



# SCHOOL HEADS' EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EI), ADVERSARIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI), AND COMPETENCE

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## ABSTRACT

This study explored the relationship between School Heads' Emotional Intelligence (EI), Adversarial Intelligence (AI), and their competence in leadership, assessing the levels of EI and AI among school heads and examining their influence on various leadership competencies, including responsiveness, flexibility, coaching and mentoring, administrative skills, curriculum planning, collaboration, and professional development. Using triangulation design grounded in a pragmatic theoretical framework, the study integrated qualitative and quantitative approaches, collecting data concurrently and analyzing them independently to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between EI, AI, and leadership competence. The study focused on secondary school heads within the Schools Division Office (SDO) of Laguna, employing both random and purposive sampling to ensure a representative sample of 132 respondents. Quantitative analysis revealed that both EI and AI were significantly correlated with leadership competence, with school heads possessing high EI demonstrating greater effectiveness in fostering positive relationships, managing emotions, and promoting a supportive school environment, while those with strong AI exhibited superior strategic decision-making, risk assessment, and problem-solving skills, enabling them to navigate educational challenges effectively. The qualitative findings reinforced the statistical results, highlighting key themes such as EI as a leadership asset, AI as a strategic competency, the synergy of EI and AI in enhancing competence, and strategies for developing these intelligences among school heads. Participants emphasized EI's role in emotional regulation, empathy, and fostering professional relationships, while AI was linked to strategic decision-making, crisis management, and conflict resolution, with many school heads reporting that balancing both intelligences allowed them to navigate challenges effectively, ensuring institutional stability and a supportive educational environment. The study rejected the null hypotheses, confirming a significant relationship between both EI and AI with school heads' competence, underscoring the need for professional development programs that enhance these intelligences to improve school management and educational outcomes. To address the study's findings and support leadership development, the researcher developed a Proposed Developmental Plan for Enhancing School Heads' Competence Through Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Adversarial Intelligence (AI) in the Schools Division Office of Laguna, providing structured guidance for strengthening EI and AI competencies among school heads through targeted training, mentoring programs, and continuous performance evaluation, with the ultimate goal of fostering an adaptive and high-performing educational environment.

## INTRODUCTION

Effective school leadership is vital for fostering high-quality teaching, learning, and student development (Leithwood et al., 2018). School heads were not only administrators but also pivotal figures in shaping the culture, performance, and overall effectiveness of their schools. Their leadership had a direct impact on fostering an environment that promoted both teacher competence and student success. As educational leadership faced growing challenges, the importance of Emotional Intelligence (EI), Adversarial Intelligence (AI), and leadership competence became evident, influencing the school head's ability to navigate obstacles, inspire their teams, and achieve institutional goals (Kaur & Gera, 2021).

Emotional Intelligence (EI) helped school heads manage emotions, build trust, and foster positive relationships, creating a supportive environment for growth (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2019). Adversarial Intelligence (AI) enabled school heads to assess risks and make informed decisions during challenges, complementing EI with strategic thinking (Kaur & Gera, 2021). Leadership competence involved setting goals, guiding teachers, and ensuring quality instruction, which drove professional growth and student success (Tan & Chew, 2020).

While the importance of EI and AI in leadership was well-documented, a significant gap remained in research exploring their combined impact on the competence of school heads, particularly within the context of the Schools Division of Laguna. School heads in this division faced multiple, often conflicting demands, such as leading educational reforms, managing staff, and ensuring student success. Their competence was not solely

determined by their administrative abilities but by how well they integrated emotional and strategic intelligence to guide their schools toward achieving their goals. Given the unique challenges in the region, there was an urgent need for deeper exploration into how EI and AI, working in tandem, could enhance the leadership competence of school heads in the Schools Division of Laguna.

Understanding this relationship provided valuable insights into how school heads could be better equipped to face the challenges of their roles. This study informed the development of leadership development programs that focused on building both emotional and strategic intelligence, offering school heads the tools they needed to lead with empathy, resilience, and strategic foresight. Such development programs helped develop leaders who were not only effective in managing their schools but also capable of fostering a supportive, growth-oriented environment for both teachers and students.

By examining how Emotional Intelligence and Adversarial Intelligence contributed to the competence of school heads, the study aimed to provide a framework for improving leadership practices and achieving better outcomes in schools.

## OBJECTIVES

This study aimed to explore the combined relationship of Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Adversarial Intelligence (AI) on school heads' competence in the Schools Division Office (SDO) of Laguna. It examined how these two forms of intelligence influenced leadership competence, providing a deeper understanding of the emotional and strategic capabilities of school heads.



Specifically, it aimed to cover the following areas:

1. The level of the school heads' Emotional Intelligence (EI) in terms of self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills.
2. The level of the school heads' Adversarial Intelligence (AI) in terms of information gathering techniques, intelligence analysis, risk assessment, strategic planning, and decision support.
3. The level of the school heads' competence in terms of responsiveness, flexibility, coaching and mentoring, administrative skills, curriculum planning, collaboration and teamwork, and professional development.
4. The significant relationship between school heads' Emotional Intelligence (EI) and their competence.
5. The significant relationship between school heads' Adversarial Intelligence (AI) and their competence.
6. The extent to which school heads' Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Adversarial Intelligence (AI) contribute to their competence.
7. How school heads' Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Adversarial Intelligence (AI) complement their leadership competence.
8. The development of a proposed plan to enhance school heads' competence through Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Adversarial Intelligence (AI) in the Schools Division Office of Laguna.

### SAMPLING DESIGN

This study explored the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI), Adversarial Intelligence (AI), and leadership competence among school heads within the Schools Division Office (SDO) of Laguna. It specifically targeted secondary school principals and head teachers from the largest schools across various municipalities, including Alaminos, Bay, Calauan, Cavinti, Famy, Kalayaan, Liliw, Los Baños, Lumban, Mabitac, Majayjay, Nagcarlan, Paete, Pagsanjan, Pakil, Pangil, Pila, Rizal, Santa Cruz, Santa Maria, Siniloan, and Victoria.

To ensure a representative sample, respondents were selected using purposive random sampling, with the final sample size determined to be approximately 132 based on Yamane's formula for sample size calculation. This statistical method allowed for an efficient and reliable sample, ensuring the validity and generalizability of the findings. Schools were chosen based on their size, prioritizing those with the highest number of head teachers and principals, regardless of their categorization as small, medium, large, or very large.

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Quantitative data were gathered using Likert scale surveys to assess school heads' emotional intelligence, adversarial intelligence, and leadership competence. Qualitative data were collected through interviews and case analyses, with purposively selected respondents based on their length of service, position (Principal II), experience, and professional recognition.

Certain limitations were acknowledged in this study. The qualitative data were obtained from purposively selected respondents, which may have influenced the diversity of perspectives. Furthermore, smaller schools with fewer head teachers or principals, as well as the district where the researcher was employed, were excluded for ethical and practical reasons. These exclusions may have affected the generalizability of the findings. Despite these limitations, the study provided significant insights into how Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Adversarial

Intelligence (AI) contribute to effective leadership practices in secondary education within the SDO Laguna.

### RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employed a mixed-methods design, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This design facilitated the seamless combination of two distinct research methodologies to produce triangulated results. Both data sets were collected concurrently and analyzed independently using appropriate quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques.

The integration of these two data sets provided a more comprehensive understanding than either method could achieve independently. This approach provided a comprehensive representation of the investigated issue, enabling cross-validation of findings through the integration of qualitative data and existing literature, ensuring triangulation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Furthermore, the primary aim of this integration was to enhance the depth of analysis, offering a well-rounded perspective on the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI), Adversarial Intelligence (AI), and leadership competence. The combined results underwent validation and confirmation, strengthening the reliability and applicability of the study's conclusions.

### STATISTICAL DESIGN

To determine the levels of Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Adversarial Intelligence (AI) among school heads, the study employed Weighted Mean calculations, presenting the data in tables with mean averages and verbal interpretations. Standard deviation was also computed to measure the variability in responses.

To analyze the relationship between school heads' EI, AI, and leadership competence, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient was utilized to test significant relationships among these variables. This statistical approach provided insight into how emotional and strategic intelligence influenced leadership effectiveness.

For the qualitative aspect, thematic analysis was conducted to interpret recurring themes from interview responses. Verbatim transcriptions were analyzed to identify patterns related to decision-making, conflict resolution, risk management, and leadership practices. The responses were categorized to generate meaningful insights into the impact of EI and AI on leadership competence.

To ensure the reliability of findings, triangulation was applied by cross-referencing the interview data with statistical results and existing literature. This process strengthened the credibility of the study by confirming results from multiple sources.

Lastly, the study employed a comprehensive framework integrating statistical and qualitative findings. The results informed the development of targeted strategies for enhancing school heads' leadership competence through the cultivation of EI and AI, contributing to educational leadership and professional development within the Schools Division Office of Laguna.

### RESULTS

#### Level of School Heads' Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Table 1 presents the level of the school heads' Emotional Intelligence (EI) in terms of self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills.



Emotional Intelligence (EI)	Weighted Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Self-Awareness	6.73	0.35	Exceptionally Manifested
Self-Regulation	6.63	0.38	Exceptionally Manifested
Self-Motivation	6.69	0.39	Exceptionally Manifested
Empathy	6.73	0.36	Exceptionally Manifested
Social Skills	6.69	0.34	Exceptionally Manifested

**Table 1. Level of School Heads' Emotional Intelligence (EI)**

**Level of School Heads' Adversarial Intelligence (AI)**

Table 2 presents the mean level of the school heads' Adversarial Intelligence (AI) in terms of information gathering techniques,

intelligence analysis, risk assessment, strategic planning, and decision support.

Adversarial Intelligence (AI)	Weighted Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Information Gathering Techniques	6.71	0.41	Exceptionally Manifested
Intelligence Analysis	6.72	0.40	Exceptionally Manifested
Risk Assessment	6.66	0.40	Exceptionally Manifested
Strategic Planning	6.73	0.38	Exceptionally Manifested
Decision Support	6.82	0.33	Exceptionally Manifested

**Table 2. Level of School Heads' Adversarial Intelligence (AI)**

**Level of School Heads' Competence**

Table 3 presents the mean level of the school heads' competence in terms of responsiveness, flexibility, coaching and mentoring,

administrative skills, curriculum planning, collaboration and teamwork, and professional development.

Competence	Weighted Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Responsiveness	6.74	0.34	Exceptionally Manifested
Flexibility	6.80	0.35	Exceptionally Manifested
Coaching and Mentoring	6.77	0.33	Exceptionally Manifested
Administrative Skills	6.69	0.42	Exceptionally Manifested
Curriculum Planning	6.71	0.42	Exceptionally Manifested
Collaboration and Teamwork	6.86	0.33	Exceptionally Manifested
Professional Development	6.79	0.38	Exceptionally Manifested

**Table 3. Level of School Heads' Competence**

**Significant Relationship between School Heads' Emotional Intelligence (EI) on their Competence**

Table 4 presents the data on the significant relationship between school heads' Emotional Intelligence (EI) and their competence

		Responsiveness	Flexibility	Coaching & Mentoring	Administrative Skills	Curriculum Planning	Collaboration & Teamwork	Professional Development
Self-Awareness	Pearson Correlation	.492**	.427**	.489**	.315**	.331**	.262**	.414**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.002	.000
	N	132	132	132	132	132	132	132
Self-Regulation	Pearson Correlation	.646**	.621**	.646**	.516**	.620**	.506**	.546**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	132	132	132	132	132	132	132
Self-Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.634**	.476**	.637**	.640**	.512**	.419**	.492**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	132	132	132	132	132	132	132
Empathy	Pearson Correlation	.686**	.641**	.728**	.664**	.599**	.579**	.595**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	132	132	132	132	132	132	132
Social Skills	Pearson Correlation	.627**	.638**	.620**	.666**	.690**	.592**	.634**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	132	132	132	132	132	132	132

**Table 4. Significant Relationship between School Heads' Emotional Intelligence (EI) on their Competence**



**Significant Relationship Between School Heads' Adversarial Intelligence (AI) and their Competence**

Table 5 shows the significant relationship between school heads' Adversarial Intelligence (AI) and their competence.

		Responsiveness	Flexibility	Coaching & Mentoring	Administrative Skills	Curriculum Planning	Collaboration & Teamwork	Professional Development
Information Gathering Techniques	Pearson Correlation	.803**	.803**	.823**	.913**	.736**	.671**	.808**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	132	132	132	132	132	132	132
Intelligence Analysis	Pearson Correlation	.762**	.766**	.773**	.871**	.696**	.632**	.754**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	132	132	132	132	132	132	132
Risk Assessment	Pearson Correlation	.767**	.667**	.766**	.760**	.650**	.591**	.651**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	132	132	132	132	132	132	132
Strategic Planning	Pearson Correlation	.737**	.793**	.766**	.841**	.758**	.689**	.760**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	132	132	132	132	132	132	132
Decision Support	Pearson Correlation	.694**	.847**	.816**	.728**	.734**	.838**	.779**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	132	132	132	132	132	132	132

**Table 5. Significant Relationship Between School Heads' Adversarial Intelligence (AI) and their Competence**

**School Heads on the Influence of Emotional Intelligence (EI), Adversarial Intelligence (AI) contribute to their Competence**

This section examined the extent to which school heads' Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Adversarial Intelligence (AI) contributed to their competence. Four key themes emerged: EI as a Leadership Asset, AI as a Strategic Competency, the Synergy of EI and AI, and Strategies for Development.

EI played a crucial role as a leadership asset, enabling school heads to regulate emotions, build relationships, and make sound decisions, fostering a positive work environment (Goleman, 2017). Empathetic leaders cultivated trust, collaboration, and morale, strengthening professional bonds within their institutions (Northouse, 2019). Meanwhile, AI functioned as a strategic competency, equipping school heads with the ability to analyze challenges, anticipate risks, and implement effective solutions in critical situations (Boyatzis et al., 2021). It also allowed them to maintain stability by strategically managing crises and resolving conflicts (Northouse, 2019).

The integration of EI and AI further enhanced leadership competence by balancing emotional and strategic responses, leading to well-rounded decision-making that addressed both human and institutional needs (Goleman, 2017). This synergy strengthened crisis response and adaptive leadership, enabling school heads to navigate complex challenges more effectively (Boyatzis et al., 2021). To develop these competencies, continuous professional development proved essential, as ongoing training refined both EI and AI, strengthening leadership effectiveness (Northouse, 2019). Additionally, structured planning and self-reflection enhanced decision-making skills and contributed to overall school performance (Boyatzis et al., 2021).

**School Heads on the Influence of Emotional Intelligence (EI), Adversarial Intelligence (AI) complement their Leadership Competence**

This section explored how school heads' Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Adversarial Intelligence (AI) complemented leadership

competence. Four key themes emerged: EI and Its Role in Leadership, AI as a Leadership Tool, the Complementary Role of EI and AI, and Strengthening EI and AI for Leadership Enhancement.

EI played a crucial role in leadership by enabling school heads to regulate emotions, foster relationships, and make rational decisions. Boyatzis et al. (2021) highlighted that EI enhanced leadership by ensuring that decisions were policy-driven rather than emotionally reactive. Zhang et al. (2018) reinforced the importance of rational decision-making, emphasizing that leaders who took time to reflect before making decisions ensured that their actions aligned with policies, fostering stability and trust.

Meanwhile, AI served as a leadership tool by equipping school heads with the ability to anticipate challenges, strategize effectively, and remain composed in crises. Avolio and Luthans (2015) stressed that strategic thinking prevented panic, while Drucker (2017) emphasized the importance of planning in overcoming adversities. Maintaining composure and leading by example inspired confidence within the organization. Luthans and Youssef-Morgan (2017) further linked resilience to effective leadership, highlighting the role of AI in sustaining institutional stability.

The integration of EI and AI further strengthened leadership effectiveness by balancing emotional awareness with strategic thinking. Dwivedi (2025) found that leaders who successfully combined empathy with risk assessment made well-rounded decisions. The synergy between EI and AI allowed leaders to craft effective interventions, adapt to challenges, make ethical choices, and enhance organizational performance.

To reinforce these competencies, the continuous development of EI and AI through training, mentorship, and reflection proved essential for leadership enhancement. Boyatzis et al. (2021) emphasized the value of professional development in refining emotional regulation and strategic decision-making. Collaboration and real-world application were also vital in



leadership growth. Scenario-based training and self-assessment tools further improved these competencies, ensuring that leaders remained adaptable and effective in managing school operations.

### Proposed Developmental Plan for Enhancing School Heads' Competence Through Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Adversarial Intelligence (AI) in the Schools Division Office of Laguna

The Proposed Developmental Plan for Enhancing School Heads' Competence Through Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Adversarial Intelligence (AI) will aim to strengthen leadership capabilities in the Schools Division Office of Laguna through targeted training, mentorship programs, and scenario-based exercises. It will include four key components: EI Enhancement, which will focus on self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills to improve leadership effectiveness; AI Development, which will equip school heads with skills in information gathering, risk assessment, strategic planning, and decision-making; Integration of EI and AI in Leadership Practices, ensuring practical application in school management; and Evaluation and Sustainability, which will measure program impact and ensure long-term application of acquired competencies. Activities such as self-assessments, mindfulness training, conflict resolution workshops, crisis management simulations, and strategic planning exercises will be implemented in phases from 2025 to 2026, with clear objectives, responsible personnel, required resources, and success indicators to measure effectiveness.

Equipping school heads with EI and AI competencies, this plan will foster adaptive, resilient, and strategic leadership to improve decision-making, conflict resolution, and school management. The expected outcomes will include enhanced emotional resilience, improved collaboration with staff, better risk management, and data-driven problem-solving. Success indicators will assess the increased application of these skills in

daily leadership practices. Through this structured approach, the Schools Division Office of Laguna will ensure continuous professional development, empowering school heads to lead more effectively in an evolving educational landscape.

### CONCLUSION

The statistical analysis rejected both null hypotheses (H01 and H02), confirming significant positive relationships between Emotional Intelligence (EI), Adversarial Intelligence (AI), and school heads' competence. High EI enhanced responsiveness, mentoring, collaboration, and professional development, while strong AI improved risk management, strategic decision-making, and leadership effectiveness. EI fostered supportive environments and effective communication, whereas AI enabled data-driven strategies to address challenges. The integration of both intelligence domains strengthened leadership efficacy, promoting better decision-making, improved school performance, and enhanced teacher and student outcomes.

### AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

School heads should enhance their competencies by conducting stress management workshops, improving information-gathering skills, and implementing structured feedback mechanisms to strengthen communication. Conflict resolution training and clear mediation protocols should be established to address issues efficiently. Regular resource audits should ensure adequate support for teachers and students, while monitoring systems should reinforce accountability. Strategic planning and goal-setting training should align leadership with school objectives. Finally, utilizing the proposed developmental plan will provide structured guidance in balancing Emotional and Adversarial Intelligence, fostering a supportive yet strategic leadership approach that enhances school performance and overall educational resilience.

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