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Modeling The Influence of Emotional Intelligence and Health-Promoting Lifestyle on School Heads' Decision-Making Styles

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ABSTRACT

This study examined emotional intelligence, health-promoting lifestyle, and decision-making styles of basic education school heads in Agusan del Sur as basis for the proposed LEAD-WELL Program. Addressing the limited local evidence on how wellness practices and emotional competencies are linked with school leadership decisions, the study used a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design involving 205 school heads in the quantitative phase and 13 school heads in the qualitative phase. Standardized questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used, and data were analyzed through descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, moderation analysis, Structural Equation Modeling, mediation analysis, thematic analysis, and mixed-method integration. Findings showed high levels of emotional intelligence, health-promoting lifestyle, and decision-making styles. Emotional intelligence significantly predicted all decision-making styles, while health-promoting lifestyle significantly predicted rational, intuitive, avoidant, and spontaneous decision-making, but not dependent decision-making. Health-promoting lifestyle also significantly predicted emotional intelligence, which mediated its relationship with all decision-making styles. The model explained 50.9% to 77.9% of the variance in decision-making styles, with the highest explanatory power for dependent decision-making. Qualitative findings revealed that leadership decisions were shaped by emotional mastery, compassionate accountability, inclusive dialogue, reflective judgment, wellness practices, spiritual grounding, physical resilience, and support networks. The study is novel in integrating wellness, emotional intelligence, and decision-making in one mixed-method leadership model. The proposed LEAD-WELL Program offers practical support for strengthening emotionally balanced, wellness-oriented, collaborative, and sustainable school leadership.

INTRODUCTION

Effective decision-making remains a major concern in school leadership as school heads face complex institutional demands. In the United States, Johnson *et al.* (2023) noted that accountability, student diversity, school safety, and learners' socio-emotional needs complicate leadership decisions. Ahtiainen *et al.* (2023) found that Finnish school leaders face changing professional expectations and demands for collaborative governance, while Kenayathulla *et al.* (2024) reported that Malaysian school heads deal with technological change, stakeholder pressure, and continuing training needs. In the Philippines, school heads are expected to sustain emotional regulation, wellness, and sound judgment despite heavy workloads. Queiroz-Ribeiro *et al.* (2025) emphasized that emotional intelligence is closely linked to decision-making, particularly in how individuals process emotions and make judgments. Chao (2023) added that health-promoting lifestyle practices may strengthen cognitive readiness and emotional stability, while Agyapong *et al.* (2023) noted that stress and burnout can affect teachers' well-being and professional functioning. Although previous studies have examined emotional intelligence in relation to school leadership decision-making (Dumandan & Oca, 2025), other studies have

linked health-promoting lifestyle with well-being and leadership functioning (Yang *et al.*, 2025). However, limited research has tested both variables together as predictors of decision-making styles using Structural Equation Modeling, a method suited for analyzing complex relationships among variables (Hair *et al.*, 2022). This study examined how emotional intelligence and health-promoting lifestyle predict the decision-making styles of school heads through Structural Equation Modeling and whether profile variables moderate these relationships. Using a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, the study also explored school heads' perspectives on leadership demands, wellness constraints, and adaptive decision-making strategies, providing a basis for targeted interventions to strengthen emotional regulation, wellness practices, and decision-making competence in Agusan del Sur (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Effectiveness

Emotional intelligence supports school leadership by helping school heads manage emotions, communicate effectively, maintain resilience, and respond fairly to demanding school situations. Çayak and Eskiçi (2021) emphasized that emotional intelligence strengthens

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leadership-related skills, while Queiroz-Ribeiro *et al.* (2025) noted that emotional intelligence helps individuals process emotions and make sound judgments.

Emotional Intelligence and Decision-Making

Emotional intelligence is linked to decision-making because it helps school heads regulate stress, process emotions, and maintain clarity when evaluating options. Dumandan and Oday (2025) found that emotional intelligence is associated with school heads' decision-making, while Queiroz-Ribeiro *et al.* (2025) emphasized that emotional intelligence supports judgment, emotional control, and decision processes.

Wellness and Leadership Functioning

Health-promoting lifestyle strengthens leadership functioning by supporting school heads' physical energy, emotional balance, stress management, and resilience. Chao (2023) found that health-promoting lifestyle is linked with healthier behavioral and psychological functioning, while Yang *et al.* (2025) showed that health-promoting leadership is related to employee well-being and performance.

Gaps in Structural Equation Modeling Studies

Although emotional intelligence and health-promoting lifestyle have been studied separately in relation to leadership and well-being, limited studies have tested their combined predictive role in decision-making styles using Structural Equation Modeling. Hair *et al.* (2022) explained that Structural Equation Modeling is useful for testing complex relationships among variables, supporting the need for an integrated model involving emotional intelligence, wellness practices, decision-making styles, and profile-related moderators.

Gaps in Mixed-Method Leadership Research

Most studies on emotional intelligence, wellness, and decision-making rely mainly on quantitative approaches, which may not fully explain school heads' actual leadership realities. Creswell and Creswell (2023) emphasized that mixed-methods research allows quantitative results to be expanded and explained through qualitative findings, supporting the use of a sequential explanatory design in examining leadership demands, wellness constraints, and adaptive decision-making practices.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, a two-phase approach in which quantitative data collection and analysis are followed by qualitative inquiry to explain and deepen the quantitative findings (Toyon, 2021).

Research Participants

In the quantitative phase, 205 basic education school heads from the 13 municipalities of Agusan del Sur were

selected through stratified random sampling, with each municipality serving as a stratum and the sample size computed using the Raosoft calculator at a 5% margin of error and 95% confidence level (Bujang, 2021). In the qualitative phase, 13 school heads, one from each municipality, were purposively selected to provide in-depth insights relevant to the study's research questions (Tajik *et al.*, 2024).

Research Locale

This study was conducted in basic education schools across the 13 municipalities of Agusan del Sur. These schools represent varied geographic contexts, from urban municipalities to geographically isolated and disadvantaged rural barangays, reflecting diverse leadership environments and decision-making challenges.

Research Instruments

The study used three standardized instruments and a semi-structured interview guide. The General Decision-Making Styles Questionnaire measured rational, intuitive, dependent, avoidant, and spontaneous decision-making styles (Scott & Bruce, 1995; Olcum & Tirek, 2015). The Emotional Intelligence Scale assessed self-emotions appraisal, others-emotions appraisal, use of emotions, and regulation of emotions (Law & Wong, 2004), while the Health-Promoting Lifestyle Profile II measured health responsibility, physical activity, nutrition, spiritual growth, interpersonal relations, and stress management (Bermeo *et al.*, 2024). The interview guide explored school heads' accounts of how emotional intelligence and health-promoting lifestyle shape decision-making in school leadership.

Treatment of Data

Frequency Count and Percentage were used to summarize the school heads' demographic profile. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to determine the levels of emotional intelligence, health-promoting lifestyle, and decision-making practices among school heads. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to examine the relationships between emotional intelligence and decision-making, and between health-promoting lifestyle and decision-making. Structural Equation Modeling was used to generate and validate the model linking emotional intelligence and health-promoting lifestyle to decision-making outcomes, addressing Research Problem 5 (Abu-Bader & Jones, 2025). Thematic Analysis was used to identify themes explaining school heads' accounts of how emotional intelligence and health-promoting lifestyle shape their decision-making practices.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Distribution of Respondents Across Profile

Table 1 presents the profile of the basic education school heads in the Province of Agusan del Sur. It shows the distribution of respondents according to age, sex, length

of service, and type of school, providing an overview of their personal and professional characteristics.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents Across Profile

Profile Indicators	Frequency	Percent
Age		
25-40 years	57	28%
41-60 years	145	71%
Above 60 years	3	1%
Total	205	100%
Sex		
Female	95	46%
Male	110	54%
Total	205	100%
Length of Service		
3-5 years	58	28%
6-10 years	45	22%
11-15 years	41	20%
16-20 years	27	13%
21-25 years	17	8%
26-30 years	4	2%
31-40 years	13	6%
Total	205	100%
Type of School		
GIDA	21	10%
Rural	165	80%
Urban	19	9%
Total	205	100%
Educational Attainment		
Bachelor's Degree	16	7.81%
Masteral -Unit Earner/CAR	106	51.71%
Masteral -Graduated	49	23.90%
Doctoral-Unit Earner/CAR	22	10.73%
Doctoral-Graduated	12	5.85%
Total	205	100%

Age

Most school heads were 41–60 years old, comprising 145 respondents or 71 percent, followed by those aged 25–40 years old with 57 respondents or 28 percent, while only 3 respondents or 1 percent were above 60 years old. This shows that the respondents were generally in the middle to later stage of adulthood, which is supported by Claud and Dalisay (2024), who reported that most school heads in their study were also within the middle-age group.

Sex

Male school heads slightly outnumbered female school heads, with 110 respondents or 54 percent compared with 95 respondents or 46 percent. This suggests that the respondents were more represented by male school heads, although sex distribution among school heads may vary across contexts, as reflected in related school

leadership profile studies by Claud and Dalisay (2024) and Dellomas and Deri (2022).

Length of Service

Most school heads had served for 3–5 years, with 58 respondents or 28 percent, followed by those with 6–10 years of service at 45 respondents or 22 percent. This indicates that many respondents had shorter to moderate leadership experience, while Claud and Dalisay (2024) showed a contrasting pattern where many school heads had served for longer periods.

Type of School

Most respondents were assigned in rural schools, with 165 school heads or 80 percent, followed by 21 or 10 percent from geographically isolated and disadvantaged area schools and 19 or 9 percent from urban schools.

This shows that the respondents were largely from rural school contexts, supporting the relevance of school type as a profile variable in understanding school leadership conditions, as reflected in Alagos (2024) and Gardose and Gardose (2024).

Educational Attainment

Most school heads were master's unit earners or had completed the academic requirements for a master's degree, comprising 106 respondents or 51.71 percent, followed by 49 or 23.90 percent who had completed a

master's degree. This indicates that most respondents had graduate-level preparation, although doctoral completion was less common, which is supported by Dellomas and Deri (2022), Pana (2024), and Quimerista (2024).

Emotional Intelligence of School Heads

Table 2 presents the level of emotional intelligence of basic education school heads in the Province of Agusan del Sur across four indicators: self-emotions appraisal, others-emotions appraisal, use of emotions, and regulation of emotions.

Table 2: Emotional Intelligence of School Heads

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
Self-Emotions Appraisal	4.08	1.02	High
Others-Emotions Appraisal	4.06	1.02	High
Use of Emotions	4.07	0.99	High
Regulation of Emotions	4.03	1.01	High

Among the four indicators, self-emotions appraisal obtained the highest mean of 4.08, followed by use of emotions at 4.07, others-emotions appraisal at 4.06, and regulation of emotions at 4.03. Although regulation of emotions recorded the lowest mean, all indicators were still described as High, indicating that school heads generally had a high level of emotional intelligence. This finding aligns with Pretorius and Plaatjes (2023), who emphasized self-awareness as a key emotional intelligence skill for school principals, and Hsieh *et al.* (2024), who highlighted the role of principals' emotional intelligence in strengthening school functioning through trust and

positive teacher behavior. It also reflects the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads, which emphasizes strategic leadership, people development, professional growth, and supportive school environments.

Health Promoting Lifestyle of School Heads

Table 3 presents the health-promoting lifestyle level of basic education school heads in Agusan del Sur across six indicators: health responsibility, physical activity, nutrition, spiritual growth, interpersonal relationship, and stress management.

Table 3: Health Promoting Lifestyle of School Heads

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
Responsibility of Health	3.98	1.07	High
Physical Activity	3.97	1.05	High
Nutrition	4.01	1.01	High
Spiritual Growth	4.09	0.99	High
Interpersonal Relationship	4.09	1.01	High
Stress Management	4.02	1.01	High

Among the indicators, spiritual growth and interpersonal relationship obtained the highest mean of 4.09, followed by stress management at 4.02, nutrition at 4.01, health responsibility at 3.98, and physical activity at 3.97. Although physical activity had the lowest mean, all indicators were still described as High, indicating that school heads generally practiced a high level of health-promoting lifestyle. This finding aligns with Wüthrich-Grossenbacher (2024), who emphasized the spiritual dimension of well-being; Beusaert *et al.* (2023), who highlighted the role of social capital in principals' well-being; and Elomaa *et al.* (2023), who reported that school

principals use coping strategies in managing work-related stress. It also reflects DepEd Order No. 028, s. 2018, which promotes health and well-being in the school community through Oplan Kalusugan sa Department of Education.

Decision-Making Styles of School Heads

Table 4 presents the decision-making styles of basic education school heads in Agusan del Sur across five indicators: rational, intuitive, dependent, avoidant, and spontaneous.

Table 4: Decision-Making Style of School Heads

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
Rational	4.02	1.05	High
Intuitive	4.04	1.02	High

Dependent	4.08	1.01	High
Avoidance	4.00	1.08	High
Spontaneous	4.03	1.02	High

Among the five indicators, dependent decision-making obtained the highest mean of 4.08, followed by intuitive at 4.04, spontaneous at 4.03, rational at 4.02, and avoidant at 4.00. Although avoidant decision-making recorded the lowest mean, all indicators were still described as High, indicating that school heads generally manifested a high extent of decision-making styles, with stronger preference for consultation and guidance. This finding aligns with Babu (2024), who found that emotional intelligence is significantly linked to academic leaders' decision-making styles, particularly intuitive and rational decision-making. Bridwell-Mitchell and Yurkofsky (2023) also showed that

principals' problem-solving is shaped by professional networks and institutional logics, while DepEd Order No. 007, s. 2024 supports participatory and decentralized school-based decision-making. Thus, the high rating in dependent decision-making may reflect a consultative leadership culture rather than lack of independence.

Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Decision-Making Styles

Table 5 presents the relationship between emotional intelligence and decision-making style as moderated by age.

Table 5: Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Decision-Making Style as Moderated by Age

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Moderating Variable	Estimate	P-value	Remarks
Emotional Intelligence	Rational Decision-Making	Age	-0.603	0.004	Significant Moderator
	Intuitive Decision-Making		-0.612	0.009	Significant Moderator
	Dependent Decision-Making		-0.190	0.386	Not a Significant Moderator
	Avoidance Decision-Making		-0.180	0.445	Not a Significant Moderator
	Spontaneous Decision-Making		0.253	0.295	Not a Significant Moderator

Age significantly moderated the relationship between emotional intelligence and rational decision-making, estimate = -0.603, $p = 0.004$, and intuitive decision-making, estimate = -0.612, $p = 0.009$, suggesting that younger and older school heads may differ in how emotional intelligence relates to these styles. However, age did not significantly moderate the relationship between emotional intelligence and dependent, avoidant, and spontaneous decision-making, with p -values of 0.386, 0.445, and 0.295, respectively, indicating that these associations remain relatively similar regardless

of age. Mikels and Stuhlmacher (2020) emphasized that age-related changes in emotion, motivation, and decision-making may shape adult decision processes, supporting the significant results for rational and intuitive decision-making. In contrast, Lovitos (2025) found that demographic profiles were not significantly related to emotional intelligence in leadership and decision-making, supporting the non-significant results for dependent, avoidant, and spontaneous decision-making. Table 6 presents the relationship between emotional intelligence and decision-making style as moderated by sex.

Table 6: Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Decision-Making Style as Moderated by Sex

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Moderating Variable	Estimate	P-value	Remarks
Emotional Intelligence	Rational Decision-Making	Sex	-0.255	0.228	Not a Significant Moderator
	Intuitive Decision-Making		-0.230	0.322	Not a Significant Moderator
	Dependent Decision-Making		0.205	0.349	Not a Significant Moderator
	Avoidance Decision-Making		-0.028	0.905	Not a Significant Moderator
	Spontaneous Decision-Making		-0.109	0.648	Not a Significant Moderator

Sex did not significantly moderate the relationship between emotional intelligence and rational, intuitive, dependent, avoidant, and spontaneous decision-making, with p-values of 0.228, 0.322, 0.349, 0.905, and 0.648, respectively. This suggests that the association between emotional intelligence and decision-making styles remains relatively similar between male and female school heads. Lovitos (2025) similarly found that sex was not significantly related to perceptions of emotional intelligence in school

leadership and decision-making. Gómez-Leal *et al.* (2022) also emphasized that emotional intelligence supports school leaders' self-awareness, self-management, empathy, and leadership effectiveness, suggesting that emotional intelligence may support decision-making regardless of sex. Table 7 presents the relationship between emotional intelligence and decision-making style as moderated by length of service.

Table 7: Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Decision-Making Style as Moderated by Length of Service

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Moderating Variable	Estimate	P-value	Remarks
Emotional Intelligence	Rational Decision-Making	Length of Service	0.018	0.734	Not a Significant Moderator
	Intuitive Decision-Making		-0.021	0.713	Not a Significant Moderator
	Dependent Decision-Making		0.051	0.350	Not a Significant Moderator
	Avoidance Decision-Making		0.039	0.505	Not a Significant Moderator
	Spontaneous Decision-Making		0.066	0.271	Not a Significant Moderator

Length of service did not significantly moderate the relationship between emotional intelligence and rational, intuitive, dependent, avoidant, and spontaneous decision-making, with p-values of 0.734, 0.713, 0.350, 0.505, and 0.271, respectively. This suggests that the association between emotional intelligence and decision-making styles remains relatively similar among school heads with shorter and longer service. Lovitos (2025) similarly found that professional characteristics were not significantly

related to emotional intelligence in school leadership and decision-making. Queiroz-Ribeiro *et al.* (2025) also emphasized that emotional intelligence is connected with emotional understanding, regulation, and decision-making, suggesting that decision-making may depend more on emotional competencies than length of service alone. Table 8 presents the relationship between emotional intelligence and decision-making style as moderated by type of school.

Table 8: Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Decision-Making Style as Moderated by Type of School

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Moderating Variable	Estimate	P-value	Remarks
Emotional Intelligence	Rational Decision-Making	Type of School	-0.494	0.006	Significant Moderator
	Intuitive Decision-Making		0.121	0.548	Not a Significant Moderator
	Dependent Decision-Making		-0.266	0.160	Not a Significant Moderator
	Avoidance Decision-Making		-0.355	0.082	Not a Significant Moderator
	Spontaneous Decision-Making		-0.089	0.666	Not a Significant Moderator

Type of school significantly moderated the relationship between emotional intelligence and rational decision-making, estimate = -0.494, $p = 0.006$, suggesting that school heads from different school types may differ in how emotional intelligence relates to systematic and logical decision-making. However, type of school did not

significantly moderate the relationship between emotional intelligence and intuitive, dependent, avoidant, and spontaneous decision-making, with p-values of 0.548, 0.160, 0.082, and 0.666, respectively, indicating that these associations remain relatively similar across school types. Shah *et al.* (2021) found a significant relationship between

emotional intelligence and decision-making among school principals, supporting the significant result for rational decision-making. Chen *et al.* (2021) also emphasized that school leaders' emotional capabilities operate within demanding policy and organizational contexts, suggesting

that school context may shape some leadership decisions but not uniformly across all decision-making styles. Table 9 presents the relationship between emotional intelligence and decision-making style as moderated by educational attainment.

Table 9: Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Decision-Making Style as Moderated by Educational Attainment

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Moderating Variable	Estimate	P-value	Remarks
Emotional Intelligence	Rational Decision-Making	Educational Attainment	-0.069	0.778	Not a Significant Moderator
	Intuitive Decision-Making		-0.703	0.008	Significant Moderator
	Dependent Decision-Making		0.144	0.570	Not a Significant Moderator
	Avoidance Decision-Making		-0.101	0.711	Not a Significant Moderator
	Spontaneous Decision-Making		-0.215	0.343	Not a Significant Moderator

Educational attainment significantly moderated the relationship between emotional intelligence and intuitive decision-making, estimate = -0.703, $p = 0.008$, suggesting that school heads with different educational attainment levels may differ in how emotional intelligence relates to intuition-based decision-making. However, educational attainment did not significantly moderate the relationship between emotional intelligence and rational, dependent, avoidant, and spontaneous decision-making, with p -values of 0.778, 0.570, 0.711, and 0.343, respectively, indicating that these associations remain relatively

similar across educational attainment levels. Wang (2021) emphasized that educational leaders' decisions are shaped by the interaction of emotion and cognition, supporting the significant result for intuitive decision-making. Patti and Stern (2023) also highlighted emotional intelligence as a leadership skill developed through social-emotional competencies and leadership practice, supporting the non-significant results for rational, dependent, avoidant, and spontaneous decision-making. Table 10 presents the relationship between health promoting lifestyle and decision-making style as moderated by age.

Table 10: Relationship Between Health Promoting Lifestyle and Decision-Making Style as Moderated by Age

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Moderating Variable	Estimate	P-value	Remarks
Health Promoting Lifestyle	Rational Decision-Making	Age	-0.295	0.328	Not a Significant Moderator
	Intuitive Decision-Making		-0.472	0.148	Not a Significant Moderator
	Dependent Decision-Making		-0.196	0.537	Not a Significant Moderator
	Avoidance Decision-Making		-0.377	0.272	Not a Significant Moderator
	Spontaneous Decision-Making		-0.751	0.028	Significant Moderator

Age significantly moderated the relationship between health-promoting lifestyle and spontaneous decision-making, estimate = -0.751, $p = 0.028$, suggesting that younger and older school heads may differ in how health-promoting lifestyle relates to quick decision-making. However, age did not significantly moderate the relationship between health-promoting lifestyle and rational, intuitive, dependent, and avoidant decision-making, with p -values of 0.328, 0.148, 0.537, and 0.272,

respectively, indicating that these associations remain relatively similar across age groups. Behr *et al.* (2022) emphasized that health-promoting lifestyle behaviors are associated with well-being, mental health, and quality of life, supporting the significant result for spontaneous decision-making. Chao (2023) also found that health-promoting lifestyle is associated with several health-related indicators, suggesting that age may not always meaningfully change how wellness practices relate to other

decision-making styles. Table 11 presents the relationship between health promoting lifestyle and decision-making style as moderated by sex.

Table 11: Relationship Between Health Promoting Lifestyle and Decision-Making Style as Moderated by Sex

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Moderating Variable	Estimate	P-value	Remarks
Health Promoting Lifestyle	Rational Decision-Making	Sex	-0.589	0.046	Significant Moderator
	Intuitive Decision-Making		-0.125	0.707	Not a Significant Moderator
	Dependent Decision-Making		-0.695	0.029	Significant Moderator
	Avoidance Decision-Making		-0.462	0.183	Not a Significant Moderator
	Spontaneous Decision-Making		-0.461	0.188	Not a Significant Moderator

Sex significantly moderated the relationship between health-promoting lifestyle and rational decision-making, estimate = -0.589, $p = 0.046$, and dependent decision-making, estimate = -0.695, $p = 0.029$, suggesting that male and female school heads may differ in how wellness practices relate to logical evaluation and consultation-based decisions. However, sex did not significantly moderate the relationship between health-promoting lifestyle and intuitive, avoidant, and spontaneous decision-making, with p -values of 0.707, 0.183, and 0.188, respectively, indicating that these associations

remain relatively similar regardless of sex. The European Institute for Gender Equality (2021) emphasized that health and risk behaviors are gendered, supporting the significant moderation results for rational and dependent decision-making. Chao (2023) also found that health-promoting lifestyle is shaped by several health-related and personal indicators, suggesting that sex may not uniformly change the relationship between wellness practices and all decision-making styles. Table 12 presents the relationship between health promoting lifestyle and decision-making style as moderated by length of service.

Table 12: Relationship Between Health Promoting Lifestyle and Decision-Making Style as Moderated by Length of Service

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Moderating Variable	Estimate	P-value	Remarks
Health Promoting Lifestyle	Rational Decision-Making	Length of Service	0.084	0.279	Not a Significant Moderator
	Intuitive Decision-Making		-0.016	0.846	Not a Significant Moderator
	Dependent Decision-Making		0.158	0.046	Significant Moderator
	Avoidance Decision-Making		0.059	0.495	Not a Significant Moderator
	Spontaneous Decision-Making		-0.089	0.310	Not a Significant Moderator

Length of service significantly moderated the relationship between health-promoting lifestyle and dependent decision-making, estimate = 0.158, $p = 0.046$, suggesting that school heads with shorter and longer service may differ in how wellness practices relate to consultation-based decisions. However, length of service did not significantly moderate the relationship between health-promoting lifestyle and rational, intuitive, avoidant, and spontaneous decision-making, with p -values of 0.279, 0.846, 0.495, and 0.310, respectively, indicating that these associations remain relatively similar regardless of service length. Zeng *et al.* (2021) found that working

years were significantly related to health-promoting lifestyle behaviors, supporting the significant moderation result for dependent decision-making. Wray *et al.* (2024) also emphasized that health-promoting behaviors are connected with decision-making and well-being, suggesting that wellness practices may relate to decision-making processes even when service length does not significantly moderate all decision-making styles. Table 13 presents the relationship between health promoting lifestyle and decision-making style as moderated by type of school.

Table 13: Relationship Between Health Promoting Lifestyle and Decision-Making Style as Moderated by Type of School

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Moderating Variable	Estimate	P-value	Remarks
Health Promoting Lifestyle	Rational Decision-Making	Type of School	-0.463	0.064	Not a Significant Moderator
	Intuitive Decision-Making		-0.129	0.639	Not a Significant Moderator
	Dependent Decision-Making		-0.413	0.110	Not a Significant Moderator
	Avoidance Decision-Making		-0.400	0.154	Not a Significant Moderator
	Spontaneous Decision-Making		-0.584	0.038	Significant Moderator

Type of school significantly moderated the relationship between health-promoting lifestyle and spontaneous decision-making, estimate = -0.584, $p = 0.038$, suggesting that school heads from different school types may differ in how wellness practices relate to quick decision-making. However, type of school did not significantly moderate the relationship between health-promoting lifestyle and rational, intuitive, dependent, and avoidant decision-making, with p -values of 0.064, 0.639, 0.110, and 0.154, respectively, indicating that these associations remain relatively similar across school types. Bartelink

et al. (2022) emphasized that health-promoting school implementation varies because schools are dynamic organizations with unique contexts, supporting the significant moderation result for spontaneous decision-making. WHO and UNESCO (2021) also highlighted that health-promoting schools involve whole-school and community-based practices, suggesting that wellness-related practices may remain relevant across different school settings. Table 14 presents the relationship between health promoting lifestyle and decision-making style as moderated by educational attainment.

Table 14: Relationship Between Health Promoting Lifestyle and Decision-Making Style as Moderated by Educational Attainment

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Moderating Variable	Estimate	P-value	Remarks
Health Promoting Lifestyle	Rational Decision-Making	Educational Attainment	-0.202	0.610	Not a Significant Moderator
	Intuitive Decision-Making		0.519	0.214	Not a Significant Moderator
	Dependent Decision-Making		-0.538	0.187	Not a Significant Moderator
	Avoidance Decision-Making		-0.007	0.987	Not a Significant Moderator
	Spontaneous Decision-Making		0.092	0.837	Not a Significant Moderator

Educational attainment did not significantly moderate the relationship between health-promoting lifestyle and rational, intuitive, dependent, avoidant, and spontaneous decision-making, with p -values of 0.610, 0.214, 0.187, 0.987, and 0.837, respectively. This suggests that the association between health-promoting lifestyle and decision-making styles remains relatively similar across educational attainment levels. Marasigan and Eborá (2021) found no significant difference in school heads' decision-making behaviors when grouped according to educational attainment, supporting the present non-significant result. However, Montez and Cheng (2022)

reported that educational attainment is positively associated with adult health, with health behaviors serving as one of the mechanisms linking education and health, suggesting that education may still be connected with health-related patterns.

Influence of Emotional Intelligence and Health-Promoting Lifestyle on the Decision-Making Styles of School Heads

Table 15 shows the influence of emotional intelligence and health-promoting lifestyle on the decision-making styles of school heads.

Table 15: Influence of Emotional Intelligence and Health-Promoting Lifestyle on the Decision-Making Styles of School Heads

Path		Coefficient (β)	t Statistics	P-value	Remarks
Emotional Intelligence	Rational Decision-Making	0.444	4.503	0.000	Significant
Emotional Intelligence	Intuitive Decision-Making	0.471	4.713	0.000	Significant
Emotional Intelligence	Dependent Decision-Making	0.830	12.442	0.000	Significant
Emotional Intelligence	Avoidance Decision-Making	0.331	2.849	0.004	Significant
Emotional Intelligence	Spontaneous Decision-Making	0.558	5.743	0.000	Significant
Health-Promoting Lifestyle	Rational Decision-Making	0.452	4.515	0.000	Significant
Health-Promoting Lifestyle	Intuitive Decision-Making	0.338	3.248	0.001	Significant
Health-Promoting Lifestyle	Dependent Decision-Making	0.084	1.119	0.263	Not Significant
Health-Promoting Lifestyle	Avoidance Decision-Making	0.478	4.046	0.000	Significant
Health-Promoting Lifestyle	Spontaneous Decision-Making	0.223	2.155	0.031	Significant
Health-Promoting Lifestyle	Emotional Intelligence	0.596	8.185	0.000	Significant

Emotional intelligence significantly predicted all decision-making styles: rational, $\beta = 0.444$, $p = 0.000$; intuitive, $\beta = 0.471$, $p = 0.000$; dependent, $\beta = 0.830$, $p = 0.000$; avoidant, $\beta = 0.331$, $p = 0.004$; and spontaneous, $\beta = 0.558$, $p = 0.000$. This indicates that emotionally intelligent school heads are more likely to use systematic evaluation, intuition, consultation, cautious delay, and quick decision responses. Sambol *et al.* (2025) showed that emotional understanding contributes to decision-making in emotionally charged situations, while Wang (2021) emphasized that educational leaders' decisions are shaped by the interaction of emotion and cognition. Health-promoting lifestyle significantly predicted rational, $\beta = 0.452$, $p = 0.000$; intuitive, $\beta = 0.338$, $p = 0.001$; avoidant, $\beta = 0.478$, $p = 0.000$; and spontaneous decision-making, $\beta = 0.223$, $p = 0.031$, but not dependent decision-making, $\beta = 0.084$, $p = 0.263$. This suggests that wellness practices may support logical, intuitive, cautious, and quick decisions, while consultation-based decisions may depend more on leadership norms and school protocols.

Zeng *et al.* (2021) linked health-promoting lifestyle with work-related and personal factors, while Jia *et al.* (2023) and Chao (2023) showed that lifestyle practices are strongly related to cognitive and health-related outcomes. Health-promoting lifestyle also significantly predicted emotional intelligence, $\beta = 0.596$, $p = 0.000$, indicating that healthier routines, stress management, and positive relationships may strengthen emotional awareness and regulation among school heads. Licata *et al.* (2023) linked emotional intelligence with lifestyle behaviors, while Pellitteri (2021) emphasized the relevance of emotional intelligence in educational leadership.

Mediating Role of Emotional Intelligence to the Direct Effect of Health Promoting Lifestyle to the Decision-Making Styles

Table 16 shows the mediating role of emotional intelligence to the direct effect of health promoting lifestyle to the decision-making styles.

Table 16: Mediating Role of Emotional Intelligence to the Direct Effect of Health Promoting Lifestyle to the Decision-Making Styles

Path	Coefficient (β)	t statistics	P values	Remarks
Health Promoting Lifestyle Emotional Intelligence Avoidance Decision Making	0.197	2.603	0.009	Significant
Health Promoting Lifestyle Emotional Intelligence Dependent Decision Making	0.495	7.216	0.000	Significant

Health Promoting Lifestyle Emotional Intelligence Intuitive Decision Making	0.281	4.085	0.000	Significant
Health Promoting Lifestyle Emotional Intelligence Rational Decision Making	0.264	3.853	0.000	Significant
Health Promoting Lifestyle Emotional Intelligence Spontaneous Decision Making	0.333	4.708	0.000	Significant

Emotional intelligence significantly mediated the relationship between health-promoting lifestyle and all five decision-making styles: avoidant, $\beta = 0.197$, $p = 0.009$; dependent, $\beta = 0.495$, $p = 0.000$; intuitive, $\beta = 0.281$, $p = 0.000$; rational, $\beta = 0.264$, $p = 0.000$; and spontaneous, $\beta = 0.333$, $p = 0.000$. The strongest indirect effect was on dependent decision-making, suggesting that wellness-related behaviors may strengthen emotional awareness and regulation, which are then reflected in consultation, judgment, cautious delay, and quick decision responses. Sambol *et al.* (2025) found that emotional understanding contributes to decision-making in emotionally charged situations, while Wang (2021) emphasized that educational

leaders' decisions are shaped by the interaction of emotion and cognition. Licata *et al.* (2023) also linked emotional intelligence with lifestyle behaviors, and Pellitteri (2021) highlighted the role of emotional intelligence in educational leadership, supporting the mediating role of emotional intelligence between health-promoting lifestyle and decision-making styles. Figure 1 presents the influence of emotional intelligence and health-promoting lifestyle on the decision-making styles of school heads. It also shows the mediating role of emotional intelligence in the relationship between health-promoting lifestyle and decision-making styles.

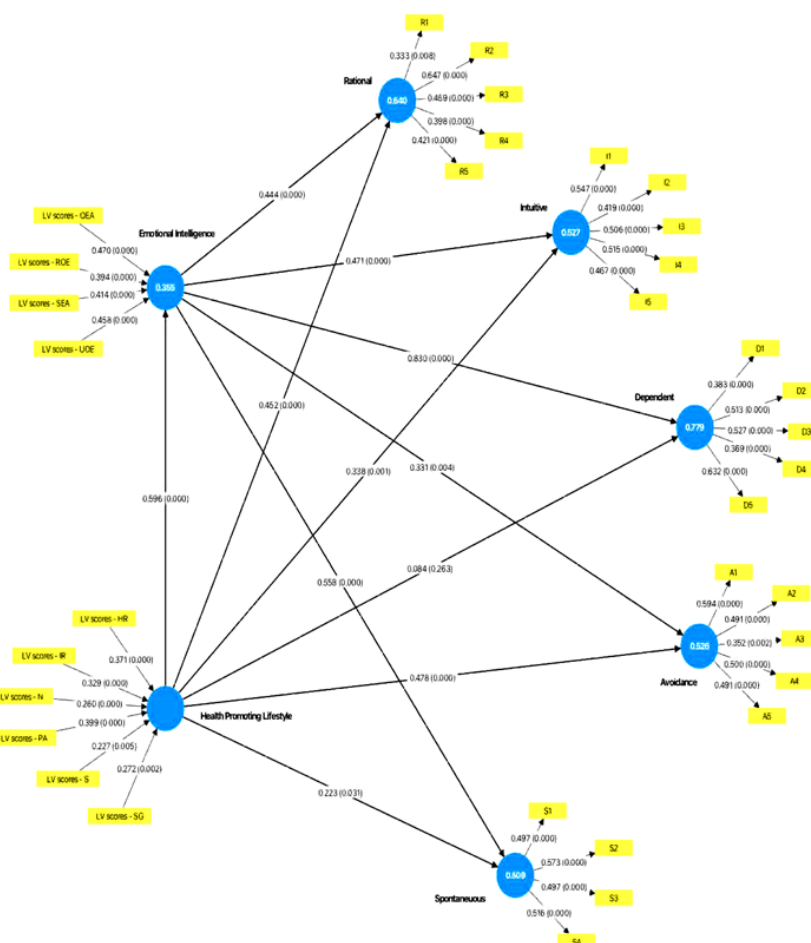


Figure 1: Structural Model on the Influence of Emotional Intelligence and Health-Promoting Lifestyle on the Decision-Making Styles of School Heads

The structural model showed moderate to high explanatory power for the decision-making styles of school heads. Dependent decision-making obtained the highest value, $R^2 = 0.779$, indicating high explanatory power, while rational, $R^2 = 0.640$; intuitive, $R^2 = 0.527$; avoidant, $R^2 = 0.526$; and spontaneous decision-making, $R^2 = 0.509$, showed moderate explanatory power. These results suggest that emotional intelligence and health-promoting lifestyle adequately explain school heads' consultation-based, logical, intuitive, cautious, and quick decision responses. Hair *et al.* (2022) emphasized that R^2 values indicate the model's explanatory power for endogenous constructs, supporting the interpretation that the model meaningfully explains school heads'

decision-making styles. Shmueli *et al.* (2019) further noted that model evaluation in Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling includes assessing explanatory power, which supports the use of R^2 in determining how well the model accounts for decision-making outcomes.

Lived Experiences and Perceptions of School Heads on How their Emotional Intelligence and Health Promoting Lifestyle Influence their Decision-Making Practices

Table 17 presents the themes and sub-themes that describe the lived experiences and perceptions of school heads on how their emotional intelligence and health-promoting lifestyle shape their decision-making practices.

Table 17: Themes and Sub-Themes on the Lived Experiences and Perceptions of School Heads on How their Emotional Intelligence and Health-Promoting Lifestyle Shape their Decision-Making Practices

Themes	Sub-Themes	Core Ideas
Emotional Mastery in Demanding Leadership Situations	Pausing before reacting	emotional pause and self-control
	Composed response under pressure	calm and empathetic response
	Regulating before major decisions	emotional regulation before deciding
Compassionate Accountability in School Governance	Balancing care with duty	compassion with responsibility
	Sympathy without losing authority	empathetic but firm leadership
	Makatao and considerate decisions	humane and considerate judgment
Inclusive Dialogue for Shared Ownership	Democratic decision-making	shared and participatory decision-making
	Consultation before implementation	listening before action
	Voice and trust-building	dialogue and stakeholder trust
Reflective Judgment Against Bias and Impulsivity	Separating feelings from facts	fact-based emotional awareness
	Checking emotional judgment	self-checking before deciding
	Avoiding rushed decisions	avoiding impulsive choices
Restorative Wellness for Clear-Headed Decisions	Restoring focus after exhaustion	rest and renewed clarity
	Rest and stress control	stress management for clear thinking
	Well-rested judgment	calm and focused decision-making
Spiritual Grounding for Value-Based Leadership	Prayer for wisdom and clarity	faith-guided decision-making
	Reflection for direction	reflective clarity and guidance
	Values, integrity, and purpose	purpose-driven leadership
Embodied Resilience Through Physical Care	Physical readiness for leadership	physical wellness and alertness
	Energy and concentration	nutrition and physical energy
	Wellness as leadership stamina	stamina for multiple responsibilities
Support Networks as Decision-Making Safeguards	Wider perspective from mentors	mentor-guided perspective
	Family and social support	support during complex decisions
	Encouragement from the school community	community encouragement and guidance

Emotional Mastery in Demanding Leadership Situations

This theme shows that school heads regulate emotions before responding to stressful leadership concerns. Participants expressed this through “pause, breathe in and out, and calm my emotions” (P12, L41–48), “I stayed calm” (P11, L9–13), and “pause, reflect, and regulate my emotions” (P13, L29–35). Wang (2021) emphasized that

emotions shape educational leaders' decision-making, while Floman *et al.* (2024) showed that school leader emotion regulation supports educator well-being.

Compassionate Accountability in School Governance

This theme indicates that school heads balance empathy with responsibility when addressing teacher, learner, and

school concerns. Participants described this through “Balancing compassion with responsibility” (P12, L8–13), “sympathy rather than authority” (P04, L10–14), and “makatao and considerate” decisions (P08, L18–24). Gómez-Leal *et al.* (2022) identified empathy and self-management as key leadership competencies, while Floman *et al.* (2024) stressed the value of emotionally supportive school leadership.

Inclusive Dialogue for Shared Ownership

This theme shows that school heads use consultation and dialogue to build trust and shared responsibility. Participants noted “parliamentary-style discussion” (P11, L22–26), “empathy and consultation” (P13, L10–15), and allowing parents to “feel included” (P11, L13–17). Or and Berkovich (2023) emphasized participative decision-making in schools, while Gómez-Leal *et al.* (2022) linked emotional intelligence with effective school leadership.

Reflective Judgment Against Bias and Impulsivity:

This theme suggests that school heads use self-awareness to separate emotions from facts and avoid rushed decisions. Participants stated that they can “separate feelings from facts” (P10, L18–24), avoid deciding when emotions are high (P08, L18–20), and “pause and regulate” before major choices (P04, L32–36). Wang (2021) explained that emotions interact with cognition in educational decision-making, while Gómez-Leal *et al.* (2022) emphasized self-awareness and self-management in school leadership.

Restorative Wellness for Clear-Headed Decisions:

This theme shows that rest, recovery, and stress management help school heads regain focus and make balanced decisions. Participants described gaining “renewed focus, patience, and sound judgment” (P12, L82–91), staying “focused and mentally clear” (P04, L47–51), and thinking more clearly when well-rested (P10, L56–60). DeMatthews *et al.* (2021) noted that principal stress and burnout can affect leadership functioning, while Upadaya *et al.* (2021) linked principals’ stress profiles with workload and recovery-related demands.

Spiritual Grounding for Value-Based Leadership

This theme indicates that prayer, reflection, and spiritual growth guide school heads towards value-based decisions. Participants shared that they pray for “guidance, wisdom, and clarity” (P12, L106–110), find “clarity and direction” through prayer and reflection (P04, L60–63), and strengthen “values, integrity, and sense of purpose” (P13, L64–70). Doyle Fosco (2022) identified purpose, relationships, health, and spirituality as relevant to educational leader well-being, while Upadaya *et al.* (2021) emphasized the role of personal and contextual resources in managing leadership stress.

Embodied Resilience Through Physical Care

This theme shows that physical activity, nutrition, and rest support leadership stamina, focus, and emotional balance. Participants linked wellness with being “mentally alert and emotionally balanced” (P13, L51–56), improved “energy and concentration” (P13, L64–68), and stamina for multiple responsibilities (P11, L67–73). White *et al.* (2024) found that physical activity is linked with mental health and well-being, while Doyle Fosco (2022) identified positive health as part of educational leader well-being.

Support Networks as Decision-Making Safeguards

This theme shows that mentors, family, colleagues, and the school community help school heads gain perspective and avoid isolated judgment. Participants referred to support from “trusted colleagues or mentors” (P10, L77–82), “family and social support” (P12, L106–108), and encouragement from the “school community” (P13, L68–72). Doyle Fosco (2022) emphasized positive relationships as part of leader well-being, while DeMatthews *et al.* (2021) highlighted the need for systemic support to address principal stress and burnout.

Mixed-Method Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Table 18 presents the joint display for mixed-method integration, illustrating how the quantitative findings are linked with the qualitative themes to generate integrated inferences.

Table 18: Joint Display of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings and Integrated Inferences

Quantitative Findings	Qualitative Findings	Integrated Inference
Emotional intelligence significantly predicted rational decision-making.	School heads paused, regulated emotions, separated feelings from facts, and avoided impulsive responses.	Emotional intelligence supports deliberate, balanced, and evidence-informed decisions.
Emotional intelligence significantly predicted intuitive decision-making.	School heads used emotional awareness, empathy, experience, and contextual judgment in complex situations.	Intuitive decisions are shaped by emotional awareness and leadership judgment, not instinct alone.
Emotional intelligence strongly predicted dependent decision-making.	School heads consulted teachers, parents, mentors, colleagues, and stakeholders before deciding.	Emotionally intelligent school heads value consultation, shared ownership, and relational trust.

Emotional intelligence significantly predicted avoidant decision-making.	School heads used calmness and emotional control before addressing difficult situations.	Avoidant decision-making reflected cautious and composed decision readiness rather than decision evasion.
Emotional intelligence significantly predicted spontaneous decision-making.	School heads made quick but composed decisions during urgent school situations.	Emotional intelligence supports prompt decisions without being overly reactive.
Health-promoting lifestyle significantly predicted rational, intuitive, avoidant, and spontaneous decision-making.	Rest, stress management, prayer, reflection, physical activity, and nutrition helped school heads regain clarity and focus.	Wellness practices sustain cognitive readiness, emotional stability, and decision-making capacity.
Health-promoting lifestyle did not significantly predict dependent decision-making.	Consultation was linked more to support networks, shared governance, and stakeholder participation.	Consultation-based decisions may depend more on leadership culture and school governance than wellness practices alone.
Health-promoting lifestyle significantly predicted emotional intelligence.	Wellness practices helped school heads remain calm, reflective, emotionally balanced, and mentally clear.	Health-promoting lifestyle strengthens emotional awareness, regulation, and resilience.
Emotional intelligence significantly mediated the relationship between health-promoting lifestyle and all decision-making styles.	Wellness practices helped school heads become calmer and more emotionally grounded before deciding.	Emotional intelligence explains how wellness practices are translated into decision-making behavior.

CONCLUSIONS

Leadership practice in the province is shaped by the combined realities of rural education, advanced academic preparation, and an evolving leadership journey, where school heads are expected to make decisions within contexts that may require adaptability, resourcefulness, and continuous professional growth. School heads are generally able to recognize and understand their own emotions, respond sensitively to the emotions of others, use emotional awareness constructively, and regulate their emotions in various leadership situations. They also engage in wellness-related behaviors that support their physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being. In decision-making, they use varied approaches but give particular importance to consultation, guidance, and the perspectives of others when addressing school-related concerns. Emotional intelligence does not relate to decision-making in a uniform way, as its role becomes more meaningful when viewed alongside the school heads' age, school context, and educational background. Rational and intuitive decision-making are shaped not only by emotional competencies, but also by the personal maturity, institutional setting, and academic preparation of school leaders. A health-promoting lifestyle does not connect with decision-making in the same manner across all school heads, as its meaning appears to vary according to age, sex, length of service, and type of school. Wellness-related behaviors are linked to decision-making through the personal conditions, professional exposure, and school environment within which school heads perform their leadership roles. Emotional intelligence appears to be a central factor in how school

heads approach different decision-making situations, while health-promoting lifestyle becomes meaningful partly through its connection with emotional functioning. Wellness contribute to decision-making not only through physical or personal well-being, but also through the emotional awareness, balance, and self-regulation that support leadership judgment. Decision-making among school heads is not purely administrative, procedural, or technical in nature. Rather, it is a holistic leadership process shaped by emotional control, compassion, reflection, personal wellness, spiritual grounding, physical resilience, and the presence of supportive relationships.

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