

Ethical Leadership, Accountability, and Transparency in School Governance in Banaybanay District, Division of Davao Oriental: Basis for Policy and Program Development

Salal Hash Baz O. Anong

Doctor of Education, Major in Educational Administration, Greenville College, Pasig City, Philippines

Email of Corresponding Author: salalhashbaz.anong001@deped.gov.ph

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Abstract

This study examined ethical leadership, accountability, and transparency in school governance among public elementary schools in Banaybanay District, Division of Davao Oriental, as a basis for governance improvement. Anchored on Ethical Leadership Theory, Accountability Theory, and Transparency Theory of Governance, the study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design. Data were gathered from 250 respondents, comprising 158 administrators and 92 teachers, using proportionate stratified random sampling and a structured, researcher-adapted questionnaire. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were conducted to assess governance practices, differences across respondent profiles, and relationships among variables. Findings indicated high levels of ethical leadership ($M = 3.50$), accountability ($M = 3.47$), and transparency ($M = 3.62$). Honesty, responsible resource stewardship, and reporting and feedback mechanisms emerged as notable strengths, while justice and policy and ethical compliance received moderate ratings. Transparency assessments differed significantly according to age, position, and length of service, whereas ethical leadership and accountability showed no significant differences across respondent profiles. All three governance dimensions were positively and significantly correlated, with accountability and transparency demonstrating the strongest relationship ($r = .904$, $p < .001$). The study recommended strengthening fairness, ethical compliance, financial disclosure, participatory decision-making, and stakeholder engagement through the proposed Leadership, Ethics, Accountability, and Disclosure for Strengthened School Governance (LEAD-SG) Program. The findings align with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on Quality Education, SDG 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, and SDG 17 on Partnerships for the Goals. The study may contribute to educational, institutional, governance, and community sustainability by informing district-specific policies, supporting responsible resource management, strengthening stakeholder trust, and promoting continuous school improvement.

Keywords: Accountability, Ethical Leadership, Governance Enhancement, Institutional Sustainability, Participatory Decision-Making, School Governance, Stakeholder Engagement, Sustainable Development Goals, Transparency

1. Introduction

Ethical leadership, accountability, and transparency are central to effective school governance. This study examines these interconnected dimensions among school heads and teachers in public elementary schools in Banaybanay District, Division of Davao Oriental, to establish a contextual basis for policy and program development. It synthesizes relevant governance literature, identifies the theoretical and conceptual foundations, and addresses the need for district-specific empirical evidence.

School leaders are expected to exercise ethical judgment, justify decisions, use resources responsibly, and provide stakeholders with accessible information. These practices strengthen confidence, participation, and continuous school improvement. Existing research associates principled governance with school effectiveness and teacher commitment: Brooks and Brooks (2024); Ayento (2025); Garcia and Ching (2024); Soria and Rubio (2025). In Banaybanay District, schools implement Department of Education initiatives on school-based management and shared governance, yet locally grounded evidence on the three dimensions considered together remains limited.

Ethical leadership encompasses respect for others, service to others, justice, honesty, and community building. Respect and fairness foster belonging and trust; service-oriented leadership supports teachers and learners; justice promotes equitable decisions; honesty reinforces credibility; and community building encourages shared responsibility. These mutually reinforcing practices are associated with organizational commitment, positive school climates, and stakeholder collaboration. The literature supporting these themes includes Brown et al. (2005); Capuyan and Tabile (2024); Dul et al. (2024); Sacriz and Tagadiad (2024); Clores and Espiritu (2025); Almazan (2024); Berges-Puyó (2022); Papadakis (2023); Zacarias and Flores (2024); Suriaga (2023); Masunag and Guhao (2024); Pasion (2023); Um (2024); Lemana et al. (2024); Sabello and Oted (2024); Badolato and Baguio (2024). Accountability concerns school leaders' answerability for decisions and outcomes, transparency in operations, policy and ethical compliance, performance monitoring and evaluation, and responsible stewardship of resources. Together these practices support lawful and fair implementation, evidence-informed improvement, financial responsibility, and stakeholder confidence. Studies address these dimensions through Nacionales (2024); Sabello and Oted (2024); Masunag and Guhao (2024); David and Albert (2024); Lemana et al. (2024); Lareza and Espiritu (2024); Fernandez (2025); Wui et al. (2024); Roxas (2024); Dijon (2024); Abing (2024); Brooks and Brooks (2024); Mori (2024); Saura and Genton (2024); Osano et al. (2025); Sanchez et al. (2024); Ibarra and Guhao (2024); Verzo (2024); Liwag and Lo (2025); Hernandez (2024); Gueta et al. (2024); De Guzman (2024). Transparency in school governance is expressed through open communication, information accessibility, financial resource disclosure, decision-making transparency, and reporting and feedback mechanisms. Accessible and timely information enables teachers, parents, and community partners to understand decisions, scrutinize resource use, communicate concerns, and participate in school improvement. Research on these mechanisms includes Magsino and Ramos (2024); Llorin et al. (2024); Dela Cruz and Abad (2025); Cuerdo and Villanueva (2024); Bautista and Mercado (2024); Lareza and Espiritu (2024); Fernandez (2025); Roxas (2024); Oroña-Cabagay et al. (2025); Gaspar et al. (2022); Castillo and Cay (2024); Hernandez (2024); Gonio et al. (2024); Quinal and Dupa (2024); Abing (2024); Quimpan and Bauyot (2024); Cagas (2025); Verzo (2024); Ibarra and Guhao (2024); Sayang (2024). Across the reviewed literature, ethical leadership provides the moral orientation for school decisions, accountability establishes obligations to explain and assess actions, and transparency makes processes and information open to stakeholders. Their combined consideration offers a fuller assessment of school governance than examining each practice in isolation (Bovens, 2007).

International scholarship emphasizes ethical conduct, organizational accountability, public value, and openness as foundations of credible governance. Philippine studies similarly associate these practices with teacher engagement, leadership effectiveness, and stakeholder trust. At the national level, the Department of Education promotes participatory governance and shared responsibility. In Banaybanay District, Davao Oriental, school heads collaborate with teachers, parents, local government units, and community partners, but findings from other regions may not adequately capture local governance conditions. Brooks and Brooks (2024); Ayento (2025); Garcia and Ching (2024); Soria and Rubio (2025).

The study is anchored on Ethical Leadership Theory, which explains how leaders model integrity, fairness, and concern for others; Accountability Theory, which emphasizes answerability and justification of actions; and Transparency Theory of Governance, which emphasizes openness, information access, and stakeholder scrutiny. The original chapter presents these foundations as Hood and Heald (2006) as cited by (OECD, 2024). Supporting literature includes (Bedi et al., 2016; Ko et al., 2024), and (United Nations, 2023). The Input–Process–Output framework considers respondents' age, sex, educational attainment, length of service, and position alongside their assessments of ethical leadership, accountability, and transparency. Ethical leadership is assessed through respect, service, justice, honesty, and humility; accountability through answerability, transparency, policy and ethical compliance, monitoring and evaluation, and resource stewardship; and transparency through communication, information access, financial disclosure, decision-making, and feedback. The planned quantitative descriptive-

correlational inquiry examines differences by respondent profile and relationships among governance variables to inform policy and program development.

Although existing research documents the benefits of ethical leadership, accountability, and transparency, the source chapter identifies limited published empirical evidence assessing their combined dimensions in Banaybanay District public elementary schools. Differences in organizational culture, leadership capacity, and community participation restrict the direct transferability of findings from other divisions. The study therefore seeks to establish the extent of the three governance dimensions, examine differences in assessments and their relationships, and provide evidence for locally responsive policy and program development.

The study aligns most directly with SDG 4 (Quality Education) by examining governance practices that support effective, inclusive, and continuously improving public elementary education. It also relates to SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) through ethical decision-making, answerability, transparent resource use, and accountable school administration. Its emphasis on school–family–community collaboration is consistent with SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). These are alignments of the study’s governance objectives, not claims of measured SDG outcomes.

The study contributes primarily to educational, institutional, governance, and community sustainability. Ethical leadership can sustain trust and equitable treatment; accountability can support responsible resource management and ongoing performance review; and transparency can maintain informed stakeholder participation. By informing district-specific policy and program development, the findings may help school leaders and education stakeholders sustain school improvement, professional collaboration, and credible public education governance. The source does not establish direct environmental or technological sustainability outcomes.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to assess the extent of ethical leadership, accountability, and transparency and examine their relationships with school governance. The quantitative approach enabled objective measurement and statistical analysis of the variables, consistent with Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2023). The descriptive component determined the extent of governance practices, while the correlational component examined relationships among variables without manipulation, as supported by (Kumar,2023). The findings were intended to guide the development of an evidence-based Governance Enhancement Framework for Banaybanay District.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in Banaybanay District, Schools Division of Davao Oriental, Department of Education (DepEd), Region XI, Mindanao. Banaybanay is a coastal municipality with an agriculture- and fisheries-based economy. Its public schools implement Department of Education policies and governance standards while addressing local educational needs. The district was selected because its diverse school administrative and instructional contexts provided an appropriate setting for examining ethical leadership, accountability, and transparency and generating locally relevant evidence for governance improvement.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents consisted of 250 teachers selected from a population of 670 teachers in identified public elementary schools in Banaybanay District. They provided assessments of ethical leadership, accountability, and transparency in school governance. Their demographic characteristics included age, sex, position, highest educational attainment, and length of service. Participation was voluntary and required informed consent, with confidentiality maintained throughout the research.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample size of 250 respondents was determined using Slovin’s formula with a 5% margin of error from the total population of 670 teachers. Proportionate stratified random sampling was employed, with participating schools serving as strata. The number of respondents assigned to each school was proportional to its teacher population, ensuring representation across schools. Teachers were randomly selected within each stratum, giving qualified teachers an equal opportunity for inclusion.

2.5 Research Instrument

The study utilized a structured, researcher-adapted survey questionnaire based on established instruments and governance frameworks. The Ethical Leadership Scale (ELS) developed by Brown, Treviño, and Harrison (2005) was adapted to assess ethical leadership, while accountability and transparency indicators were drawn from the principles of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2023) and the governance policies of the Department of Education (2024). The questionnaire comprised four parts. The first collected

demographic information on age, sex, position, highest educational attainment, and length of service. The second assessed ethical leadership through respect for others, service to others, justice, honesty, and community building. The third measured accountability through answerability, transparency, policy and ethical compliance, performance monitoring and evaluation, and responsible resource stewardship. The fourth assessed transparency through open communication, information accessibility, financial resource disclosure, transparent decision-making, and reporting and feedback mechanisms. A four-point Likert scale was used, with responses ranging from 4 (Strongly Agree, Very High), 3 (Agree, High), 2 (Disagree, Low), to 1 (Strongly Disagree, Very Low). The instrument underwent content validation by experts in educational management and research to establish clarity, relevance, and appropriateness. A pilot test involving participants outside the actual sample was conducted, and internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection followed a systematic process beginning with approval from the research adviser and appropriate institutional authorities. Formal permission was obtained from the Schools Division Superintendent of Davao Oriental, followed by coordination with the Public Schools District Supervisor and participating school heads. Following validation and pilot testing, the researcher personally administered the questionnaires to selected teachers during School Year 2025–2026. Respondents received an explanation of the study's objectives, instructions for completing the instrument, and assurances of voluntary participation and confidentiality. Adequate time was provided to complete the questionnaires without undue pressure. Completed questionnaires were retrieved according to the agreed schedule and checked for completeness and consistency. Missing or unclear responses were clarified when necessary. The collected information was subsequently organized, coded, securely stored, encoded, and verified for statistical analysis using appropriate statistical software.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequency and percentage distributions described respondents according to age, sex, position, highest educational attainment, and length of service. Mean and standard deviation determined the extent of ethical leadership, accountability, and transparency, including the average ratings and variability of responses. An independent samples t-test was used to examine significant differences in assessments based on dichotomous demographic variables, particularly sex. One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) determined significant differences across profile variables with three or more categories, including age, position, educational attainment, and length of service. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson's r) assessed the strength and direction of relationships among ethical leadership, accountability, and transparency. The methodology also specified Multiple Linear Regression Analysis to identify governance dimensions associated with institutional sustainability. The statistical findings were intended to support the development of a Strategic Enhancement Program for public schools in Banaybanay District.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study observed established research ethics to protect participants' rights, dignity, privacy, and welfare. Necessary institutional approvals were secured before data collection. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained after explaining the study's purpose, procedures, expected duration, potential benefits, minimal risks, and the right to withdraw without consequences. Respondents' anonymity and confidentiality were protected through coded questionnaires and the exclusion of personally identifiable information. Research data were stored in password-protected electronic files and secured physical storage accessible only to authorized individuals. Records were to be disposed of securely after the prescribed retention period. The researcher maintained honesty, integrity, objectivity, and accurate reporting throughout the study. As the researcher was also a school principal in Banaybanay District, additional precautions were taken to minimize potential bias or perceived influence. Participants were assured that their decisions would not affect their employment or professional standing. The study complied with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173) and applicable educational research ethics.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Professional Profile of Respondents

3.1.1 Age

Among 250 respondents, 86 (34.40%) were aged 45–54, 60 (24.00%) were 55–65, 53 (21.20%) were 24–34, and 51 (20.40%) were 35–44. The age distribution indicates a predominantly mature workforce and provides context for differences in professional experience. The original discussion relates these findings to Pantao (2024); Olvido et al. (2024).

3.1.2 Sex

Female respondents numbered 208 (83.20%), compared with 42 males (16.80%). The predominance of women reflects the composition of the respondent group and is relevant when interpreting subgroup assessments. The original discussion relates these findings to Pantao (2024); Olvido et al. (2024); Cagang et al. (2023).

3.1.3 Position

The sample comprised 158 administrators (63.20%) and 92 teachers (36.80%). Both administrative and teaching perspectives were represented, although administrators constituted the larger group. The original discussion relates these findings to Jones et al. (2024); Ma et al. (2024).

3.1.4 Educational Attainment

The respondents included 106 (42.40%) with master's units, 67 (26.80%) master's degree holders, 42 (16.80%) bachelor's degree holders, 25 (10.00%) with doctoral units, and 10 (4.00%) doctoral degree holders. Most respondents had undertaken graduate-level education, indicating substantial participation in continuing professional preparation. The original discussion relates these findings to López-Martín et al. (2023); Balanquit et al. (2023); (Kaspar et al., 2024).

3.1.5 Length of Service

The largest group had served 21–30 years (134; 53.60%), followed by 1–10 years (74; 29.60%), 11–20 years (36; 14.40%), and at least 31 years (6; 2.40%). The group was predominantly experienced, although length of service does not by itself establish teaching quality or eliminate the need for professional learning. The original discussion relates these findings to Gore et al. (2024); Christensen and Jerrim (2025); Compagnoni et al. (2024).

3.2 Extent of Ethical Leadership

3.2.1 Respect for Others

Respect for others was rated High ($M=3.52$, $SD=0.31$ in the numerical summary), with item means ranging from 3.50 to 3.53. Respectful treatment of stakeholders received the highest rating. The ratings suggest consistently perceived respectful interactions and inclusive treatment. The original discussion relates these findings to Neves (2025); Msangya (2025).

3.2.2 Service to Others

Service to others was rated High ($M=3.55$, $SD=0.49$); prioritizing stakeholder welfare scored highest ($M=3.62$), while decisions supporting others' development scored lowest ($M=3.52$). Service-oriented leadership was generally evident through support, welfare considerations, and collaboration. The original discussion relates these findings to Yan et al. (2025); Condemina and Baguio (2025).

3.2.3 Justice and Fairness

Justice received a Moderate rating ($M=3.35$, $SD=0.49$). Fair application of school policies was highest ($M=3.40$), whereas impartial handling of concerns and conflicts was lowest ($M=3.26$). Justice was comparatively less evident, indicating scope to improve impartial conflict resolution and consistent equitable treatment. The original discussion relates these findings to Ortiz et al. (2025).

3.2.4 Honesty and Integrity

Honesty was rated High ($M=3.59$, $SD=0.40$). Accurate reporting scored highest ($M=3.62$), while accepting responsibility for decisions scored lowest ($M=3.55$). These findings identify honesty and reliable communication as prominent strengths of ethical leadership. The original discussion relates these findings to Bujang et al. (2025).

3.2.5 Community Building

Community building was rated High ($M=3.57$, $SD=0.38$). Positive relationships through communication and trust were highest ($M=3.66$), while promoting teamwork was lowest ($M=3.53$). The findings reflect generally favorable perceptions of collaboration, mutual trust, and stakeholder participation. The original discussion relates these findings to Abdullah et al. (2025).

3.2.6 Overall Ethical Leadership

Ethical leadership was rated High overall ($M=3.50$, $SD=0.30$ in the numerical summary). Honesty ranked highest ($M=3.59$), followed by community building (3.57), service (3.55), and respect (3.51); justice was Moderate (3.35). The overall pattern shows stronger perceived honesty and collaboration than fairness and impartiality. The original discussion relates these findings to (Alhaidan, 2025; Lamsis & Vakil, 2025).

3.3 Extent of Accountability

3.3.1 Answerability

Answerability was rated High ($M=3.52$, $SD=0.52$), with indicator means ranging from 3.44 to 3.57. Respondents generally perceived school personnel as answerable for decisions and responsibilities. The original discussion relates these findings to Biniaminov and Moshel (2025); Lamsis and Vakil (2025); Ayento (2026).

3.3.2 Transparency as an Accountability Practice

Transparency within accountability was rated High ($M=3.43$, $SD=0.50$), although some indicators received comparatively lower scores. The results indicate that openness supports accountability but may not be equally consistent across specific administrative practices. The original discussion relates these findings to Ayento (2025); Soria and Rubio (2025); Biniaminov and Moshel (2025).

3.3.3 Policy and Ethical Compliance

Policy and ethical compliance was Moderate ($M=3.36$, $SD=0.53$). Its highest indicator scored 3.47, while the remaining indicators were Moderate. This comparatively lower rating identifies policy adherence and consistent ethical compliance as areas for improvement. The original discussion relates these findings to Gordo (2025); Lamsis and Vadil (2025); Özdoğan and Sarier (2024).

3.3.4 Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

Performance monitoring and evaluation was rated High ($M=3.48$, $SD=0.55$); the highest item mean was 3.55. Respondents generally recognized monitoring and evaluation practices as components of school accountability. The original discussion relates these findings to Olino (2025); Patiam (2025); Patiga (2025); Precioso and Chua (2025).

3.3.5 Responsible Stewardship of Resources

Responsible resource stewardship was rated High ($M=3.55$, $SD=0.55$), with the highest indicator at 3.60. The favorable ratings indicate perceived attention to responsible use and management of school resources. The original discussion relates these findings to Anino et al. (2025); Arzani (2025); Gardner-McTaggart (2025).

3.3.6 Overall Accountability

Accountability was High overall ($M=3.47$, $SD=0.48$). Resource stewardship (3.55) ranked highest, followed by answerability (3.52), monitoring and evaluation (3.48), transparency (3.43), and policy and ethical compliance (3.36; Moderate). The findings suggest stronger resource-management and answerability practices than policy and ethical compliance. The original discussion relates these findings to Biniaminov and Moshel (2025); Gordo (2025); Ayento (2026).

3.4 Extent of Transparency in School Governance

3.4.1 Open Communication

Open communication was rated High ($M=3.60$, $SD=0.55$). Respondents generally perceived communication channels as open and supportive of information sharing. The original discussion relates these findings to Pido and Bullecer (2025); Bation (2025); Ayento (2026).

3.4.2 Information Accessibility

Information accessibility was High ($M=3.59$, $SD=0.52$), with item means from 3.52 to 3.63. School information was generally viewed as accessible, although individual accessibility practices differed slightly. The original discussion relates these findings to Pido and Bullecer (2025); Bation (2025); Ayento (2026).

3.4.3 Financial Resource Disclosure

Financial resource disclosure was rated High ($M=3.51$, $SD=0.54$). The rating indicates favorable perceptions of financial information disclosure while leaving room to strengthen consistency. The original discussion relates these findings to Espela et al. (2025); Ong (2025); Dela Cruz and Andales (2026); Espela et al. (2025); Ong (2025); Dela Cruz and Andales (2026).

3.4.4 Decision-Making Transparency

Decision-making transparency was rated High ($M=3.62$). Respondents generally viewed school decisions as communicated with openness and opportunities for understanding. The original discussion relates these findings to Fernandez and Naui (2026); Mirasol (2026); Fernandes (2026); Beard (2026); Abison (2025); Fernandez and Naui (2026); Mirasol (2026); Fernandes (2026).

3.4.5 Reporting and Feedback Mechanisms

Reporting and feedback mechanisms received a High rating ($M=3.77$, $SD=0.51$), the highest transparency dimension; item means reached 3.79. The findings highlight reporting and stakeholder feedback as especially visible transparency practices. The original discussion relates these findings to Soria and Rubio (2025); Fernandez (2025); Ayento (2026); Soria and Rubio (2025); Fernandez (2025); Ayento (2026).

3.4.6 Overall Transparency

Transparency in school governance was High overall ($M=3.62$, $SD=0.50$). Reporting and feedback (3.77) led the dimensions, followed by decision-making transparency (3.62), open communication (3.60), information accessibility (3.59), and financial resource disclosure (3.51). The results indicate broad positive perceptions of transparency, with financial disclosure relatively less highly rated than reporting and feedback. The original

discussion relates these findings to Patiam (2025); Gile and Despi (2025); Campbell and Sum (2026); Patiam (2025); Gile and Despi (2025); Campbell and Sum (2026).

3.5 Differences in Assessments by Respondent Profile

3.5.1 Age

Assessments did not differ significantly by age for ethical leadership ($F=0.764$, $p=.515$) or accountability ($F=1.378$, $p=.250$). Transparency differed significantly across age groups ($F=4.005$, $p=.008$). Age groups shared similar assessments of ethical leadership and accountability but differed in perceptions of governance openness. The original discussion relates these findings to Meriç and Öz (2025); Biniaminov and Moshel (2025); Ayento (2026); Meriç and Öz (2025); Biniaminov and Moshel (2025); Ayento (2026).

3.5.2 Sex

No significant differences by sex were reported for ethical leadership ($F=0.093$, $p=.896$), accountability ($F=0.181$, $p=.311$), or transparency ($F=0.000$, $p=.998$). Male and female respondents generally expressed comparable assessments of all three governance dimensions. The original discussion relates these findings to Ayento (2026); Condemina and Baguio (2025); Pido and Bullecer (2025); Ayento (2026); Condemina and Baguio (2025); Pido and Bullecer (2025).

3.5.3 Position

Ethical leadership ($F=2.499$, $p=.115$) and accountability ($F=0.829$, $p=.364$) did not differ significantly by position. Transparency did ($F=6.587$, $p=.011$). Teachers and administrators differed in perceived transparency, potentially reflecting their different school roles and access to governance processes. The original discussion relates these findings to Ayento (2026); Fernandez (2025); Gile and Despi (2025).

3.5.4 Educational Attainment

No significant differences were found by educational attainment for ethical leadership ($p=.914$), accountability ($p=.964$), or transparency ($p=.340$). Formal educational attainment did not distinguish perceptions of the measured governance practices. The original discussion relates these findings to Condemina and Baguio (2025); Pido and Bullecer (2025); Ayento (2026).

3.5.5 Length of Service

Ethical leadership ($F=0.738$, $p=.530$) and accountability ($F=0.987$, $p=.400$) did not differ significantly by service length. Transparency differed significantly ($F=3.396$, $p=.019$). Transparency assessments varied with professional tenure, whereas ethical leadership and accountability ratings remained broadly similar. The original discussion relates these findings to Ayento (2026); Fernandez (2025).

3.6 Relationships Among Ethical Leadership, Accountability, and Transparency

All three variable pairs were positively and significantly correlated: ethical leadership and accountability ($r=.318$, $p<.001$), accountability and transparency ($r=.904$, $p<.001$), and ethical leadership and transparency ($r=.276$, $p<.001$). Accountability and transparency had the strongest association. These results establish association rather than causation and emphasize the close connection between accountability and transparency in perceived school governance. The original discussion relates these findings to Gordo (2025); Ayento (2026); Abison (2025); Pido and Bullecer (2025).

3.7 Proposed Governance Development Program

The study proposed the LEAD-SG Program (Leadership, Ethics, Accountability, and Disclosure for Strengthened School Governance) for Banaybanay District. It outlines a two-day capacity-building activity involving school leaders and stakeholders, with sessions on ethical decision-making, accountability, transparent communication, participatory governance, financial stewardship, and feedback mechanisms. The proposed output is a school governance action plan that can be integrated into existing school improvement processes. The program responds to the relatively lower justice and compliance ratings and the observed differences in transparency assessments. It is framed around existing Department of Education school improvement planning, School Governance Councils, and professional standards for school heads; its budget is identified as proposed estimates subject to applicable rules.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concluded that ethical leadership, accountability, and transparency in school governance in Banaybanay District, Division of Davao Oriental, were generally rated high, with overall means of 3.50, 3.47, and 3.62, respectively. The 250 respondents were predominantly female, experienced school personnel, with administrators comprising the majority and many having pursued graduate-level education. Ethical leadership was strongest in honesty, community building, service, and respect, while justice received a moderate rating. Accountability was particularly evident in responsible resource stewardship, answerability, and performance monitoring, although

policy and ethical compliance required improvement. Transparency was highly evident in reporting, feedback, and decision-making, while financial resource disclosure received the lowest rating among its dimensions. Ethical leadership and accountability did not differ significantly across respondents' demographic and professional characteristics, whereas transparency differed significantly according to age, position, and length of service. Significant positive relationships were established among ethical leadership, accountability, and transparency, with the strongest association observed between accountability and transparency ($r=0.904$, $p<.001$). These findings indicate a positive foundation for school governance while emphasizing the need to strengthen fairness, ethical compliance, transparency, and stakeholder participation.

School administrators should strengthen fairness, justice, and equitable treatment through consistent decision-making, transparent policies, and regular stakeholder feedback while sustaining honesty, service, respect, and community-building practices. Policy and ethical compliance should be improved through clear policy communication, consistent implementation, regular monitoring, and periodic evaluation. Financial resource disclosure and information accessibility should be enhanced through timely reporting, proper documentation, open communication, and accessible feedback mechanisms. Administrators should promote inclusive and participatory decision-making and ensure equitable access to information across different demographic and professional groups. Continuous professional development, transparent reporting, responsible resource management, and stakeholder participation should be sustained to strengthen integrated governance practices. The district should develop and implement the proposed Leadership, Ethics, Accountability, and Disclosure for Strengthened School Governance (LEAD-SG) Program to reinforce ethical leadership, accountability, transparency, and overall school governance. Future studies should ensure more balanced representation of teachers and administrators and consider respondents' demographic and professional characteristics.

The study was limited to 250 respondents from Banaybanay District, Division of Davao Oriental, comprising 158 administrators (63.20%) and 92 teachers (36.80%). The respondents were predominantly female (83.20%), and the largest proportion had 21–30 years of service (53.60%), indicating an uneven distribution of participants according to sex, position, and professional experience. These characteristics may limit the representation of perspectives from other demographic and professional groups. Furthermore, the study focused specifically on ethical leadership, accountability, and transparency in school governance within Banaybanay District; therefore, the findings may not fully represent governance practices in other school districts or educational settings. The results also established significant relationships among the study variables but did not establish causal relationships. Consequently, the findings should be interpreted within the study's geographical scope, respondent composition, and examined variables. Future research may include a more balanced representation of teachers and administrators and respondents from diverse demographic and professional backgrounds to provide a broader understanding of school governance practices.

5. Compliance with ethical standards

The study adhered to established ethical principles to safeguard the rights, dignity, privacy, and welfare of all participants. Necessary approvals and permissions were secured from the appropriate educational authorities before data collection. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained after explaining the study's purpose, procedures, potential benefits, minimal risks, and participants' right to withdraw without consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained through coded questionnaires, secure data storage, and restricted access to research information. The researcher upheld honesty, integrity, objectivity, and transparency throughout the research process and implemented precautions to minimize potential bias or undue influence on participants. The study complied with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173) and applicable ethical guidelines governing educational research.

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