurturing a supportive environment for continuous growth. Prioritizing personalized and collaborative approaches empowers educators to address diverse student needs, ultimately leading to improved student outcomes and overall educational success. By acknowledging and addressing individual educator needs, institutions create an environment conducive to both professional development and student achievement. This approach signifies a holistic commitment to educational excellence and the ongoing enhancement of teaching practices, ensuring that educators are equipped to meet the evolving needs of students and the demands of a dynamic educational landscape.

Continuous professional development greatly improves educators' ability to promote diversity and cultural competency by exposing them to diverse viewpoints and specialized areas like Indigenous Programs and Special Education. This ongoing training equips educators with the skills to create inclusive classrooms and challenges biases, fostering a deeper understanding of various cultures. Moreover, specialized training programs in education empower educators, shaping their professional identities and boosting their confidence to advocate for diverse perspectives and implement inclusive practices within their school communities. As FGD-P3 mentioned:

*FGD-P3: Training on special needs and innovative teaching methods empowers me to tailor strategies, fostering inclusivity and boosting confidence. This leads to greater effectiveness in meeting diverse student needs, enhancing my empowerment and efficiency as an educator.*

Through hands-on learning experiences and alignment with personal and professional philosophies, educators emerge equipped with the knowledge, skills, and self-assurance needed to address diverse student needs, foster inclusivity, and ultimately elevate their effectiveness as educators. As FGD-P5 explained:

*FGD-P5: Training fosters inclusivity, support, and collaboration, enhancing empowerment and efficiency by addressing diverse needs with empathy and compassion. This leads to improved outcomes for all involved, furthering my effectiveness as an educator.*

Rodriguez-Gomez et al. (2024), provide validation to these findings, elaborating on the transformative impact of specialized education training programs, particularly those targeting special needs and innovative teaching methods, in empowering educators. These programs serve as potent catalysts for shaping professional



identities, instilling confidence, and enhancing effectiveness. By providing hands-on learning experiences aligned with personal philosophies, educators acquire the knowledge and empathy necessary to address diverse student needs and cultivate inclusive environments. Moreover, continuous professional development initiatives and leadership seminars contribute to the cultivation of inclusive leadership styles, thereby improving decision-making and problem-solving within educational settings. The culmination of these experiences fosters the creation of supportive and inclusive learning environments that benefit all stakeholders involved, ultimately contributing to the holistic development and success of both educators and students within the educational ecosystem.

The emergent themes of professional development, cultural competency, and empowerment intertwine to shape a holistic approach to educator growth. Professional development initiatives, including continuous learning and specialized training, are complemented by efforts to cultivate cultural competency and align with educational philosophies. Empowerment permeates through confidence building, knowledge acquisition, and fostering innovation. Emergent concepts such as a continuous learning culture and efficiency enhancement underscore the importance of ongoing growth and effectiveness in practice. Together, these themes empower educators to become adaptable, inclusive, and competent professionals, capable of driving positive change in the ever-evolving landscape of education.

#### 4. Conclusion

This contains the summary, conclusions, and implications of the study. The summary of findings is based on the result and discussion. The data was thoroughly analyzed and interpreted according to the study's objectives.

The researcher aimed to explore the strategies and challenges experienced by school administrators in implementing empowerment principles to optimize workflow efficiency within educational settings, investigate how school administrators' experiences with decision-making processes and empowerment techniques during employee selection impact organizational efficiency within educational institutions, and assess the effectiveness of school administrators' experienced approaches and methodologies in integrating empowerment principles into training practices, aiming to improve efficiency and foster a culture of empowerment within educational institutions.

Primary data was gathered through in-depth interviews (IDI) and focus group discussions (FGD) guided by a questionnaire designed to achieve these objectives.

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

Effective workflow management, clear communication, and strong leadership exhibited by school heads in Davao City significantly contribute to the empowerment and productivity of educators. Real-world experiences highlighted the importance of transformative techniques, participatory decision-making, and instructional leadership in fostering favorable learning environments.

School administrators demonstrate proficiency in management and curriculum development by prioritizing tasks, streamlining processes, and creating an environment conducive to teacher success. Their systematic approach to hiring, emphasizing character, aptitude, and commitment, ensures the formation of cohesive teams dedicated to achieving educational objectives.

## 5. Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from this study, the researchers hereby generally provide recommendations for the Department of Education policymakers, school stakeholders, teachers, and future researchers.

**Department of Education Policymakers.** Given the emphasis on empowerment and efficiency enhancement, policymakers should prioritize initiatives that support workflow optimization, strategic employee selection, and comprehensive training practices. This may involve developing policies that allocate resources for professional development programs tailored to educators' needs and ensuring that recruitment and selection processes prioritize individuals who align with the vision of empowerment and efficiency in education.

**School Stakeholders.** School administrators and other stakeholders should collaborate to implement strategies aimed at optimizing workflows, enhancing employee selection processes, and improving training practices. This collaboration may involve fostering a supportive work environment that encourages innovation, providing opportunities for professional growth and development, and investing in technologies that streamline administrative tasks to free up time for educators to focus on teaching and student engagement.

**Teachers.** Teachers play a crucial role in driving efficiency and empowerment in education. As such, they should be provided with ongoing support and training opportunities to enhance their skills in workflow optimization, employee selection techniques, and effective training practices. Teachers may also be encouraged to actively engage in professional development activities and share best practices with their colleagues to promote a culture of continuous improvement within the education system.

**Future Researchers.** Future research endeavors should continue to explore the intersections of empowerment and efficiency in education, particularly focusing on innovative approaches to workflow optimization, employee selection, and training practices. This may involve conducting longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of empowerment initiatives on student outcomes, exploring the effectiveness of different training methodologies, and investigating the role of technology in enhancing efficiency in educational settings.

Overall, by prioritizing empowerment and efficiency in education, policymakers, school stakeholders, teachers, and future researchers can collectively contribute to the development of a more effective and sustainable education system that prepares students for success in the 21st century.

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