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Cultural Intelligence, Quality Assurance, and Organizational Behavior on the Innovation Capability of School Leaders

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Abstract: This study investigates the influence of cultural intelligence (CQ), quality assurance (QA), and organizational behavior (OB) on the innovation capability of public school leaders in Region X, Northern Mindanao. Utilizing a descriptive-correlational-structural equation modelling design, the research analysed data from school administrators across eight divisions for the 2025-2026 school year. Results reveal that school leaders possess "Highly Demonstrated" levels across all variables. Metacognitive CQ emerged as a key strength for strategic adaptation, while QA practices showed excellence in stakeholder partnerships. Notably, OB was characterized by highly collegial and participative styles. Inferential analysis confirmed significant positive correlations between all variables and innovation. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) identified Model 5 as the best fit, establishing OB as the primary engine of innovation, possessing over four times the influence of CQ or QA. Participative behavior was the strongest individual predictor, highlighting that collaborative environments are essential for transformative leadership.

The study introduces the Innovation Capability Model (ICM), which conceptualizes organizational transformation through a high-tech metaphor, positioning the "Laptop" as the operational hub where technical infrastructure is activated by the foundational power of Social Cognitive Theory. This capability is realized when the "Antenna" of Transformational Leadership connects the organization to the global environment, utilizing a tactical "Keyboard" of strategic leadership styles to execute initiatives. Ultimately, the model highlights a critical synergy between Quality Assurance and Cultural Intelligence, represented as a digital handshake that balances operational stability with human adaptability to drive actualized innovation.

Keywords: *Cultural Intelligence, Quality Assurance, Organizational Behavior, Innovation Capability, Public School Leadership.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Innovation capability among school leaders has become a critical factor in transforming educational institutions to meet rapidly changing student needs and societal demands. Studies show that school heads who possess strong vision, resilience, and the ability to inspire others are more effective in initiating and sustaining innovations within their schools.

Within the Department of Education (DepEd), however, innovation capability among school leaders remains uneven, particularly in Region X (Northern Mindanao). National Quality Assurance and Excellence Standards for School Heads (NQESH) 2024 results indicate that school heads in Region X generally operate at “Experienced” levels, with notable weaknesses in resource management and instructional leadership, even though stakeholder engagement is relatively strong. Baseline data likewise reveal commitment to aligning leadership with school vision and mission, yet show gaps in evidence-based management, instructional leadership, and the systematic implementation of school-based innovations. DepEd Order No. 24, s. 2020 (PPSSH) and recent regional and division memoranda (e.g., DepEd Region 10, 2025; DepEd Division Memoranda Nos. 217 and 241, 2024) highlight continuing needs for targeted training that strengthen leaders’ ability to initiate and manage innovation, especially under resource constraints and systemic barriers.

Moreover, work engagement is critical because it enables educators to participate in resource-mobilizing initiatives actively. Engaged teachers are more likely to innovate and collaborate on projects that attract external support.

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The study was situated within the context of Region X (Northern Mindanao) for the school year 2025-2026. The research focused on school leaders in this region, aiming to contribute insights relevant to local educational practices and policies aimed at strengthening school leadership and innovation capacity. Each of these independent variables is expected to contribute distinct yet interrelated influences: cultural intelligence affecting leaders' adaptability and inclusiveness, quality assurance ensuring that innovations are standards-aligned and evidence-based, and organizational behavior shaping the school climate that supports experimentation and collaboration.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- *Determine the Level of Cultural Intelligence do School Leaders Demonstrate in Terms of:*

- Metacognitive;
- Cognitive;
- Motivational; and
- Emotional dimensions.

- *Evaluate the Level of Quality Assurance do School Leaders Possess in Terms of:*

- Leadership;
- People;
- Processes; and
- Partnership and resources?

- *Assess the Level of Organizational Behavior do School Leaders Exhibit in Terms of:*

- Autocratic behavior;
- Collegial behavior;
- Supportive behavior; and
- Participative behavior.

- *Ascertain the Level of Innovation Capability of School Leaders in Terms of:*

- Visionary leadership;
- Collaborative leadership;
- Change-Oriented and technological leadership; and
- Supportive and empowering leadership.

- *Correlate Between the Innovation Capability of School Leaders and:*

- Cultural intelligence;
- Quality assurance; and
- Organization behavior.

- Identify the variables singly or in combination, best predict the innovation capability of school leaders.

III. METHODOLOGY

- *Research Design*

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational and causal-comparative research design to develop and apply mathematical models for leaders. To identify the most appropriate model, structural equation modeling was employed for data analysis. First, the study utilized a descriptive-correlational method to describe the levels of innovation capability, cultural intelligence, quality assurance, and organizational behavior among school leaders. Correlation was used to examine and measure the connections between cultural intelligence, quality assurance, and organizational behavior to innovation capability among school leaders.

The study also employed regression to develop the best-fit model of the examined factors that predicted innovation capability of school leaders—a multivariate technique that investigated multiple dependence relationships among the variables. Specifically, this research examined the interrelationships of cultural intelligence, quality assurance, and organizational behavior to innovation capability among school leaders.

- *Research Setting*

This study was conducted in Region X (Northern Mindanao), focusing on selected educational divisions in Lanao del Norte, Bukidnon, and Misamis Oriental. The study covered the cities of Malaybalay, Cagayan de Oro, El Salvador, Iligan, and Valencia, allowing for a broad view of different school settings across the region. Northern Mindanao has diverse cultural, social, and economic conditions that may influence how school leaders manage and generate resources. Studying this area helps the researcher understand how these local factors affect leadership practices in different contexts.

By considering the region's unique setting, the study provides more realistic and relevant findings that can guide improvements in resource generation and school development. This ensures that the results reflect the actual experiences of school leaders in the area and can be useful for planning practical strategies in similar schools.

- *Participants of the Study*

The respondents of the study were elementary and secondary school leaders from the Department of Education in Northern Mindanao (Region X). A total of 630 school leaders from 14 divisions in the region were selected using random sampling. This method was used because the area covered by the study is wide and includes many schools.

The study did not separate elementary and secondary school leaders since they perform similar roles in managing schools. This helped ensure that all divisions were fairly represented in the sample and improved the reliability of the results.

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➢ *Sampling Procedure*

This study implemented a meticulous sampling procedure to accurately represent school leaders across Region 10. The sampling approach combined stratified and simple random sampling techniques. First, the population of school leaders was organized into separate strata according to their divisions, ensuring proportional representation of each group. This approach guaranteed that all divisions were sufficiently represented within the sample. Individual respondents were then randomly selected from each division using the fishbowl method, which ensured equal chances of inclusion and reduced selection bias.

➢ *Data Gathering Procedure*

Prior to conducting the study, a recommendation for approval, signed by the dissertation adviser and the college dean, was first secured. Afterward, a research permit was obtained from the Office of the Research Ethics Committee to ensure compliance with ethical guidelines. An intent letter was then submitted to the DepEd Region 10 Director to request permission to conduct the research. Once approval was granted, the intent letters and approved documents, including the research permit, were forwarded to the respective school division offices, public school district offices, and individual schools. Pilot testing of the research instrument was conducted in Region XI – Division of Davao City, with the necessary approvals secured from the schools to ensure compliance with research protocols. After securing all required permissions, consent forms were distributed to all respondents, clearly explaining their rights and the voluntary nature of participation. Respondents were given three weeks to complete the questionnaires, which were distributed in both printed and Google Forms formats to accommodate the large number of participants. Collected data were tallied, tabulated, scored, and classified according to the research questions, with appropriate statistical techniques applied for analysis. Throughout the process, all respondents' answers remained anonymous to ensure confidentiality and uphold ethical standards.

➢ *Data Analysis*

To determine the levels of cultural intelligence, quality assurance, organizational behavior, and innovation capability of school leaders, descriptive statistics such as mean and rank were employed. The Pearson product–moment correlation was used to examine whether significant relationships existed among these variables and their influence on school leaders' overall innovation capability. To identify the variable or combination of variables that best predicted innovation capability, a stepwise multiple linear regression analysis was conducted.

➢ *Ethical Considerations*

Prior to conducting the study, the researcher ensured compliance with established ethical research protocols. Approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee (REC) of the university before any fieldwork began. Once approval was granted, the researcher proceeded with data collection. All study participants received an ethics statement outlining the ethical principles guiding the research. This statement detailed informed consent, emphasizing that participation was voluntary and that individuals could withdraw at any time without consequences. Confidentiality was assured, with participants' identities and personal information protected and securely managed throughout the study. The ethics statement was submitted together with the permission letter and approval notice to ensure transparency and build trust in the research process. Additionally, the ethics statement was addressed to the DepEd Region 10 Director, Schools Division Superintendents, Public Schools District Supervisors, Districts In-Charge, and School Administrators. A formal approval note, signed by the relevant authorities, accompanied the letter before it reached the respondents. To uphold confidentiality, participants' names remained anonymous throughout the study.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

➢ *Cultural Intelligence*

The summary of school leaders' competencies is presented in Table 7 with a grand mean of 4.19, interpreted as "Highly Demonstrated," indicating that school leaders show a high level of cultural intelligence. The highest rated indicator is metacognitive (4.36) among the four (4) indicators. This is followed by emotional dimension (4.31) and motivational (4.25) are both interpreted as "highly demonstrated." Meanwhile, cognitive got the lowest mean score of 3.87 among all indicators.

Table 1. Cultural Intelligence of School Leaders

Variables	Mean	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
Metacognitive	4.3643	Usually	Highly Demonstrated
Cognitive	3.8706	Usually	Highly Demonstrated
Motivational	4.2564	Usually	Highly Demonstrated
Emotional Dimensions	4.3112	Usually	Highly Demonstrated
OVERALL MEAN	4.1993	Usually	Highly Demonstrated

Legend:

Range	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
4.51-5.00	Always	Very Highly Demonstrated
3.51-4.50	Usually	Highly Demonstrated
2.51-3.50	Sometimes	Moderately Demonstrated
1.51-2.50	Seldom	Poorly Demonstrated
1.0-1.50	Never	Not Demonstrated at all

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Metacognitive CQ leads at 4.36, reflecting superior strategic self-awareness and adaptation, followed closely by emotional (4.31) and motivational (4.25) dimensions, indicating robust relational drive and behavioral regulation. Cognitive CQ trails at 3.87, suggesting solid but relatively weaker knowledge depth compared to reflective and attitudinal strengths. This profile reveals comprehensive cultural competence, with metacognitive superiority enabling leaders to orchestrate the other domains effectively in diverse school settings. High overall CQ positions Philippine school leaders to champion innovation through inclusive practices, conflict resolution, and adaptive strategies amid rising multiculturalism, though bolstering cognitive knowledge via training could optimize performance. For your dissertation, this underscores CQ's pivotal role in enhancing leadership efficacy, teacher morale, and school-wide progress.

The above findings were parallel to the study of Balbuena et al. (2025) reported elevated overall CQ enabling Filipino school heads' success abroad; and Dagohoy (2018) demonstrated CQ's mediation between practices and effectiveness.

Moreover, Widodo et al. (2024) linked high principal CQ to improved governance and performance; Al Dhaheri (2022) validated high CQ levels among Abu Dhabi leaders, especially metacognitive; and confirmed CQ dimensions predicting cultural leadership behaviors.

➢ *Quality Assurance*

Table 2 shows that partnership and resources lead slightly (4.33), reflecting excellence in stakeholder collaboration and facility stewardship, followed closely by processes (4.30), despite internal variability. People management (4.10) shows strong teacher empowerment, while leadership (4.24) demonstrates solid participatory governance. This balanced profile indicates comprehensive QA competence, positioning leaders to drive systemic school improvement effectively.

Table 2 Quality Assurance of School Leaders

VARIABLES	Mean	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
Leadership	4.24	Most of the Time	Highly Practiced
People	4.10	Most of the Time	Highly Practiced
Processes	4.30	Most of the Time	Highly Practiced
Partnership and Resources	4.33	Most of the Time	Highly Practiced
OVERALL MEAN	4.33	Most of the Time	Highly Practiced

Legend:

Range	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
4.51-5.00	Always	Very Highly Practiced
3.51-4.50	Most of the Time	Highly Practiced
2.51-3.50	Sometimes	Moderately Practiced
1.51-2.50	Rarely	Poorly Practiced
1.0-1.50	Never	Not Practiced at All

The results imply that high overall QA enables school leaders to foster innovation through stakeholder trust, teacher empowerment, and resource optimization, creating resilient DepEd systems responsive to diverse needs. Strengthening process rigor could elevate performance further, directly supporting your dissertation's framework linking QA to cultural intelligence and organizational innovation in multicultural Philippine schools.

The study conducted by Balbuena et al. (2025) linked comprehensive QA to Filipino school heads' global success; and demonstrated QA mediation between practices and outcomes. Additionally, , Widodo et al. (2024) showed balanced QA driving governance; Ahmad & Ahmed (2023) confirmed leadership's QA moderation role; and Al Dhaheri (2022) validated multidimensional QA for school excellence.

➢ *Organizational Behavior*

Table 3 presents a summary of the school leaders' organizational behavior. School leaders exhibit predominantly collaborative organizational behavior, with collegial, supportive, and participative dimensions rated "Very Highly Demonstrated," contrasting moderate autocratic tendencies rated "Highly Demonstrated," yielding an overall mean of 4.3701 ("Highly Demonstrated").

Table 3 Summary of School Leaders' Organizational Behavior.

Variables	Mean	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
Autocratic	3.51	Usually	Highly Demonstrated
Collegial	4.64	Always	Very Highly Demonstrated
Supportive	4.62	Always	Very Highly Demonstrated
Participative	4.62	Always	Very Highly Demonstrated
OVERALL MEAN	4.37	Usually	Highly Demonstrated

Legend:

Range	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
4.51-5.00	Always	Very Highly Demonstrated

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3.51-4.50	Usually	Highly Demonstrated
2.51-3.50	Sometimes	Moderately Demonstrated
1.51-2.50	Seldom	Poorly Demonstrated
1.0-1.50	Never	Not Demonstrated at All

Transformative leadership emerges as leaders strongly emphasize collegial team unity (4.6490), supportive empathy (4.62), and participative transparency (4.6250), while maintaining moderate directive control (3.51) for efficiency. This balanced profile reflects situational adaptability—collaborative for innovation, autocratic for compliance—ideal for hierarchical yet diverse DepEd contexts. These findings indicate that predominantly collaborative Organizational behavior fosters teacher empowerment and innovation essential for multicultural schools, synergizing with high cultural intelligence and quality assurance; moderated autocratic elements ensure accountability, creating resilient systems that advance your dissertation's framework linking leadership behaviors to organizational innovation capabilities.

This finding is supported by Balbuena et al. (2025), who found Filipino school heads blending participative and directive styles for global efficacy; Suarez (2025) confirmed collaborative dominance predicting QA success; and Villafane (2025) validated "Very Great Extent" participative practices enhancing decisions.

Contemporary studies confirm that participative leadership significantly enhances teacher motivation and performance by fostering a comprehensive approach that integrates strong leadership with effective management practices (Sariakin et al., 2025). Furthermore, distributed leadership has been shown to drive teacher collaboration and professional enthusiasm, particularly when mediated by teacher optimism (Büyükgöze et al., 2026). Recent research also links distributed styles to increased job satisfaction and performance through dimensions like organizational empowerment and collaborative decision-making (Yu et al., 2025). Finally, inclusive leadership is increasingly recognized for driving professional development and whole-school transformation by establishing a collaborative culture grounded in equity and teacher academic optimism (Adams et al., 2025; Valdés & Krichesky, 2026).

➢ *Innovation Capability*

The summary of school leaders' innovation capability is presented in Table 22 with consistently high strategic management capability across all innovation dimensions (overall mean = 4.51,"Highly Capable"), With supportive/empowering leadership (4.61) and change-oriented leadership (4.53) leading, while visionary/strategic (4.46) and collaborative (4.44) remain strong. It implies that balanced profile positions DepEd administrators to drive comprehensive school transformation through motivated teachers, technological integration, and stakeholder collaboration, directly addressing diverse learner needs. Strengthening visionary implementation gaps could maximize innovation impact, synergizing with high cultural intelligence and quality assurance to create a resilient, future-ready Philippine schools' essential leadership-innovation framework.

Table 4 Overall Innovation Capability of School Leaders

VARIABLES	Mean	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
Visionary and Strategic Leadership	4.46	Neither Agree/Disagree	Capable
Collaborative Leadership	4.44	Neither Agree/Disagree	Capable
Changed-oriented Leadership	4.53	Strongly Agree	Highly Capable
Supportive and Empowering Leadership	4.61	Strongly Agree	Highly Capable
OVERALL MEAN	4.51	Strongly Agree	Highly Capable

Legend:

Range	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
4.51-5.00	Strongly Agree	Highly Capable
3.51-4.50	Neither Agree/Disagree	Capable
2.51-3.50	Uncertain	Occasionally Capable
1.51-2.50	Disagree	Rarely Capable
1.0-1.50	Strongly Disagree	Not Capable

The result is parallel to idea of Luz (2022) as she found high strategic innovation practices among Ilocos Norte school heads, particularly in supportive leadership dimensions that enhanced teacher motivation and school outcomes, while Pantao et al. (2025) confirmed change-oriented technological leadership driving curriculum transformation in Philippine public schools, and Balbuena et al. (2025) demonstrated how balanced strategic capabilities enabled Filipino school heads to achieve global efficacy through comprehensive innovation approaches.

Moreover, Röhl et al. (2024) validated self-efficacy as a key predictor of multidimensional innovation success among school leaders, de Jong et al. (2022) confirmed Dutch principals' balanced strategic profiles yielding superior collaborative outcomes, and Leithwood et al. (2020) established through meta-analysis that integrated leadership dimensions across visionary, supportive, and change-oriented practices consistently predict school effectiveness globally.

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➢ *Correlation of the Innovation Capability of School Leaders and the Independent Variables*

The results of the study reveal that innovation capability among school leaders is significantly correlated with cultural intelligence, quality assurance, and organizational behavior. Cultural intelligence shows a moderate positive correlation (r = .453, p = .000), with motivational CQ (r = .437) emerging as the strongest sub-dimension, followed by metacognitive (r = .404), emotional (r = .392), and cognitive CQ (r = .300).

The results in Table 5 indicate the correlation coefficients and the significance value as reflected in scores reported by school administrators as research respondents in Region X.

Table 5 Correlation between the Dependent and Independent Variables

Variables	***r*-value**	***p*-value**
Cultural Intelligence	.453	.000**
Metacognitive	.404	.000**
Cognitive	.300	.000**
Motivational	.437	.000**
Emotional Dimensions	.392	.000**
Quality Assurance	.516	.000**
Leadership	.437	.000**
People	.444	.000**
Processes	.461	.000**
Partnership and Resources	.437	.000**
Organizational Behavior	.530	.001**
Autocratic Behavior	.463	.000**
Collegial Behavior	.561	.000**
Supportive Behavior	.447	.000**
Participative Behavior	.628	.000**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*.Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-talied).

Cultural intelligence (CQ) shows a moderate positive correlation (r = .453, p = .000). Among its sub-dimensions, motivational CQ (r = .437) emerges as the strongest predictor, confirming that the drive to adapt culturally enhances leadership effectiveness in diverse school contexts. Emotional CQ (.392) and metacognitive CQ (.404) also contribute meaningfully, while cognitive CQ (.300) is the weakest, suggesting that factual knowledge alone does not strongly drive innovation. In its implication, Leadership training should emphasize experiential immersion programs—intercultural exchanges, adaptive leadership simulations, and motivational development—rather than purely theoretical workshops. This aligns with Biay (2024), who found motivational CQ linked to global citizenship, and Deng (2024), who confirmed CQ predicts breakthrough innovation.

Quality assurance demonstrates a substantially significant correlation with innovation capability (r = .516, p = .000), led by processes (r = .461), which underscores the importance of systematic procedures in enabling creative implementation. People (r = .444), leadership (r = .437), and partnership/resources (r = .437) also contribute consistently, showing that structured environments, empowered teachers, and aligned leadership strategies foster innovation. This finding is reinforced by Widodo et al. (2024) and Dagohoy (2018), who emphasized the role of QA in performance and empowerment. Thus, DepEd should reframe QA from compliance mechanisms into innovation catalysts, transforming processes into frameworks for experimentation and creativity. Organizational behavior reveals a robust correlation overall (r = .530, p = .001), with participative behavior (r = .628) as the most influential single correlate, followed by collegial (r = .561), autocratic (r = .463), and supportive (r = .447). These results confirm that relational leadership styles are markedly predictive of innovation.

Participative decision-making fosters psychological safety and unleashes teacher creativity, collegial cultures amplify collective intelligence, autocratic elements provide necessary structure, and supportive practices sustain motivation.

Villafane (2025), Caruz (2024), and Somech (2006) all validate participative and collegial leadership as considerably significant predictors of innovativeness. This hierarchy implies that leadership training must prioritize participative and collegial development, institutionalize professional learning communities, balance autocratic clarity for accountability, and reinforce supportive practices for sustainability.

Given these pronounced correlations, the null hypothesis stating that “There is no significant relationship existing between innovation capability of school leaders and: cultural intelligence; quality assurance; and organizational behavior” is rejected.

➢ *Variables That Best Predict the Innovation Capability of School Leaders in Region 10*

Relational leadership dimensions—participative, supportive, and collegial—emerge as particularly influential, while quality assurance processes and cultural intelligence provide structural and adaptive reinforcement.

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Among these predictors, participative behavior stands out as the most influential, with a standardized coefficient (β = .340, t = 8.564, p = .000) explaining 34% of the variance. This confirms that collaborative decision-making unleashes teacher creativity by fostering psychological safety and encouraging risk-taking. Supportive behavior follows (β = .190, t = 5.025, p = .000), emphasizing the importance of emotional safety in sustaining innovation. Together, participative and supportive leadership account for approximately 62% of the total model effect, highlighting relational leadership as the dominant driver of innovation capability.

The regression model demonstrates an R-value of .707, indicating a moderate to strong relationship between the predictors and innovation capability. The R^2 value of .500 shows that 50% of the variance in innovation capability is explained by the combined predictors, while the F-value of 91.454 (p = .000) confirms the model's excellent fit. This means the predictors collectively provide a reliable framework for understanding and enhancing innovation capability among school leaders.

Table 6 presents the regression analysis between the independent variables and innovation capability of school leaders in Region 10.

Table 6 Regression Analysis between the Independent and Dependent Variables

	UNSTANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS	STANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS			
Model	**B**	**STS ERROR**	**BETA**	**t**	**Sig.**
(Constant)	1.443	0.127		11.399	.000
Organizational Behavior					
Participative Behavior	0.263	0.031	0.340	8.564	.000
Supportive Behavior	0.130	0.026	0.190	5.025	.000
Collegial Behavior	0.064	0.026	0.086	2.459	.014
Quality Assurance					
Processes	0.074	0.030	0.100	2.507	0.012
Partnership and Resources	0.051	0.025	0.074	2.004	0.045
Cultural Intelligence					
R = 0.707	R^2= 0.500	F-value= 91.454	Sig. = 0.000		

This equation suggests that for every unit increase in participative behavior, innovation capability improves by 0.263 units, while supportive behavior contributes 0.130 units, processes 0.074 units, collegial behavior 0.064 units, motivational CQ 0.061 units, partnership/resources 0.051 units, and cognitive CQ 0.037 units.

Given these results, the null hypothesis stating that "There is no independent variable, singly or in combination, that best predicts school leaders' innovation capability" is rejected. The predictors collectively and significantly explain innovation capability, with participative and supportive behaviors exerting the most substantial influence.

These findings are consistent with contemporary research within the Philippine educational landscape. Aparicio (2025) identified that participative and supportive leadership behaviors are the strongest predictors of instructional innovation among Filipino school heads, specifically highlighting how resource management facilitates digital adaptation. Furthermore, recent data from the International Conference on Education, Psychology, and Humanities (ICEPH, 2025) confirms that supportive leadership behaviors directly predict teacher innovativeness, as school heads who prioritize emotional and professional support create the psychological safety necessary for teachers to implement creative pedagogical strategies.

Results were strengthened by the study of Syvertsen et al. (2024), which emphasized team encouragement as a driver of innovation self-efficacy, and Wuletu et al. (2025) validated participative leadership's direct effects on school innovation climate. Moreover, Macalalad et al. (2025) documented that school heads' innovativeness enhances leadership competence and productivity, while de Castro et al. (2025) confirmed that collaborative practices predict teachers' innovative work behaviors. Collectively, these studies reinforce the regression findings, establishing relational leadership—particularly participative and supportive behaviors—as the cornerstone of innovation capability in educational settings.

V. CONCLUSION

School leaders demonstrate superior cultural intelligence, particularly excelling in metacognitive strategic adaptation, emotional regulation, and motivational drive, though cognitive knowledge depth remains relatively weaker. This profile confirms comprehensive cultural competence, positioning leaders to champion inclusive innovation practices amid rising school multiculturalism. In terms of quality assurance, school leaders exhibit excellent quality assurance competence, led by superior stakeholder collaboration and resource stewardship in partnerships, complemented by strong processes, people empowerment, and participatory leadership. This balanced high performance establishes QA as a foundational enabler of systemic school improvement through trust-building and optimization. With regards to organizational behavior, leaders demonstrate transformative relational leadership through exceptional collegial team unity, supportive empathy, and participative transparency, balanced by moderate directive control. This

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adaptive hybrid profile proves optimal for hierarchical DepEd contexts, confirming collaborative behaviors as primary drivers of teacher empowerment and multicultural innovation. Lastly, on the level of innovation capability, school leaders possess consistently high innovation capability across all dimensions, demonstrating particular strength in supportive/empowering and change-oriented leadership while maintaining robust visionary/strategic and collaborative capacities. This comprehensive profile validates DepEd administrators' readiness to drive holistic school transformation, addressing diverse learner needs through integrated leadership practices. Organizational behavior demonstrates the strongest relationship with school leaders' innovation capability, confirming relational leadership—particularly participative and collegial behaviors—as the primary driver of teacher creativity and collective intelligence in DepEd contexts. This hierarchy validates strategic training priorities, establishing participative structures and professional learning communities to transform hierarchical systems into hybrid models, balancing directive tradition with collaborative innovation needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Based on the Conclusions Drawn from the Study, the Following Recommendations are Made:*

School leaders may implement mandatory Year 1 cultural intelligence training emphasizing metacognitive adaptation and motivational drive through immersive multicultural classroom simulations, positioning CQ as a foundational competency before innovation initiatives to enhance teacher adaptability in diverse Region 10 schools. School Leaders may develop integrated Quality Assurance policies repositioning partnership/resources and people empowerment as behavioral amplifiers rather than standalone systems, mandating process audits linked to participative leadership structures to optimize stakeholder trust and teacher development within DepEd Region 10 frameworks. Policy makers may mandate national DepEd policy requiring teacher innovation councils and professional learning communities in all public schools, prioritizing participative and collegial behaviors as primary innovation drivers while maintaining balanced directive accountability—transforming hierarchical systems into hybrid models through Sulong EduKalidad reforms. Stakeholders can stablish partnership offering certified relational leadership programs for DepEd administrators, integrating Model 5 pathways with LAC facilitation training to build participative-supportive competencies, creating regional hubs for evidence-based school transformation aligned with Northern Mindanao's multicultural contexts.

Educational institutions may foster a supportive and collaborative organizational culture, strengthen cultural intelligence through continuous training, and ensure effective quality assurance by aligning people, processes, and leadership. With strong visionary and empowering leadership and the use of theory-based and data-driven practices, schools can effectively sustain innovation and become high-performing, culturally responsive systems.

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