Article

Proposed Equilibrium Framework for Educational Leaders in the Philippines

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Abstract: This study titled "Proposed Equilibrium Framework for Educational Leaders in The Philippines" aimed explore the experience and strategies of public school heads in work-life balance- their professional and personal life. This study involved 10 school heads of the public elementary and secondary schools in the division of Cabuyao during the School-Year 2024-2025. This phenomenological-transcendental study used interview guide questions as the prime source of data to explore their practices and strategies of the school heads in balancing their professional and personal life. The statements collected from the participants were checked and analyzed by Qualitative Data Analyst. The study revealed that the school heads have experienced balancing professional duties and personal life which highlight both the positive and negative aspects. Just like the other professions, they have faced challenges which include the stress, health issues, and burnout, as well as the time constraint which result to heavy workload. They have also faced difficulties to maintain their personal well-being, frequently sacrificing their leisure activities and the time to be spent for their families due to the unexpected meetings, urgent concerns as well as strict report deadlines. Despite of these challenges, the school heads have employed various coping strategies such as engaging hobbies, spending precious time with their families, and asking supports and technical assistance from the top management. They also emphasized the significance of being proactive and adaptive to manage their professional demands and sustain their productivity. The school heads have described their experiences and strategies to achieve work-life balance my emphasizing the effective time and task management, which also include the prioritization of tasks, delegation, and to create effective schedule. They even highlighted the significance of setting boundaries and maintain to manage the workload effectively. Additionally, they even fostered the supportive work environment through establishing open communication and collaborative problem-solving among school staffs. To maintain their well-being, the school heads prioritized self-care practices which involves taking breaks and staying positive. There are ten themes emerged from the study such Theme1: Struggles in Maintaining Personal Well-being, Theme 2: Intentional Stress Management Through Strategic, Emotional and Personal Well-Being Practices, Theme 3: Strategic Management Personal Boundaries, and Support System: Key Factors contributing to Work-Life Balance; Theme 4: Collaborative Ecosystem for Care and Support; Theme 5: Organized Workflow as Foundation of Work-Life Balance; Theme 6:. Deliberate Separation of Professional and Personal Spheres; Theme 7: Mindful Response to Disruption through Strategic Emotional and Practical Action; Theme 8: Redefining Leadership through Delegation, Empowerment, and Strategic Balance of Work-Life Sustainability; Theme 9: Modeling and Humanizing Leadership to Promote Work-Life Balance; and Theme 10: Work Beyond the Bell: The Extended Realities of Educational Responsibilities. The school heads have described that their experiences in work-life balance as the leader of the school have unleashed the ups and downs in their profession. They showed-off the realities that being leaders do not guarantee to achieve everything in positive way, and so, there is still a need to propose an output that may help them achieve work-life balance through an equilibrium framework for educational leaders.

Keywords: Social Media Practices, Digital Literacy, Fact-Checking, Privacy Awareness, Digital Footprint Management

1. Introduction

The school head is the focal point around which many aspects of the school revolve, making them change agents who have a big influence on the learning environment through their strategies for sharing information, creating support systems, participating in mentoring programs, and encouraging progress. Whether academic or administrative, he is in charge of all aspects of the system's operation. Almost all decisions at the school must be made by the head of the institution. The school head serves as the institution's leader and must be a director, planner, and judge. Collaboration is a working method that a reliable school leader would employ by forming teams and smaller groups of team members to review ideas or strategies. Therefore, in order to influence the quality of instruction, the head of the school must be a strong team player.

Philippines Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH) outlines the knowledge, skills, and values school leaders are expected to have as they advance in their careers. The domain 4 which is Developing Self and Others have explained that school heads are expected to reflect on their personal and professional development to enhance their practice in leading and developing people as they support their personnel's professional development and welfare. This is well elucidated to DepEd Order No. 24, s. 2020 Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH).

As educational leaders, school heads have sway in the classroom and their leadership responsibilities are essential to the school improvement process. In order to influence school transformation, the head teacher's mandate calls for him or her to assume leadership roles. They are the ones who design the course that the school must take. They play crucial roles in overseeing the overall operation of the school, managing the staff and teachers, and directing the students' education.

According to Pane (2022) A school principal oversees safety and security at the school level and manages the school's overall operations. School principals advocate for their students. They assist teachers in making the best decisions to meet student needs, and work with parents to create student success plans. The role of the school principal cannot be overstated. They are the focal point of every advancement a school makes. After teacher quality, principal leadership was regarded as the most urgent issue facing public school education. Depending on the school's location, student body, and type of state and federal funding, a principal's primary duties can change.

Achieving a work-life balance involves attending to a person's personal, family, and professional obligations. "-Equilibrium-" is reached when demands, goals, and objectives from one of these three different domains (work, family, and individual) do not necessitate limiting the amount of time allotted to the others. Indeed, a close examination of our surroundings reveals that practically everyone struggles with a significant issue like work-life balance. However, people only have a limited amount of time in their lives, and during that time, they must manage a lot of activities outside of work. Negativity is unavoidable if a certain balance between work and life cannot be achieved in terms of both time and behavior. Additionally, focusing on a single aspect of life and seeing it as the only thing that exists will disrupt the work-life balance.

2. Materials and Methods

The qualitative research was used to thoroughly examine the nature, essence, and fundamentals of a subject. By carrying out in-depth research on small groups of people, it directs and supports the development of hypotheses. The results of qualitative research were descriptive as opposed to predictive. Qualitative research methods are used in social and behavioral sciences such as psychology, sociology, and anthropology.

Lapaz (2020) asserts that qualitative research aims to uncover the range of behavior exhibited by a target audience and the perceptions that influence it in relation to particular topics or issues. It guides and supports the development of hypotheses through in-depth

research on small groups of people. Qualitative research yields descriptive rather than predictive results.

The social and behavioral sciences, including psychology, anthropology, and sociology, are where qualitative research methods first emerged. In-depth interviews with individuals, group discussions (usually involving two to ten participants), diary and journal exercises, and in-context observations are examples of qualitative methods used in marketing research today.

The researcher has determined that the transcendental phenomenological approach is the most appropriate for the study out of all the approaches used in the analysis of Moustakas data. The primary goal of this strategy is to gather information that explains human experiences. Additionally, it organizes and analyzes phenomenological data; to identify the steps of phenomenological analysis and to demonstrate these steps using a research study, specific discussions are required. Using a more structured approach, Moustakas (1994) outlined the steps in phenomenological analysis, which is also used to identify the underlying causes of the experiences that the study participants had.

This approach is well suited to the study since its primarily aim to determine the experiences and challenges of school heads as educational learners. This will explore their experiences and challenges in achieving work-life balance. It will also scrutinize the practical dilemmas they faced as well as the coping mechanism they performed to surpass the challenge. Further, specific questions to be asked among the participants would lead the researcher to discover, scrutinize, and analyze their responses and would provide strong evidence to prove their experiences.

Among the various methods of the Qualitative – Transcendental phenomenological study, the researcher deemed that conduct of interview is suited to attain the statement of the problem. The responses of the participants would serve as the major tools in determining the experiences and the challenges of the school heads in achieving work-life balance. This interview is also be suited to the nature of this study since the research problem of this inquiry focuses on describing and understanding their lived experiences.

Interviews are thought to be the best research method for examining the real-life experiences of educators who had their teaching assignments abruptly changed. One research method that aims to thoroughly examine a topic is the interview, which is conducted with participants who are fully informed about the topic. Additionally, the interview method has allowed the participants to freely express their responses based on their experiences and perceptions of the questions posed; they are given plenty of time to do so and provide context.

In order to answer the main question, the researcher will be creating a set of semi-structured interview guide questions. The specific questions have helped the researcher collect the required data and are the first step in achieving the primary goal. In addition, the researcher would use their responses to gather the necessary data, identify themes from the participants, interpret their statements, and examine the participants' responses as a whole.

The present study was conducted among the public elementary and secondary schools in the Division of Cabuyao. The city schools division of Cabuyao has 19 public elementary schools and 10 public secondary schools composed of small to mega school when in terms of population of each school. Big schools have higher population of teachers than those who are teaching in small schools. These schools were spearheaded by 29 school heads who serve as the forerunners of their respective schools. Regardless of their school size, the school heads have the same nature of work which is to lead and manage the schools effectively.

This study involved school heads who have been in educational leadership for at least five (5) years. The researcher has pre-determined potential participants to ensure that the required number of respondents is met for this qualitative research. For the study to remain focused, inclusion was limited to school administrators such as principals, assistant

principals, or department heads with direct supervisory positions over teachers and who are engaged in administrative decision-making. Participants must also be willing to participate in the study and provide informed consent prior to participation.

Alternatively, school heads who have less than five (5) years of leadership experience, teachers who do not hold positions in administration and leadership, as well as others who refuse to participate was excluded. According to Creswell (2014), a qualitative study typically involves interviewing 5 to 25 individuals who have experienced a particular phenomenon to ensure a rich, in-depth understanding of their lived experiences. To further support the research findings, secondary sources such as books, journals, and relevant online articles were utilized.

To satisfy to main objectives, the researcher utilized an interview guide questions as the prime source of data needed in this study. She prepared questions for the participants in accordance with the objectives of the study. These questions enabled the participants to reflect on the whole discussion and offer their positions or opinions on the topics that are important to the research. Further, the researcher used open-ended questions which are all aligned to the main focus of the study.

The Interview Guide Questions was a self-made instrument which were checked and validated by the (2) School Head- as the head of the school and (2) Public School District Supervisor. The instrument was checked by the Language Expert, Expert of the Field, and Research expert to evaluate the content and provide technical assistance to the researcher when needed. Their comments and suggestions were considered for the improvement and for the final drafting of the instruments.

Prior to the conduct of the interview proper, the environment was set into more convenient and friendly place or setting to build confidence and trust among the participants to be able to get valid information for the study. The researcher strictly followed the safety and health protocol implemented in the school. The researcher has facilitated the interview during their vacant time or beyond their official working time schedule and with the consent of their supervisor.

3. Results and Discussion

The following tables that were presented in the next discussions provide the different findings that are being gathered through the interview among the participants of the study.

Interview and Observation

The (10) school heads from the different public elementary and secondary schools who met the predetermined requirements and were deemed suitable to address the problem statement were interviewed by the researcher. A permission from the Division Office was secured by the researcher have been given an indorsement to meet and facilitate the interview with the target participants. The respective district supervisors of the school heads were asked for permission by the researcher to carry out the study. The researcher inquired about the target participants' suitability to conduct the interview after receiving their confirmation. Also, she informed the participants that their statements will be solely used for the purpose of this study. Their identity will not be disclosed. Before starting the interview with the learners, the researcher has ensured that the safety and the health protocol were observed as prescribed by DepEd Cabuyao and the CDRRM.

An individual interview was conducted following the first interview. The researcher conducted this interview process in order to gather more detailed and in-depth information that would be useful in answering the questionnaires. The researcher then used the interview to examine the meaning in order to gain clarity and accuracy in the clarification of the information being gathered by listening to their ideas and their responses to the questions that are crucial to the study.

The following tables provide the findings collected through the interview conducted with the participants on the ten (10) interview questions. Their answers were transcribed and analyzed.

The researcher had considered sequence of the specific questions leading to satisfy the statement of the problem. The researcher had divided the presentation of the results using the textural and structural phases of the study.

The following are some of the statements that have been shared to the researcher to determine and explore their lived experience. The first part of the analysis zeroed in to "what is the essence of the lived experience of school heads in balancing work and personal life?"

From the first questions asked in the textural type the following tables present the subordinate themes and the superordinate themes which was extracted from the statements of the participants. The QDA prime was utilized to determine the codes and the subordinate themes from the statements of the participants:

Table 1. Struggles in Maintaining Personal Well-being.

Participant	Response	Superordinate Theme	Subordinate Theme
Participant 1	sacrificing sleep and eventually falling sick		sacrificing sleep
Participant 8	I experienced lack of sleep, and frequently have sickness.	Struggles in Maintaining Personal Well-being	
Participant 9	I love my profession, but I have faced struggles to my health.		falling sick
Participant 10	There are times that I find it hard to do my work effectively due to the stress and burn out it gives me		lack of sleep

Table 1 statements of the participants revealed the theme "struggles in maintaining personal well-being" among the participant who tried to achieve work-life balance. Most of the participants have mention physical health issues such as lack of sleep, frequent sickness, and even the stress-related exhaustion. Participant 1 and 8 both shared that they sacrificed sleep, which lead to illness, meanwhile, for participant 9 she acknowledged experiencing health struggles despite of the strong passion for their profession as the school head. These insights have highlighted how demanding nature of their profession directly affects their physical health which also make it difficult to sustain a balanced lifestyle.

Further, emotional and mental strain also emerged as significant factor on their experiences. It can be noticed from the statement of participant 10 that she expressed difficulty in performing effectively due to stress and burnout. This also emphasized how the mental well-being of school head is compromised. The subordinate them like the illness, sleep deprivation, and stress reflect how their work demands an overshadow of personal care and rest. Their statements also show that the school heads' approaches to work-balance are shaped by their need to respond to the negative consequences of overwork rather than proactive self-care strategies.

The theme Struggles in Maintaining Personal Well-Being" manifests the deep and persistent struggles faced by the school heads in managing the intersection of professional responsibilities and their personal health. The narratives of the school heads also indicate that their roles often require personal sacrifices, mostly in terms of rest and their recovery.

This also suggest a work culture which prioritizes the productivity over the safety and wellness of school head where the long hours and emotional works are normalized. Having deprived of enough sleep as well as the illness imply that the self-care is just secondary among the school heads which for some times lead to cycle of fatigue and affect their performance. These are the physical manifestations that are not isolated incidents but symptoms of a broader systemic issue where the institutional support for work-life balance is ineffective.

Furthermore, the internal conflict between passion for the profession and the toll it takes on health as described by the participants have somewhat unveiled the deeper emotional struggle. It also shows that while the school heads are committed and driven by their purpose, this the same commitment can also become a source of vulnerability when it leads to neglect of personal boundaries. The presence of stress and burnout also illustrate how the emotional exhaustion impacts not only the personal well-being but even the performance of the school head. This underscored that achieving the work-life balance is not merely an individual challenge but one that is influenced by the demands of DepEd, cultural expectations, and emotional weight of leading the school.

Kotoski (2022) on his study emphasized that leading the school continues to be associated with high levels of stress as well as emotional exhaustion. It significantly impacts the school heads' personal well-being. He also found out that substantial proportion of school heads reported the feeling of extremely stressed and burned out, they found it hefty to meet the institutional expectations, manage the school dynamics, and attend the administrative tasks often lead them to sacrifice their rest and personal care.

More so, Westphal (2022) explained that factors such as the workload, leadership support and personal efficacy is heavily influenced by the extent of stress and burnout experienced by the school leaders. She also highlighted that the school heads have received limited support and poor boundaries between work and personal life which are more likely to experience the fatigue, anxiety and the emotional detachment.

Table 2. Intentional Stress Management Through Strategic, Emotional and Personal Well-Being Practices.

Participant	Response	Superordinate Theme	Subordinate Theme
Participant 1	I manage stress by prioritizing time management, delegating tasks effectively, and fostering a supportive team environment. I also set aside time for self-care, including mindfulness practices and regular breaks, to maintain a clear and focused mindset	Intentional Stress Management Through Strategic, Emotional and Personal Well-Being Practices	Prioritizing urgent tasks, structured schedule, delegating the responsibilitis
Participant 2	I used to have clear ideas in mind, have the focus and determine which shall be prioritized.		Clear goals, delegation, prioritization
Participant 3	I manage stress by prioritizing time management, delegating tasks effectively, and fostering a supportive team environment. I also		Time management, delegation, team support, regular, breaks,

	set aside time for self-care, including mindfulness practices and regular breaks, to maintain a clear and focused mindset	mindfulness
Participant 4	I used to have clear ideas in mind, have the focus and determine which shall be prioritized.	Prioritization, focus
Participant 5	I establish clear destination between my work and personal life. I set specific work hours and have separate activities with my personal time.	Defined work hours, separation of time for works and for personal life,
Participant 6	As a school head's job is stressful, it is not expected to be relaxed. But, there are things that you should consider when you are a school head. Your work should be defined for the whole day. You should have priorities. There are a lot of things to do. You just need to estimate what you are going to do for the whole day. Prioritize things. What should you do first? The most important thing is, you should manage it. Stress is normal for us school heads. It does not go away.	Acceptance of stress, prioritization, daily planning
Participant 7	The simple thing I do is I listen to soft music. That is when I am at home.	Music therapy, love for leadership, planning based on observation
Participant 8	When I am at school, I exercise what is called rooming around. It reduces my stress because the scenarios in my classroom are different plus the greetings of the children.	Task setting, goal-setting, personal time

Table 2 above presents the stress management of the school heads which primarily centers on effective tasks managements and prioritization. Participants 1,2, and 3

emphasized the organization of tasks by urgency, setting the clear goals, and delegating responsibilities as key strategies to remain efficient and also to prevent burnout. They believed that these strategies suggest proactive mindset where the structured planning serves as a buffer to avoid the overwhelming workloads. As per their statements, establishing the routines and time management techniques lead them to maintain control over all their responsibilities and lessen the unpredictability which often fuels the stress.

Further, other participants emphasized the significance of maintaining the personal well-being and setting their boundaries. Participant 5 delineated between the work and personal loge, while participant 3 was able to incorporate the mindfulness, the breaks, and self-care practices. Meanwhile, participant 8 stressed the significance of setting daily goals while making time for oneself. These are some of the responses that reflect a recognition that sustainable leadership requires balance and that personal health must be safeguarded. Their statements also show that stress management is not only about handling the tasks efficiently but also ensuring the mental and emotional heal of school leaders.

Other participant has adopted more emotive and reflective approaches to stress. Like the statement of participant 7 when she shared that she relied on music and emotional engagement with the learners through their visit to classroom which even suggest the emotional connection and the situational awareness that them ease the stress on their profession. Participant 6 have shared that acceptance of stress is part of school leadership, she focuses on it and facilitates a strategic planning. This perspective also revealed a shift from the attempt to eliminate the stress to learning how to live with or control it more effectively.

The responses of the participants have enabled the researcher to extract the theme Intentional Stress Management through Strategic, Emotional and Personal Well-Being Practices which explains that as leaders of the school, the school principals have to manage their stress effectively. Their narratives also shows that their leadership role is inevitable, however, what stands out from their responses is their intentional approach- they do not leave stress management to chance. Instead, they have adopted strategies that address various dimensions of their works and their personal lives. They even emphasized the significance of organizing their daily tasks, setting clear and attainable objectives, and also effectively manage their time and their responsibilities. These are the strategies which aim to reduce the feelings of being overwhelmed and helped maintain control over their workloads.

The emotional and personal well-being practices include the self-care, mindfulness, and establishing the work-life boundaries and drawing the strength from their personal passions and emotional connections such as their love for music, classroom engagement, and love for their profession as school heads. These are the approaches which show that stress management is not solely a matter of productivity, but it also covers nurturing one's inner well-being and maintaining the emotional balance. These are the holistic views of their stress management that is both proactive and sustain the high-pressure on their roles as educational leaders.

Leithwood (2022) on his study explained that effective school leadership requires not only the instructional and organizational roles, but it also involves the emotional resilience and personal coping strategies to be able to deal and handle the demands on their core responsibilities. He also found out that principals who actively set boundaries between work and life engaged on reflective practices, and delegated tasks reported lower levels of burnout. Also, he emphasized the significance of emotional intelligence and self-care to manage the stress on their profession, noting that they are the educational leaders who shall practice mindfulness and maintain healthy personal routines and are more effective and resilient. He also highlighted that successful stress management among school leaders involve the combination of strategic planning, intentional self-care, and emotional regulation which shall be well-aligned with their experiences they shared.

Table 3 Strategic Management Personal Boundaries, and Support System: Key Factors contributing to Work-Life Balance.

Participant	Responses	Superordinate Theme	Subordinate Theme
Participant 1	Effective time management, delegation, and clear boundaries help me maintain work-life balance, stay organized, and prevent burnout.		Time management, delegation of tasks, setting boundaries
Participant 2	Prioritizing tasks, setting clear goals, and maintaining a structured schedule help me manage my responsibilities efficiently without feeling overwhelmed.	Strategic Management Personal Boundaries, and Support System: Key Factors contributing to Work-Life Balance	Prioritizing tasks, clear goals, structured schedules
Participant 3	As a school head, effective time management, delegation, and setting clear boundaries between work and personal life are key factors in maintaining work-life balance. Surrounding myself with a strong, collaborative team allows me to share responsibilities and focus on high-impact decisions.		Delegation, team support, self-care, family time
Participant 4	Time management,		Time

	effective communication, and proper delegation of tasks.	management, communication, and delegation of task
Participant 5	Clear communication to teachers and stakeholders, students is very important to avoid misunderstanding.	Clear communication
Participant 6	Work-life balance is important. Work is work. You should do your personal tasks for yourself. It is important to have a routine.	Personal routine, exercise, task separation
Participant 7	Maybe time management. It is true that teachers have a lot of work. I secure two weeks ahead information for the teachers. I read the memos and updates. I look for a response. Because the teachers know my style, even on weekends, they reply. Another one that can contribute is open communication with my family members.	Proactive family, family understanding, time management
Participant 8	I think the time management is the best factor which allowed me to have the balance	Time management

	between life and work.	
Participant 9	One of the big factors is the effective time management and the proper delegation of work. And so, I was able to attend my responsibilities at work and at my personal life.	Time management, delegation
Participant 10	The factor which contributes a lot is the effective time management, also, my ability to determine which shall be prioritized and shall be given the proper attention.	Time management, prioritization

Table 3 above discloses the factors which contribute a lot for the work-life balance of the school heads. As per their narratives, they believed about the significance of strategic work-life integration, particularly through their effective time management, the delegation of tasks, and the proper prioritization. Most school heads such as participant 1, 2, 4, 8,9, and 10 have emphasized that time management or using their time effectively and knowing which tasks shall be prioritized enabled them to fulfill both their professional duties and personal responsibilities without being stress or overwhelmed. They also deemed that delegation especially in leadership roles was seen as vital tool to reduce the workload and to have the proper focus on high-impact tasks, ultimately helped them strike a healthier balance of work and personal life.

Also, beyond the strategic planning, some of the school heads have emphasized the value of personal routines and boundaries. Participant 6 underscored the needs for the consistent personal routine which involve activities like the morning exercise and also, she made a clear separation of work from personal life. These routines do not only promote the physical wellness but even contribute to mental clarity and emotional balance. Likewise, participant 3 explained the significance of self-care and quality time for the family which also indicates a more holistic approach. He also acknowledged the emotional and relational well-being is vital as tasks management in achieving the sustainable work-life balance.

Additionally, participant 7 shared how the open communication with both the stakeholders and the family members fosters mutual understanding which makes it easier to navigate the lines between the professional and personal responsibilities of the school heads. Participant 5 pointed out that clear communication can also prevent the misunderstanding which may also help them lessen the unnecessary stress at work and at home. These insights further suggest that achieving the work-life balance is not solely as

individual efforts but it also involves the relational dynamics and support system, both at home and in the workplace.

The testimonies of the participants have enabled the researcher to frame the theme" Strategic Management Personal Boundaries, and Support System: Key Factors contributing to Work-Life Balance" which captures the multifaceted approach to school leaders to maintain balance amidst their demanding roles. A core factor is identified by most of the school head such as the strategic management which involves the effective time management, prioritization of tasks, the delegation of responsibilities, and even the structured scheduling. These are the strategies that helped them prevent work overload and ensure that their responsibilities are completed efficiently and effectively without intruding their personal time. Their statements also show how they control their work routines and their focus on high impact tasks and able to maintain the send of control to avoid burnout.

Additionally, the school heads also emphasized the significance of setting personal boundaries and having the reliable and effective support systems. Many of these school heads have mentioned about the roles of self-care, routines, regular exercise and maintain a clear separation of work and personal life. They also deemed that it is important to have the open communication with the family and to establish a spirit of collaboration with the school personnel as their vital supports that ease the pressure of their leadership roles. Their narrative reflects a broader and deeper understanding that work-life balance is not just about the sole time management, but it also requires nurturing the emotional health and to foster a supportive environment both at home and in workplace.

In the study conducted by Mitani (2021) she explicated that school leaders who implement the time management strategies and delegate the tasks effectively are better able to manage their workload and reduce burnout. He also found out that setting the personal boundaries and engaging the regular self-care are essential for sustaining the well-being and performance at work of school leaders. He even highlighted the roles of social and family supports to enhance the resilience and emotional stability since school leaders are expected to have strong support system who are capable of balancing professional demands with their personal commitment.

Table 4. Collaborative Ecosystem for Care and Support.

Participant	Responses	Superordinate Theme	Subordinate Theme
Participant 1	My family, reliable staff, and friends help me maintain work-life balance.		Peer and colleague support
Participant 2	A strong support system that includes a dedicated leadership team, understanding colleagues, and a reliable staff helps me manage responsibilities effectively. Support from	Collaborative Ecosystem for Care and Support	Leadership and team support

Participant 3	my family also plays a crucial role, providing encouragement and a sense of balance outside of work. The encouragement and understanding of my family provide emotional strength and motivation. Spending quality time with them helps me recharge and maintain a positive outlook.	Emotional support
Participant 4	Strong collaboration with co-workers, mentors, friends and family help me maintain work balance.	Peer and colleague support
Participant 5	The support from my co-workers and my family of course.	Peer and colleague support
Participant 6	In maintaining work-life balance, it is important to have a routine. really need to have a routine. If not, it will overlap. Sometimes, we are given more time to work. Our personal tasks that we should do for ourselves were neglected. I just realized that it is important that when you are working,	Health awareness

	you should not neglect yourself. When you have a lot of health issues, you should also take care of yourself. The regular check-up, I do it now because I am old. Before, I did not do that.	
	What I saw here is the provision of technical assistance of the top management. They are really the guides.	
	They are a big help to me. If they have an issue, they will read it and interpret and implement it. If I don't know, I will seek technical assistance from my PSDS.	
Participant 7	My supervisor. They are easy to approach, easy to answer. And they really give advice.	Family and leadership support
	More so, there is also in the family, of course.	
	If we are entrusted by our top management, the family will also entrust us. Sometimes, they help me in other tasks so that everything will be successful. So both Technical	

Participant 8	assistance from top management, specifically the PSDS, plus the moral support of the family and friends. I am very much supported by my family. Also, I received proper support from my immediate supervisor who render Technical Assistance when I needed	Leadership and technical assistance
Participant 9	The supports from the teachers, my family, and my supervisors	Peer/ colleagues/ leadership support
Participant 10	I think the supports I received from my family and my co-workers.	Peer and colleague support

Table 4 above discloses the narratives of the school heads when asked about the support that helped them the most in balancing work and life. As clearly showed in the table, family supports, peer, and leadership support emerged as the most significant and recurring theme across the responses of the participant. Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7,8, 9, and 10 have explicitly mentioned their families as the vital source of encouragement, emotional strength and even practical assistance. These participants have highlighted how the understanding and presence of family members helped them surpass the complexities of their professional responsibilities. Participant 3 made an emphasis on the quality time with the family helped her recharge, while participant 2 noted that dual role of family as the main source of encouragement and the emotional balance. These emotional and practical support appear to provide them the foundation for resiliency and their stability; these also allowed the school heads to find a sense of balance amidst to their demanding and challenging work conditions.

It can able be noticed from their responses that another prominent subtheme is the peer and colleague supports which include their co-workers, mentors, and their friends. This is highlighted to the narratives of participant 1, 2, 4, 5 9, and 10. They emphasized the significance of collaboration, camaraderie, even shared understanding within the workplace. Participant 4 has pointed the value of co-workers and mentor collaboration to maintain their work-life balance while participant 5 underscored the supportive role of colleagues alongside family. These are the interpersonal relationship which create environments of mutual support as well as empathy which helped them ease the workloads and promote also the emotional well-being. Such systems also foster a sense of

belonging and shared purpose. This brings positive impact towards their performance and overall work-life integration.

Further, the participants have also highlighted the role of leadership and technical assistance which is reflected to the narratives of participants 2, 7, 8, and 9. They have highlighted how accessible and leadership, especially through supervisors and their top management provide the valuable guidance, practical assistance and moral supports. Participant 7 have explained how the Technical Assistance helped her in leading and managing the school and considered it as a factor to handling the work-related issues effectively. Participant 6 also introduced a less commonly mentioned but significant subtheme which is self-care and health awareness in maintaining the balance. This response also reflects a growing awareness of personal responsibility, regarding health and aging. As a whole, their insights suggest that maintaining work-life balance is a multidimensional process dependent on personal, interpersonal and organizational ecosystem of support.

The testimonies from the participants have enabled the researcher to frame the theme" Collaborative Ecosystem of Care and Support" which emphasizes the interconnected and interdependent nature of the support system which helped the school heads to maintain work-life balance. It also reflects how the combination of family, colleagues, friends, and leadership create a community of care which sustains personal well-being and professional effectiveness of the school heads. Rather than relying in single source of support, the school heads described a networked environment where they received the various forms of assistance such as the emotional, social, technical, and managerial which work together to reduce the stress and promote the balance. The family members provide the emotional grounding and the practical help at home, the co-workers, teachers, and mentors offer them the daily collaboration and understanding in the school as their workplace. Leadership teams and the supervisors on the other hand, contribute by ensuring clarity, access and guidance to access to necessary resources.

This collaborative ecosystem also functions most effectively when all member of the school work in harmony, reinforcing each other to meet the evolving needs of everyone in school. The responses of the participants show that when one aspect of this system is strong and supportive supervisors. It also empowered them to handle the work-related challenges confidently. Likewise, the emotional resilience fostered by family connections allows them to return to work feeling recharged. This ecosystem is dynamic and adaptive, responding to their personal challenges, workplace demands, and even their health-related concerns. This theme also highlights that work-life balance is not achieved in isolation but as a result of collaboration, mutual care, and trust, across various domains of school heads.

This is supported by the work of Powell (2021) who highlighted the significance of multi-level support systems in promoting the principals the well-being and their performance which is benefited by the school. The work-life balance of the school heads is significantly enhanced when they received both emotional and instrumental support from multiple sources which include their families, peers, and organizational leadership. These interconnected networks mean social system or ecosystem of support where the positive interactions across personal and professional spheres reduce role conflict and improve their life satisfaction. Also, it emphasized that when the supervisors and management actively support the needs of the school heads, through flexibility, communication, and technical assistance, the school heads may experience lower stress and higher engagement. This is also aligned to the Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory which views the individual development and functioning as the result of dynamic interactions between multiple system, including the family, workplace, and broader societal structures.

Table 5. Organized Workflow as Foundation of Work-Life Balance.

Participant	Responses	Superordinate Theme	Subordinate Theme
Participant 1	I prioritize tasks by urgency and importance, using scheduling, delegation, and boundaries to balance professional responsibilities and personal well-being		Scheduling and boundary setting
Participant 2	I create a structured schedule that allocates time for key work responsibilities while also setting aside dedicated personal and family time.		Work-personal time allocation
Participant 3	I prioritize tasks by focusing on urgent and high-impact responsibilities while delegating others to my leadership team. I use strategic planning and time management techniques, such as scheduling dedicated work hours and setting boundaries for personal time. This approach ensures that both my professional duties and personal well-being receive the attention they deserve	Organized Workflow as Foundation of Work-Life Balance	Time management and boundaries

Participant 5	I keep things organize. Set boundaries and prioritize important task. Some tasks I need to attend to need to be given focused priority. Others I delegate it.	Delegation and task focus, organization
Participant 8	I used to prioritize the things that are in urgency. I made myself organized	Personal organization
Participant 10	I used to make things in order and prioritize the things that are greatly needed by the school	Institutional needs focus

Table 5 above discloses the statements of the participants which revealed that task prioritization based on urgency and significance is a common and crucial strategy for school heads to maintain the work-life balance. Participants 1,3,5, and 8 highlighted this approach, noting they have focused their attention on tasks that are time-sensitive or bring negative significant impact. This also reflects the practical application of time management framework where the tasks are categorized by urgency and significance. And in doing so, the school heads are able to deliberate decision about where to direct their energy, time, and expertise and how to prevent work from bleeding into their personal time.

Another prominent subordinate theme is the use of structured scheduling and boundary setting to carve out the time both for work and their personal activities. Participants 1, 2, and 3 mention the significance of making schedules that include the dedicated time for their family or personal life, alongside professional core responsibilities. This practice does not only helped them avoid the overwork but it also reflects an intentional effort to protect their personal time from being overridden demands on their profession. Setting the boundaries was specifically noted from the testimonies of participants 1, 3, and 5 as their tool to ensure that their personal needs are not neglected in the face of their work pressures.

The delegation and organization emerged as another significant support strategies which have manifested to the statement of participant 3 and 5 and claimed that delegating less critical tasks to teachers and non-teaching personnel allowed them to focus on more impactful responsibilities. This does not only ease the workload but also empowers the school principals with their team structure, reflecting trust and shared responsibilities. Meanwhile participant 8 and 10 have highlighted the importance of maintaining the order and prioritizing based on institutional demands, suggesting a strong alignment with the workplace goals. Their statements reflect a nuanced understanding that maintaining work-life balance involves not only managing time, but also making strategic decision about what to focus on when, and how while giving time for their personal needs and care.

The theme "Organized Workflow as a Foundation for Balance" was framed from the testimonies of the participants showing how they maintained an orderly and well-planned approach to tasks helps individuals effectively and manage both their personal and

professional responsibilities. The school heads have also shared that organizing the tasks based on their urgency and significance allowed them to have more focus on what is truly matters, this also enabled them to avoid the last minutes stress, and overlapping duties. Through using these tools, such as the scheduling, to-do listing, and calendars, they created a more effective structured workflow that brings them clarity and proper directions. This systematized the approach which ensured that critical tasks are addressed promptly while leaving the enough space for rest, reflection, and time for their families.

Moreover, the organized workflow also enabled the school heads to set a clear boundary and to manage their time more consciously. When these work processes are well-planned and prioritizes, the school heads can avoid the chaos of the multitasking and instead move through their responsibilities with their intention. Meanwhile, the delegation also becomes more effective within the organized framework, this allowed them to share the workload and reduce their pressures. This kind of thoughtful structured routine boost the productivity as well as serve as protection to mental and emotional well-being-making it as a core strategy in maintaining the work-life balance.

Macan (2023) described the concept of organized workflow as foundation for balance which is a growing body that emphasizes the role of time management and task structuring to achieve a well-balanced work-life integration. He also explained that individuals who engaged themselves in effective time management behaviors such as the setting goals, prioritizing tasks, and maintaining organized schedules- have been reported to have higher level of job satisfaction and lower level of stress. Likewise, task planning and structured workflow enabled the school principals to allocated time more effectively which somehow led them to attain high level of performance and reduced work-family conflict.

Table 6. Deliberate Separation of Professional and Personal Spheres.

Participant	Responses	Superordinate Theme	Subordinate Theme
Participant 1	I set boundaries by establishing a clear work schedule, limiting after-hours tasks, and prioritizing personal time for rest and family.		Establishing work hours, reserving time for personal life
Participant 2	I maintain a separate space for work to mentally distinguish between professional and personal life, making it easier to disconnect after work.	Deliberate Separation of Professional and Personal Spheres	Separate space, home environment
Participant 3	I set clear boundaries by designating specific work hours and		Reserving time for personal life, establishing work hours

	reserving personal time for family and self-care. I communicate these boundaries to my staff, delegating tasks when necessary and limiting work-related communications outside of designated hours.	
Participant 4	I do things in proper time, I set time for my work, and the proper time for my family.	Establishing work hours, reserving time for personal life
Participant 7	I also set a clear time for checking messages and emails, so I don't bring work home all the time. Weekends and family time are important, and I try to avoid work-related tasks during those periods.	Limiting digital world intrusion
Participant 10	Setting the boundary is like giving the time for the family and solely use it for them. Likewise, enough time shall be spent for my work.	Establishing work hours, reserving time for personal life

Table 6 presents the statements from the school heads when they have been asked about how they set boundaries between your professional responsibilities and personal time. It is well manifested on their statements that they have been able to set the boundaries through structured time management which emerged from most of the prevalent subordinate theme. Participant 1,3, 4, and 10 have also emphasized the significance of learning delegating the work hours and reserving the distinct period of time for personal needs and family activities These are all evident on their references to setting a "clear work schedule" and "doing things in proper time" which both underscore a deliberate effort to avoid overlap between the professional responsibilities and their personal commitments.

It can also be noticed from the responses of the participants that they even involved the physical and psychological separation which is highlighted by participant 2. She even mentioned the strategy to maintain a separate work space. This technique is deemed helpful to create a mental divide between the professional duties and home life, which reinforces the feeling of "logging off" from their work once that their responsibilities are completed or achieved. Participant 7 also raised the technological boundaries; she also practiced the time-specific checking of emails and consciously avoid the works on weekends. This also manifests that managing digital access also plays a critical role in protecting their personal time, specifically to a hyper-connected work environment.

Further, the communication boundaries were mentioned by participant 3, she also added that interpersonal dimension to setting boundaries. This communication involves the informing the colleagues about one's availability, delegating responsibilities, and also to limit the communication outside the working hours. This approach not only safeguards the personal time of the school heads, but it also sets expectation for the mutual respect of boundaries within the workplace.

The statements of the participants have enabled the researcher to frame the theme" Deliberate Separation of Professional and Personal Spheres" which is reflected to the intentional efforts made by the school heads to draw a clear line between the responsibilities at work and in their personal life. The participants have consistently emphasized the needs for structure and discipline. They have even reported the setting specific work hours and reserving personal time for their rest, for their self-care and to spend with their families. This time-based boundary also helped them to achieve the mental and physical transition between their roles and ensure that work does not encroach their private lives. These deliberate routines highlighted the awareness that are unregulated work which demand can easily disrupt their personal priorities, conscious separation is indeed essential.

Further, as per their statements, the separation also goes beyond scheduling. The school heads also pointed to strategies like making a distinct workspace at home which limits the digital engagement after their working hours, and so, clearly communicating boundaries to the colleagues and the teachers they handle. These practices indicate a multilayered approach wherein the physical space, communication norms, and utilization of technology are all managed to reinforce the division between the professional and the personal spheres. Through intentionally maintaining this separation, the school heads also protect their mental health, sustain their personal relationship as well as preserve a sense of control over their time. This also demonstrate the boundary-setting is not just a necessity but also a mindful act of self-preservation.

Clark (2022) on his study has emphasized the significance of maintaining a clear boundaries and limitations between the work and home to reduce the role conflict and stress. He found out that individuals who actively managed and customize their work-life boundaries experience higher level of job satisfaction and well-being. He also highlighted the significance of physical and psychological separation- which is like having the designated workspace and fixed them out on proper work hours to be able to achieve the mental health and productivity. He also affirmed that boundary-setting is not only a personal preference, but also a well-researched practice which bring significant impact to the overall quality of life and professional sustainability.

Table 7. Mindful Response to Disruption through Strategic Emotional and Practical Action.

Participant	Responses	Superordinate Theme	Subordinate Theme
Participant 1	I respond to unexpected	Mindful	Calmness and

	challenges by staying calm, assessing the situation, and adapting with problem-solving and decision-making.	Response to Disruption through Strategic Emotional and Practical Action	problem-solving
Participant 2	I maintain a composed mindset and focus on finding practical solutions rather than stressing over the disruption.		Composure and practicality
Participant 3	I respond to unexpected challenges by staying flexible, assessing priorities, and delegating tasks when necessary. I rely on my leadership team for support and problem-solving, ensuring that urgent matters are addressed without compromising my well-being.		Delegation and team reliance
Participant 5	attend and pay attention to challenges. I seek support also, professionally and emotionally. By being productive and proactive. After doing so, I take breaks and have enough sleep.		Proactivity and self-care
Participant 8	I used to pay attention, keep myself composed.		Composure and Reflection

	Also, I use to internalized the problem first, then, think about the things I can do to solve them.	
Participant 9	I used to internalize the challenges and think the possible solutions.	Reflection and Solution finding

Table 7 presents the testimonies of the participants when asked about how they respond to unexpected challenges that disrupt their work-life balance. The school heads have demonstrated a range of responses to the unexpected challenges, these reflect diverse coping strategies that are anchored on their emotional regulations, problem-solving, and interpersonal support. Both participants 1 and 2 have shown adaptive coping mechanism which is reflected on their actions of staying calm and focused on actionable steps in emphasized. These school heads relied on rational approaches, which involved assessing the situation and applying practical and appropriate solutions. This also shows their strong sense of control and emotional intelligence in facing the disruptions.

It can also be noticed from the testimonies that participant 3 has exhibited the collaborative flexibility. This school head emphasized the significance of staying flexible. She also has the ability to re-prioritizing and delegating the tasks which mirrors her ability to leadership-oriented response to stress. This also includes the support from a leadership team which underscores the roles of collective problem-solving in maintaining personal well-being and organizational functionality.

Also, the internal processing was shown in the statements of participants 8 and 9. These school heads preferred to reflect inwardly; they internalized the challenges first before taking the necessary actions. This may cause delay the immediate response, but it may allow thoughtful and calculated solutions. Participant 5 bridged the internal and external strategies through seeking both the emotional and professional support. He stayed productive and engaged in self-care. This revealed the balanced responsiveness, which blended the proactive behavior with the self-awareness and well-being practices.

The testimonies of the participants have enabled the researcher to frame the theme " Mindful Response to Disruption through Strategic Emotional and Practical Action" which was captured based on how the school heads intentionally manage the unexpected challenges that threaten their work-life balance and through combining the emotional regulations with deliberate, goal-oriented behavior. Instead of reacting impulsively or becoming overwhelmed, the school heads demonstrated mindfulness- which is described as a conscious awareness of the situation and even their internal state. This also allowed them to respond with proper clarity and composure.

As to the emotional side, the school heads have regulated their feelings through staying calm, they maintained composure, and internalized the challenges before acting. This emotional stability prevents the panic and creates the mental space necessary for thoughtful decision-making. Emotionally mindful responses also involve reflection, self-awareness and choosing to pause before taking actions. As to the practical side, the school heads, have engaged themselves to strategic actions such as prioritizing the tasks, delegating responsibilities, seeking support, and also, the problem-solving. These are the actions that are not random- they shall be calculated, purposeful responses aimed at managing both professional disruption and its impact to the personal well-being.

As a whole, the theme highlighted a dual approach: individuals manage disruptions not only by solving the external problem but also stabilizing their internal state. This somewhat leads to a more effective outcomes and preserves a work-life balance amidst uncertainty. This also integrates the emotional and practical strategies to demonstrate mature and holistic response to stress and disruption.

Yin, et.al., (2021) explained that the critical roles of emotional regulations and strategic actions to maintain the work-life balance amid the unexpected disruptions. He also emphasized that the emotional regulations serve as a mediating factor between the job characteristics and the well-being among the school heads. He also suggested that the school heads who effectively managed their emotions are found to be more equipped to handle the challenges in the school. He also found out that school heads who employed the emotional regulation techniques experienced reduced their burnouts. It also emphasized the significance of the strategies in high-stress environment. He even discussed how the emotion regulation could mitigate the negative impacts of the crisis on the responsibilities at work and at home, it also advocated the mindfulness and strategic coping mechanisms. These findings have collectively affirmed that mindful response, characterized by emotional regulation and practical action is vital to sustain the work-life balance during the unforeseen problems.

Table 8. Redefining Leadership through Delegation, Empowerment, and Strategic Balance of Work-Life Sustainability.

Participant	Responses	Superordinate Theme	Subordinate Theme
Participant 2	I delegate responsibilities effectively, ensuring that tasks are distributed based on strengths and expertise. This not only lightens my workload but also promotes a collaborative and efficient work environment.	Redefining Leadership through Delegation, Empowerment, and Strategic Balance of Work-Life Sustainability	Strength-based tasks distribution
Participant 5	Transformational leadership, by strong collaboration with the stakeholders. Being responsible and accountable, supportive and by empowering team members in our		Transformational and collaborative practices

	school help me more in achieving it, the work-life balance.	
Participant 7	I delegate tasks effectively and trust my staff to do their jobs well. I also plan ahead and manage my time wisely so that urgent work doesn't pile up. By being organized and flexible, I can lead without feeling overwhelmed.	Delegation, planning, flexibility
Participant 9	I used to delegate the tasks to proper teachers, and concentrated more on the tasks that I deemed I need to perform and no one will do it but me.	Selective delegation, role prioritization
Participant 10	I used to practice the shared governance wherein the delegation of tasks and involvement of teachers are also needed. I lead them the way that I think would bring positive impact to the school and also, to help me achieve the work-life balance.	Shared governance, involvement of teacher

Table 8 testimonies of the school heads have revealed a significant shift towards the delegation as core leadership adaptation which allowed them to manage the workloads more effective and efficient and protect their personal time. School heads such as participant 2, 7, and 9 strategically delegate the tasks, ensured that their responsibilities are aligned with the strength and roles of the teachers. This also relieved the personal burden and foster a culture of trust and autonomy in the school. Such selective and

intentional delegation also reflect a conscious effort to balance the leadership responsibilities with personal well-being; this also underscores how the tasks distribution becomes a tool for sustainability rather than simply efficiency.

Also, beyond the delegation, there are some of the school heads who have highlighted the collaborative and empowering leadership styles. Participant 5 adopted the transformational approach, she also emphasized the collaboration, accountability, and empowerment as key factors to achieve the work-life balance. Participant10 also practiced the shared governance, which she involved the teachers in leadership processes to distribute authority and foster the collective ownership. These are the approaches that reflect the deeper leadership philosophy which values the inclusion, trust, and shared responsibilities. Through creating this structure, it supports the mutual engagement and distributed leadership, these leaders also reduced the pressure to themselves while achieving an enhanced organizational resilience.

Moreover, participant 7 integrated the strategic planning and emotional intelligence to her leadership practices. It can also be noticed on her statement that she delegated with proactive time management and flexibility, which illustrates a sophisticated understanding of how the foresight and adaptability contribute to stress reduction and effective leadership. This has also layered a combined rational planning with the interpersonal sensitivity which shows that leadership adaptation is not only about the shifting tasks but also about the changing of mindset and the behavior to accommodate well-being.

The testimonies of the participants have enabled the researcher to frame the theme " Redefining Leadership through Delegation, Empowerment, and Strategic Balance of Work-Life Sustainability" reflects a collective movement toward a more adaptive and sustainable model of leadership, one with intentionally redefines authority and responsibility to back up and support the organization effectiveness and personal well-being. The school heads have strategically realigned their roles and engaged themselves and the teachers they handle to purposeful delegation which is based on the strengths and prioritized the essential duties that require their direct involvement. This approach also empowered the teachers to foster the mutual trust and even create a shared sense of ownership within the school, all of which contribute to a healthier distribution of tasks and responsibilities and a more manageable work-life balance and rhythm.

The theme also highlighted how the school principals embraced a more collaborative and emotionally intelligent style of leadership. Rather than operating through control, they lead through the shared governance, transformational relationship and strategic foresight which include the time management, flexibility, and even the proactive planning. These shifts do not only address immediate workload problems, but also reflect a long-term investment towards sustainable leadership practices. The result also shows a more balanced professional life where the school heads can meet the demands of their role without sacrificing their personal well-being o the morale and growth of all the school personnel.

In the study conducted by Setyono (2022) underscores the pivotal role of the transformative leadership to foster work-life balance and to enhance the engagement of school personnel. He found out that transformational leadership influenced both work-life balance of the school heads and the teachers positively and have found affirmative impact to the overall performance of the school. He also found out that work-life balance mediates the relationship between the transformational leadership and the work engagement. He highlighted on his study the significance of supportive leadership to promote the well-being of teachers. He also suggested that school heads who adopted the transformational behavior empowering the teachers, fostering the collaboration, and providing support can effectively improve the work-life balance, which mostly lead to an enhanced organizational outcome.

Table 9. Modeling and Humanizing Leadership to Promote Work-Life Balance.

Participant	Responses	Superordinate Theme	Subordinate Theme
Participant 2	I model healthy work-life balance practices by setting boundaries, managing time effectively, and prioritizing self-care, encouraging my staff to do the same.		Leading by example
Participant 4	I see to it that I show them how I balance the time for my work and for my family.		Leading by example
Participant 5	Walk the talk. I have to show and model to the staff how to achieve work-life balance. I have to support them in achieving it too.	Modeling and Humanizing Leadership to Promote Work-Life Balance"	Leading by example
Participant 8	Most of the time, I encouraged them to do the same. They shall also spend time for their work, do their responsibilities in school. And then, spend their precious time to their family. They are humans, who need to attend these two matters.		Encouragement through empathy
Participant 9	I show them how I manage my time for the works in school and how I spend time for my		Leading by example

family. Even if there are

challenges along the way

on both sides, but still we

are human and we shall

be ready to face them.

Table 9 statements from the participants have shown that the dominant subordinate them that emerged is "leading by example". Most of the school heads have emphasized the significance of modeling work-life balance through their own behavior. Participants 2,4,5 and 9 stressed that exhibiting effective time management, maintaining boundaries, and also prioritizing family and self-care are essential to encourage the teachers to do the same. This approach also manifests a belief about leadership is effective when practiced visibly, serving as a mirror for the behavior of everyone in the organization.

A related subordinate theme framed from the testimonies of the school head is "demonstrating work-family balance" and "managing challenges in balance" this was acknowledged the realities and complexities of balancing the personal and professional facets of the school head. Participant 9 also recognized the challenges faced by the teachers while striving for balance and introduced an empathetic and human-centered dimension to leadership while emphasizing the resilience as well.

Another significant subordinate theme is the encouragement through the empathy which is shown in the statement of participant 8. This approach is verbal and emotionally supportive, emphasized the recognition that the school personnel are human beings with their corresponding responsibilities both in school and at home. It also indicates a leadership style that rooted in compassion and their understanding. As a whole, the statements of the school heads highlighted that focusing the work-life balance is not just about policies or reminders, it is also deeply influenced by the relational and modeling behavior of their school heads.

The statements of the participants have enabled the researcher to frame the theme" Modeling and Humanizing Leadership to Promote Work-Life Balance". This captured the core approach of school heads use to encourage their teachers and other school personnel to prioritize a balanced life. As the leaders, the school heads recognize that simply instructing the personnel to maintain balance is not enough; instead, they actively exhibit healthy behaviors themselves which involve setting boundaries, effective time management, and also being present for family and self-care. Through visibly practicing these habits, the school heads set a powerful example for their teachers and the entire team, to show that it is not only acceptable but also vital to maintain balance between their professional responsibilities and their personal well-being.

At the same time, this them also highlights the humanizing aspect of school leadership where the school heads approach their personnel not just as employees, but as individuals with complex lives. The school heads show empathy through acknowledging the dual demands of family and work, this also offers emotional support, and validating the personal struggles faced by the teachers and the school staff. Through their compassion and relational leadership style, they create a workplace culture where the work-life balance is respected, realistically supported, and encouraged, this foster both productivity and personal fulfillment.

Powell (2023) on his work explained the role of authentic and empathetic leadership in fostering the well-being of school personnel. He also explained that the school leaders demonstrate effective work-life balance through integrating the positive influence on the lives of the subordinates and help them attain own balance strategies through social learning. Also, he explained that ethical and authentic leaders, school heads shall align their behaviors with their values and acknowledge the humanity of the teachers and other

followers, this may likely build trust and encourage healthy work culture. Further, he also highlighted the significance of supportive supervisor behaviors which include the emotional support and modeling balance as they key predictors of reduced work-family conflict and improve the job satisfaction and performance. When leaders lead by example and respond to the real need of the staff with empathy, they may able to create an environment that sustain both the organizational performance and individual well-being.

Table 10. Work Beyond the Bell: The Extended Realities of Educational Responsibilities.

Participant	Responses	Superordinate Theme	Subordinate Theme
Participant 1	Tight deadlines, heavy workloads and unexpected appointments/ meetings/ trainings.		Work-personal conflict
Participant 3	As a school head, one of the biggest challenges in balancing work and personal life is managing the constant demands of school leadership, including unexpected issues that require immediate attention. The pressure to be available for staff, students, and parents can sometimes blur the boundaries between work and personal time. Additionally, juggling administrative duties, meetings, and school events while making time for family and self-care requires careful planning and discipline.	Work Beyond the Bell: The Extended Realities of Educational Responsibilities	Work-personal conflict

Participant 7	One challenge is that school responsibilities often extend beyond office hours, such as attending meetings, school events, and handling urgent concerns. Another is the pressure to always be available, which can sometimes take away from personal time. However, I try to manage these by prioritizing tasks and setting realistic expectations.	Work-personal conflict
Participant 9	There are times when unexpected school concerns require my attention beyond work hours. Also, balancing school demands with personal commitments can be tough, but I've learned that proper planning and delegation help manage these challenges.	Work-personal conflict
Participant 10	One challenge is the unpredictability of my role like emergencies or last-minute tasks often extend my working hours. There are also	Work-personal conflict

times when school
events or deadlines
overlap with personal
commitments, making it
difficult to separate
work from home life.
However, I try to
manage this by planning
ahead, delegating tasks,
and setting boundaries
whenever possible.

Table 10 above revealed a very consistent superordinate theme which is Work-Personal Life Conflict which have been experienced by the school heads involved in this study. Across the statements of the participants, they emphasized the struggle to maintain the balance amidst heavy and unpredictable demands of their professional roles. This challenge lies not solely on the volume of the tasks but also on their spontaneous nature-emergencies, last minute meetings, and even the events frequently encroach upon the time meant for their personal matters and obligations. This continuous intrusion makes it also hefty to achieve a clear separation between life and work.

Within this overarching theme, other participants highlight the specific ways in which they describe the experiences as well as the way they cope with the challenges they faced. Participant 1 highlighted the sheer workload and tight deadlines. Other, such as participant 3 and 7 have touch upon the emotional labor and pressure to be able to be constantly available, which blur boundaries and lead to role strain. Participant 9 and 10 described a more adaptive statements such as the strategic coping and proactive planning which also shows a move toward managing rather than eliminating the tension.

These significant findings underscore the significance of boundary-setting and time management in educational leadership. The unpredictability of the profession cannot always be controlled, their ability to delegate the roles and other tasks, prioritize effectively, and even to maintain personal boundaries which emerged as crucial strategies for mitigating the stress at work. The schools may take benefits from supporting these mechanisms through the professional development to be provided to all school personnel, clearer role expectations, and policies that respect the personal time of each personnel, ultimately foster the healthier work-life balance for school heads and for the educators.

The testimonies of the school heads have enabled the researcher to frame the theme" Work Beyond the Bell: The Extended Realities of Educational Responsibilities" reflect the lived experiences of the school heads who faced the ongoing professional demands that do not end when they school day does. The school heads consistently describe how their responsibilities such as the unexpected meetings, emergencies, administrative tasks, and the school events frequently extend to their personal time. The theme also revealed that the roles of school heads is not confined to office hours, rather, it also involves a continuous balancing act where their work roles often spill over into evenings and weekends and much even during their precious family events and occasions. Thence, the traditional boundaries between work and personal life becomes increasingly difficult to uphold which also contribute to stress and fatigue.

Further, the theme also underscored how the school principals attempted to navigate the challenges through their strategic coping mechanisms which include the planning, delegation, setting personal boundaries, and prioritization. Despite their efforts, the pressure remains constantly available for the staff, teachers, parents, and the schools as a whole- this often leads to role strain and emotional exhaustion. This also extends reality of educational leadership which involves the deeper systemic issues where the expectations placed on school principals exceeds what is sustainable, calling the attention to the needs of the school supports, workload management, and recognition of the invisible works that educational leaders shall perform.

Beanchi (2022) explored the challenges of the school heads in maintaining the healthy work-life balance, specifically in relation to the extended duties that stretched beyond their official school works hours. Further, according to his work, school leaders often experience the role spillover wherein both emotional and administrative demands of school leadership extend into their personal time, which usually leads to stress and burnout. He also highlighted that excessive workloads contribute to physical and emotional exhaustion. These extended responsibilities impede the boundaries between work and home life and reduce the quality of personal relationship as well as the self-care practices. Consequently, many educational leaders have found it hefty to disconnect from work which impact their overall well-being and their professional performance.

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher came up with this Equilibrium Framework for Educational Leaders.
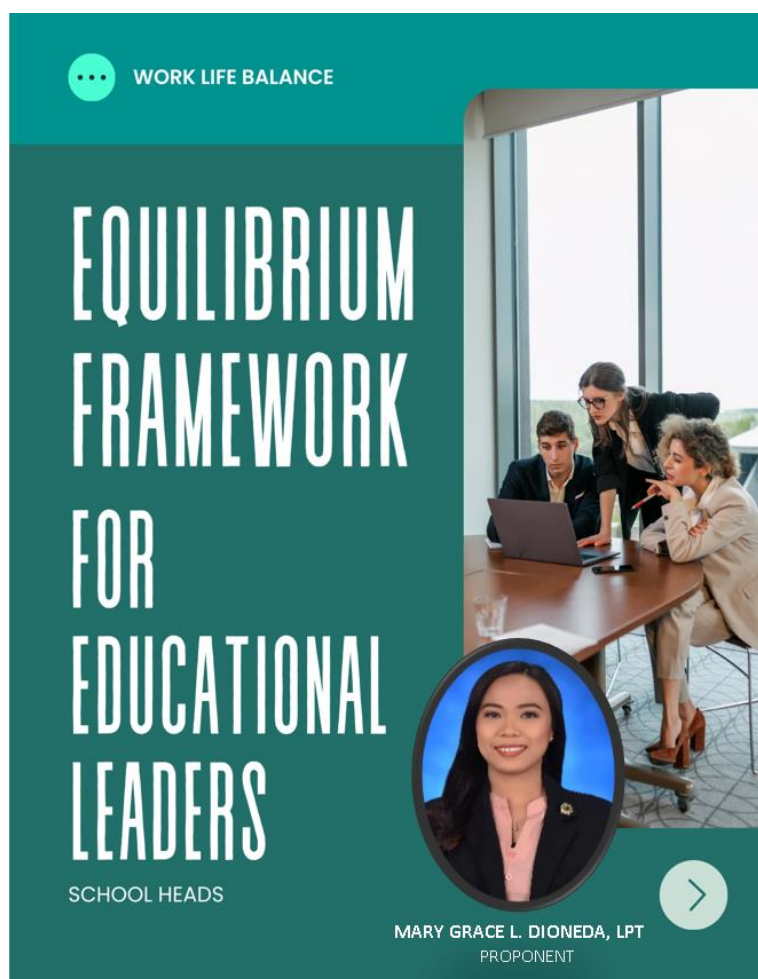
Introduction

The educational landscape has been fast evolving, the school heads as educational leaders are consistently challenged to balance a wide-range of their responsibilities such as the academic achievement, the development of the teachers and staff to equity, community engagement and well-being. The complexity of these demands often leads to their burnout, inconsistent outcomes, and fragmented school cultures. To navigate the dynamic environment effectively, there has been a growing need for a structured and yet adoptable approach that may help the school heads to maintain balance while taking steps to meaningful progress.

The proposed Equilibrium Framework for Educational Leaders is designed to achieve the needs by providing the holistic model to foster stability, clarity and sustain the growth within the educational arena. Its core is the framework which emphasize the balance-not just between competing priorities, but even between visionary leadership and the day-to-day management, the innovation, and internal school needs as well as the external expectations. This also encourages the school heads to operate from a place to self-awareness, strategic thinking, and the ethical responsibility, which enable the school heads to make informed decision that aligned both the institutional goals and the community values.

This output is also designed to support the school heads the work-life balance. It also acknowledges the effectiveness of the school leadership which is deeply tied to the personal well-being of the leaders themselves. Through promoting a balanced distribution of time, energy and attention across professional duties and personal needs. This framework also empowers the school heads to lead sustainably. It also encourages the school heads to clear boundaries, the delegation of tasks and the prioritize the self-care without compromising the professional excellence.

Just more than a leadership tool, this output also serve as wellness centered philosophy for the school heads which navigate the pressures of the modern education setting. It also supports the values rest as much as rigor, reflection as much as their actions. In doing so, this tool may enable the school head to foster healthier school environment where they can thrive their roles, not just on their professional facet, but even their personal- leading with resilience, clarity and a renewed sense of purpose.

Legal bases

This output is guided by the following legal bases:

- Batas Pambansa Blg 32 (Education Act of 1982) the section 17 of the Ed. Act outlines the obligations of the school heads; this emphasizes the need to maintain healthy school atmosphere conducive to effective teaching and learning. This also explains the needs in promoting the harmonious relationship between the school personnel and ensure the professional behavior in their work. Through fostering a balanced work environment, the school heads can better fulfill their responsibilities aligned to the principles of this equilibrium framework.

- DepEd Order No. 5 s. 2024 this was issued by DepEd which specifically rationalizes the teachers' workload and compensates for their overloads. While focused on teachers, it also underscores the significance of workload management within the educational system. Through promoting fair workload distribution, the policy indirectly supports school heads in managing their responsibilities effectively which also contribute the work-life balance.

- Labor Code of the Philippines. This sets forth regulations on the working hours, rest days, and overtime pay, which aims to protect the worker's right and ensure fair labor practices. Although it primarily seeks to address the private sector employees, its principles on work hours and rest periods serve as the reference for public school heads in establishing the policies that promote work-life balance.

- DepEd Memoranda on Work-Life Balance through the DM 113, s. 2025 focuses on enhancing the wellness and balancing the work and life balance for teachers. These documents offer the strategies and guidelines to support the school heads to manage their professional and personal

Activities	Persons & involved	Resources Needed / Budgetary Requirements	Time Frame	Success Indicators
Facilitate a training focused on leadership and tasks prioritization	School Heads Teachers Leadership coaches	Training kit Resource persons Leadership Manuals	1 week before the opening of classes	At least 85% of teachers and the school heads shall have been able to improve their knowledge and skills related to tasks prioritization
Develop a school-based leadership manual aligned with the equilibrium framework	Regional and division trainers	Budget for the training from MOOE	First quarter	The school-based leadership manual aligned to equilibrium framework shall have been 100% developed and utilized by the school heads through the guidance of the supervisors .
Facilitate a year-round coaching and mentoring program			Year-round	There shall be a 100% year-round coaching and mentoring shall have been

facilitated between the school-head and the teachers, and between the school head and the supervisor.
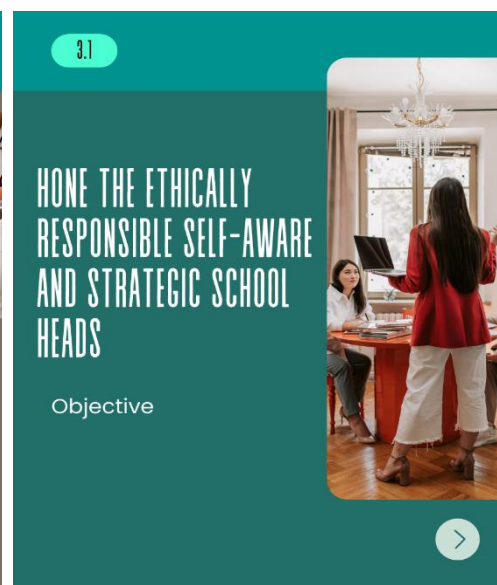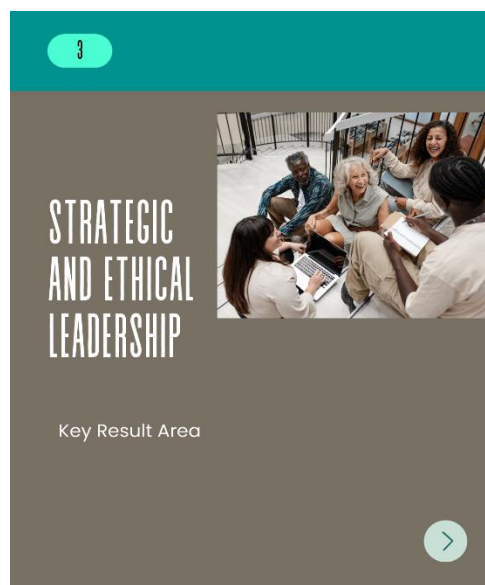

Activities	Persons & involved	Resources Needed / Budgetary Requirements	Time Frame	Success Indicators
Integrate some wellness session to Management Commission and meeting every month	School head Teachers Resource speaker	Training kit Resource persons	Year-round	At least 85% of the wellness session shall have been integrated to the meeting every month
Offer workshops focused on time and energy management		Leadership Manuals		100% of the workshop focused on time and energy management shall have been offered to the

| Facilitate peer support groups for sharing delegation practices and strategies on setting the boundaries | Budget for the training from MOOE | school heads and the teachers they handle

At least 75% of the tasks shall have been delegated properly to the learners and the boundaries on workload shall have been effectively observed. |

Activities	Persons & involved	Resources Needed / Budgetary Requirements	Time Frame	Success Indicators
Facilitate a reflective leadership seminars for school heads and teachers	Teachers

School head | Training kit

Monitoring and Evaluation Tools | During the In-Service Training | At least more than 50% of the the reflective leadership seminars shall have been facilitated among teachers and school heads. |

Require ethics and values alignment to the activities, projects, and programs implemented in school	Resource speaker Funds from MOOE and Teachers and Learners development fund		Year-round	100% of the Programs, Projects, and activities conducted have been aligned to the ethics and values implemented in school
Conduct community-based goal setting dialogue with the internal and external stakeholders	Funds from MOOE and Teachers and Learners development fund		Every quarter	At least 75% of the community-based activities that involved the internal and external stakeholders shall have been conducted successfully.
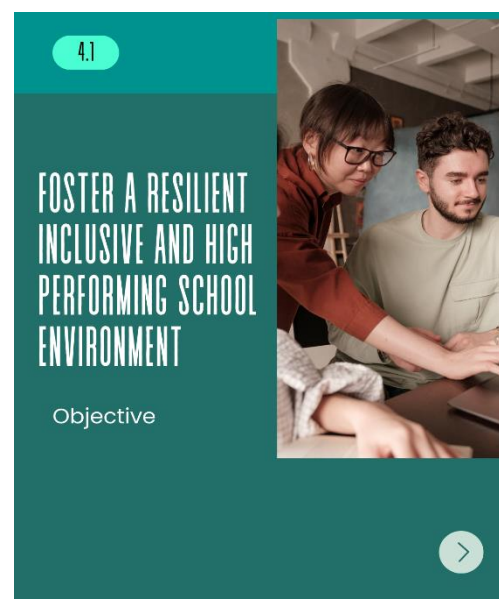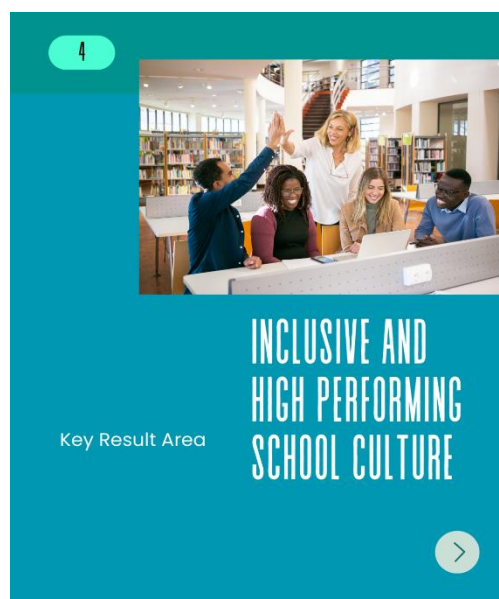
Activities	Persons & involved	Resources Needed / Budgetary Requirements	Time Frame	Success Indicators
Launch the initiatives to promote the diversity, equity, and inclusion	School Heads Teachers	Training kit	1st week of the school-year	The school shall have been able to launch at least 75% of the initiatives to promote the diversity, equity, and inclusion

Create collaborative school improvement teams which also involved the **Inputs of the teachers and learners**	Learners	Monitoring and Evaluation Tools	1st Quarter of the School-year	The school shall have been able to establish the collaborative among the 100% of the planning team and involve the inputs from the learners and the teachers
Monitor and evaluate inclusive practices as well as the performance data		Funds from MOOE and Teachers and Learners development fund	Year-round	At least 85% of the inclusive practices and the performance of the school shall have been monitored and evaluated.

"A principal who balances work and life build not only a strong school but a sustainable legacy."

MARY GRACE L. DIONEDA, LPT
PROPONENT

4. Conclusion

The researcher offered the following recommendations for possible actions:

a. The testimonies shared by the school principals show the complex and demanding nature of school leadership wherein the pursuit of work -life balance is both personal and professional challenge. As the top leaders, the school heads carry the highest and most significant responsibilities that often extend beyond the official working hours, which lead to stress, health concerns, and burnouts. Their responsibilities in schools have somewhat affect and sacrifice the

time for their families and to do their personal responsibilities. They even highlighted their resilience and adaptability as school leaders; they employed various coping mechanisms to surpass the challenges they faced. Their statements also show the critical need for the institutional support and policies which may promote the sustainable leadership practices and prioritize the well-being of the school heads.

b. To describe their experiences and strategies in balancing their work and personal life, the researcher was able to extract 10 significant themes such as: Theme1: Struggles in Maintaining Personal Well-being, Theme 2: Intentional Stress Management Through Strategic, Emotional and Personal Well-Being Practices, Theme 3: Strategic Management Personal Boundaries, and Support System: Key Factors contributing to Work-Life Balance; Theme 4: Collaborative Ecosystem for Care and Support; Theme 5: Organized Workflow as Foundation of Work-Life Balance; Theme 6: . Deliberate Separation of Professional and Personal Spheres; Theme 7: Mindful Response to Disruption through Strategic Emotional and Practical Action; Theme 8: Redefining Leadership through Delegation, Empowerment, and Strategic Balance of Work-Life Sustainability; Theme 9: Modeling and Humanizing Leadership to Promote Work-Life Balance; and Theme 10: Work Beyond the Bell: The Extended Realities of Educational Responsibilities.

c. The experiences of school heads reflect that balancing work and personal life in school leadership is often hefty and complex. Being the leader of the school does not automatically lead to a balanced life. Their lived experiences also highlight the needs for a clear and planned approach which can be balanced or equilibrium framework which is deemed helpful to manage their responsibilities while taking care of their well-being. This is a support which can make them more effectual and attain sustainable leadership and allow them to do their responsibilities well while handling their personal responsibilities.

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