

Building Entrepreneurial School Leadership on Psychological Safety: A Qualitative Case Study in Resource-Constrained Primary Schools

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Entrepreneurial leadership;
psychological safety;
humanizing leadership;
educational quality;
resource-constrained schools

ABSTRACT

Purpose – Most school leadership research departs from assumptions that do not hold in many real-world contexts: adequate infrastructure, stable government funding, and sustained public trust in state-provided education.

Methodology – Thematic analysis progressed through three stages, following the grounded theory procedures outlined in NVivo 15, which supported the work throughout.

Findings – This study addresses the resulting gap through a qualitative case study of a state primary school in Tapanuli Tengah, North Sumatra, Indonesia, where the incumbent principal raised the school's accreditation from B to A under significant resource constraints. Twelve informants from four institutional positions participated in semi-structured interviews. Transcripts were coded in NVivo 15 through open, axial, and selective coding stages. Five core themes emerged: the manifestation of entrepreneurial competence through an asset-based orientation and a dual-channel resource strategy; humanizing leadership practices centered on psychological safety; pedagogical and managerial innovation as quality-improvement mechanisms; leadership resilience as a system of learnable practices; and community trust as strategically managed social capital. Two original theoretical constructs emerged: the dual conviction model, which holds that lasting motivation requires simultaneous beliefs in meaningfulness and personal capability, and the humanizing entrepreneurial leadership framework, which repositions psychological safety as a causal precondition rather than an ethical supplement.

Contribution – Both constructs carry direct implications for leadership development programs in under-resourced school contexts.

Received 29 May 2026; Received in revised form 26 June 2026; Accepted 21 August 2026

Journal Eduscience (JES) Volume 13 No. 4 (2026)

Available online 31 August 2026

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INTRODUCTION

That principals matter is one of the few firm conclusions three decades of school leadership research have produced. Empirical evidence from a wide range of settings consistently shows that principals influence student learning indirectly, primarily through school culture, teacher motivation, instructional conditions, and the organizational environments that support teaching and learning (Heck & Hallinger, 2019; Leithwood et al., 2020; Robinson et al., 2018). Most of this evidence, however, has been generated in schools with relatively stable infrastructure, teaching personnel, and institutional support. Less is known about how principals lead when these conditions are severely constrained and how they mobilize limited resources while maintaining teachers' willingness to participate in change (Bush, 2020; Grissom et al., 2021).

This question is particularly important in resource-constrained educational settings, where school leaders must address multiple organizational challenges simultaneously. In Indonesia, primary schools in remote and disadvantaged areas may face limitations in infrastructure, administrative capacity, financial resources, and community support, creating conditions in which conventional leadership approaches may be insufficient (Juharyanto et al., 2023; UNESCO, 2023). Under such circumstances, school leadership involves not only managing existing resources but also identifying opportunities, mobilizing available assets, developing partnerships, encouraging innovation, and sustaining collective commitment. These demands make entrepreneurial school leadership particularly relevant to understanding how schools pursue improvement under constraint (Balasi et al., 2023; Bhardwaj & Sharma, 2022; Brauckmann-Sajkiewicz & Pashiardis, 2022).

Entrepreneurial school leadership in this study refers to leadership practices through which principals identify opportunities within constraints, creatively mobilize existing and external resources, encourage innovation, take calculated risks, and generate institutional value for school improvement. The concept extends beyond entrepreneurial programs or income-generating activities because it concerns how principals transform limitations into opportunities for organizational and educational development (Davies, 2019; Hentschke & Caldwell, 2019). However, entrepreneurial competence alone may not explain why some improvement initiatives become embedded in school practice while others remain temporary programs. Teachers must be willing to experiment, communicate concerns, learn from failure, and participate in organizational change. This highlights the importance of psychological safety, understood as a shared perception that individuals can express ideas, questions, concerns, and mistakes without fear of interpersonal consequences. Bringing these perspectives together, this study uses the term "Humanizing Entrepreneurial Leadership" to describe an approach that combines entrepreneurial resourcefulness with relational practices that recognize teachers as individuals, build trust, provide psychological safety, and create conditions for meaningful participation in school improvement.

The study also conceptualizes school quality as a multidimensional organizational outcome rather than a single performance indicator. In the context of this case, quality improvement encompasses improvements in school management, teaching and learning practices, teacher development, student-related outcomes, institutional accountability, accreditation status, and relationships with parents and the wider community. This broader understanding is important because resource-constrained schools may demonstrate quality improvement not only through measurable student outcomes but also through strengthened organizational systems, improved educational practices, greater institutional accountability, and increased community confidence.

The case selected for this study is a public primary school in Tapanuli Tengah, North Sumatra, that provides a particularly informative setting for examining these processes. The school was purposively selected because it represents a resource-constrained institutional context in which significant organizational improvement occurred under the continued leadership of the same principal. Most notably, the school improved its accreditation status from B to A despite substantial resource limitations. This makes the case analytically valuable because it offers an opportunity to examine how leadership operates under constraints, rather than simply whether it is associated with school improvement. The case also enables the study to trace

the leadership practices, teachers' experiences, organizational changes, and community relationships through which improvement was pursued. The purpose is not to claim that this single school represents all resource-constrained primary schools, but to use the case as an information-rich setting for developing a theoretically grounded explanation of entrepreneurial leadership under conditions of constraint.

Two important gaps, therefore, remain. First, although entrepreneurial school leadership research has highlighted opportunity identification, resource mobilization, creativity, and institutional value creation, the mechanisms through which these practices become embedded as lasting organizational and cultural change in resource-constrained public primary schools remain insufficiently documented (Balasi et al., 2023; Bhardwaj & Sharma, 2022; Brauckmann-Sajkiewicz & Pashiardis, 2022). Second, entrepreneurial school leadership and psychological safety have largely developed as separate strands of scholarship, despite the possibility that entrepreneurial initiatives depend on teachers feeling sufficiently secure to express ideas, experiment, learn, and respond to uncertainty. Examining their intersection, therefore, provides an opportunity to explain not only what entrepreneurial principals do, but also the relational conditions under which entrepreneurial leadership can become collective school improvement.

This study addresses these gaps through three objectives: (1) to analyze how the principal's entrepreneurial competencies manifest in practice; (2) to identify the organizational, pedagogical, and relational mechanisms through which these competencies are associated with school quality improvement; and (3) to explore the psychological and relational conditions that enable teachers and other school stakeholders to participate in entrepreneurial change. The study contributes theoretically by developing the concept of Humanizing Entrepreneurial Leadership as an integrated perspective that connects entrepreneurial resourcefulness with psychological safety, trust, relational responsiveness, and collective participation. Rather than treating psychological safety as a proven causal prerequisite that cannot be established from a single qualitative case, the study examines it as a key enabling condition emerging from participants' accounts of how entrepreneurial leadership operates. In this way, the study extends entrepreneurial school leadership theory by shifting attention from resource mobilization alone toward the human and relational conditions through which resourcefulness can be translated into sustained organizational improvement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurial leadership is the capacity to notice opportunities others tend to miss, work creatively with what is at hand, and direct resources toward outcomes that bring genuine value to the organization (Gupta et al., 2017; Morris et al., 2018). In education, these qualities matter most when budgets are thin and institutional support is unreliable. Across 14 European countries, Balasi et al. (2023) found that school autonomy predicts entrepreneurial leadership behavior among primary school principals. Principals in highly centralized systems still find creative ways to adapt within tight regulatory boundaries. Brauckmann-Sajkiewicz & Pashiardis (2022) argued that what separates entrepreneurial leadership capable of transforming culture from leadership that only produces one-off programs is the pairing of creativity with genuine accountability. Bhardwaj & Sharma (2022) showed that entrepreneurial leadership in education follows Sarasvathy's (2021) effectuation logic: rather than starting from a fixed goal and asking what resources are needed to reach it, the principal starts from what is already at hand and asks what can be built from it.

In Indonesia, Juharyanto et al. (2023) found that principal leadership quality directly shapes school quality, even in remote and under-resourced areas. Principals who adapt quickly to their context and actively work on school culture tend to produce environments where teachers feel motivated and are willing to try new practices, even when budgets are tight. What most entrepreneurial school leadership research captures, however, is the visible output: the programs that get started, the strategies that get adopted. The conditions that allow those programs to persist beyond their first iteration attract far less attention, and that is the gap this study targets.

Chen & Jiang (2022) defined psychological safety as the conviction that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes. The concept has since gathered strong

empirical support. Frazier et al.'s (2017) A meta-analysis, drawing on 136 studies and data from more than 22,000 individuals, found consistent positive links between psychological safety and team performance, innovative behavior, and knowledge sharing. Newman et al. (2017) found much the same across a wider body of literature.

In school settings, Chen et al. (2022) found that the moral quality of a principal's leadership shapes teachers' willingness to try new things, with psychological safety serving as a key mediating pathway alongside leader identification. Ho & Chen (2026) added an earlier link to this chain, showing that inclusive leadership shapes the organizational climate within which psychological safety either grows or fails to. Most of this research, however, has been conducted in business organizations and workplace teams. How psychological safety is built and operates within primary school leadership in severely resource-constrained parts of developing countries has not been empirically documented. That is the gap this study addresses.

Patterson & Kelleher (2017) draw a distinction that matters here: resilience in leadership is not simply the ability to endure hardship but the capacity to face it with renewed energy. Leithwood et al. (2020) A review of evidence on successful school leadership found that effective principals stay focused and keep going even in genuinely difficult conditions. Starr (2018) showed something similar: principals who maintain their own resilience are better equipped to handle teacher resistance without losing momentum for reform. Where most prior research goes wrong is in treating resilience as something a leader either has or does not. The evidence from this case points elsewhere: resilience appears less like a personal trait and more like a collection of practices, ones that can be named, observed, and in principle learned through well-designed development programs.

This study develops a humanizing entrepreneurial leadership framework that integrates the three bodies of literature reviewed above. The framework understands entrepreneurial leadership as working through four sequential layers. The first is the leadership foundation: moral calling and cognitive resilience that allow the principal to keep going in the face of adversity. The second covers the psychological and relational conditions built through humanizing practices, with psychological safety at the center. The third consists of the pedagogical and managerial innovation mechanisms that arise from those conditions. The fourth layer produces two outcomes that feed into one another: quality improvement within the school and community trust outside the school.

What sets this framework apart from earlier models is where it places psychological safety. Earlier models treat it as one condition among several, roughly equal in weight to entrepreneurial competence or management skill. This framework positions psychological safety at the second layer because the data show it must be present before the third layer; only then can the innovation mechanisms produce anything that lasts. Take it away, and the entrepreneurial effects do not simply lose strength. They never take root at all.

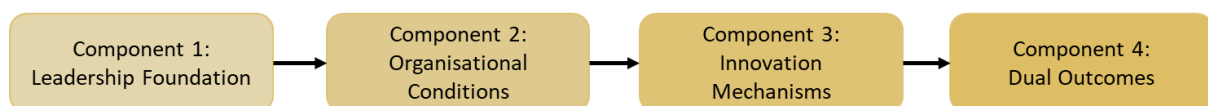


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework: Humanizing Entrepreneurial Leadership - Four Causal Layers

Source: Authors' synthesis of the literature.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach and Design Justification

The decision to use a single qualitative case study was well-reasoned. The research questions are how and why questions, best answered through sustained engagement with a specific context rather than through the broader measurement that surveys or experiments offer (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018). The phenomenon at the heart of this study, the leadership mechanisms that produce cultural transformation, cannot be separated from the institutional, historical, and relational context in which it unfolds. Removing that

context would eliminate exactly what makes the case worth examining (Stake, 2019). Developing original theoretical claims from this kind of material also needed an approach that stays open to meaning and process, rather than one built primarily around measuring variables (Lincoln & Guba, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The study proceeds from a social constructivist position, understanding reality as produced through the experiences and interpretations of the people living it (Berger & Luckmann, 2019).

Research Site and Timeline

The study was carried out at a state primary school in Tapanuli Tengah Regency, North Sumatra, Indonesia. All individuals who participated and the school itself have been anonymized; the school is referred to simply as the case school throughout. Three criteria guided site selection: the school operates under pronounced resource constraints, it achieved a verifiable accreditation upgrade from B to A under the current principal, and it offered the access required for deep fieldwork. Data collection ran from August to October 2025.

Participant Profile

Purposive sampling guided participant selection, with a single criterion in mind: every informant needed to have direct, first-hand knowledge of the phenomenon being studied (Patton, 2017). Twelve informants were drawn from four institutionally distinct positions, a range that made it possible to compare genuinely different perspectives. Table 1 presents the full participant profile.

Table 1. Research Participant Profile

Code	Position	N	Gender	Role in Research
P	Principal	1	Female	Key informant on leadership logic and strategy
AU	Administrative Staff	1	Female	Administrative and operational perspective
SC	School Committee Chairperson	1	Male	External perspective on community trust
T-01	Teacher	1	Female	Classroom teacher/Program P5 Coordinator
T-02	Teacher	1	Female	Classroom teacher/Program team member
T-03	Teacher	1	Female	Classroom teacher/Deputy Program Coordinator
T-04	Teacher	1	Female	Classroom teacher/Program Treasurer
T-05	Teacher	1	Male	Classroom teacher/Materials Collection Team Coordinator
T-06	Teacher	1	Female	Classroom teacher/Sorting Team Coordinator
T-07	Teacher	1	Male	Classroom teacher/Collection Team Member
T-08	Teacher	1	Female	Classroom teacher/Cleaning Team Coordinator
T-09	Teacher	1	Male	Classroom teacher/Exhibition and Sales Team

Source: Data Research

Before data collection began, all participants received a full explanation of the research objectives and gave their oral consent. Individual identities were protected through the coding system described above, and that protection carried through every stage of analysis and writing.

Data Collection

All interviews took place face-to-face inside the case school. The interview guide was built around five dimensions of principal entrepreneurial competence identified in the literature: innovation, diligence, strong motivation, perseverance, and entrepreneurial instinct (Davies, 2017; Hentschke & Caldwell, 2019). In practice,

the guide served more as a starting point than a script, keeping conversations tied to the same core topics while leaving space for informants to raise topics the researcher had not considered. That openness proved important: psychological safety, which became one of the study's central themes, was never in the original guide. It surfaced because informants kept returning to it on their own. Each interview lasted between 45 and 90 minutes, was recorded with the informant's consent, and was transcribed in full.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis proceeded through three stages, following the grounded theory procedures outlined by Corbin & Strauss (2018), with NVivo 15 supporting the work throughout. In the first stage, open coding, all transcripts were read repeatedly, and every meaningful segment was given a label drawn as directly as possible from the informants' own words. That stage produced more than 100 initial code nodes. In the second stage, axial coding, the initial codes were sorted into broader categories based on conceptual similarity, and the relationships between codes were mapped to show conditions, strategies, and consequences. Five major themes took shape at this point. The third stage, selective coding, brought the analysis together: a core category was identified, an analytical storyline was built that connected the five themes through a coherent causal logic, and representative quotations were selected to ground each claim. Every analytical decision was recorded in NVivo 15 memos, leaving a full and traceable record of how each conclusion was reached.



Figure 2. Inter-theme Cluster Analysis. Theme 2 and Theme 4 form the most tightly integrated cluster in the data, a pattern consistent with the study's argument that psychological conditions and leadership resilience are causally linked

Data Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was built around Lincoln & Guba's (2018) Four criteria, with each one addressed through concrete and verifiable steps. Credibility was the main priority. The primary strategy was informant triangulation: no major finding was accepted unless at least three institutionally distinct informant categories had confirmed it. To check that this triangulation held across the full dataset, a Matrix Coding Query in NVivo 15 mapped each of the five themes against the four informant categories in a 5×4 table. Meaningful coding references showed up across all cells. Member checking with key informants and peer debriefing with a researcher not involved in data collection provided additional credibility checks. Transferability was supported by a thick description of the research context (Geertz, 1973). Dependability rested on the systematic recording of every analytical decision in NVivo memos, allowing another researcher to follow the same path. Confirmability was maintained by keeping the researcher's assumptions and position in the field visible throughout.

FINDINGS

Overview of the Emerging Themes

Analysis of the twelve interview transcripts generated five major themes through thematic and selective coding: (1) Manifestation of Entrepreneurial Competence in School Leadership, (2) Humanizing Leadership as the Foundation of Institutional Change, (3) Pedagogical and Managerial Innovation as a Quality

Improvement Mechanism, (4) Leadership Resilience and a Culture of Perseverance, and (5) Community Trust and Institutional Sustainability. A total of 491 coding references were identified across these five themes and subsequently examined through a Matrix Coding Query in NVivo 15 to assess their distribution across informant categories. Table 2 presents the distribution of coding references by theme and informant category.

Table 2. Distribution of Coding References by Major Theme and Informant Category

Theme	AU	P	SC	T-01-T-09	Total
Theme 1: Manifestation of Entrepreneurial Competence	8	13	6	82	109
Theme 2: Humanizing Leadership	7	5	1	57	70
Theme 3: Pedagogical and Managerial Innovation	13	8	3	102	126
Theme 4: Leadership Resilience and a Culture of Perseverance	5	12	6	107	130
Theme 5: Community Trust and Institutional Sustainability	0	3	19	34	56
Total	33	41	35	382	491

Note: AU = Administrative Staff; P = Principal; SC = School Committee Chairperson; T-01-T-09 = Teachers. Source:

The distribution of coding references shows that Theme 4 (Leadership Resilience and a Culture of Perseverance) generated the highest number of references (130), followed by Theme 3 (Pedagogical and Managerial Innovation as a Quality Improvement Mechanism) with 126 references. These findings indicate that resilience and innovation were the aspects of leadership most frequently experienced and described by participants in their daily school activities. The teacher group contributed the most references overall (382), reflecting their direct and sustained engagement with the principal's leadership practices. In contrast, Theme 5 (Community Trust and Institutional Sustainability) generated the fewest overall references (56), but the School Committee Chairperson contributed 19 references to this theme, representing the highest single-category contribution. This pattern suggests that community trust was particularly evident to stakeholders directly involved in the school's relationships with parents and the wider community.

Interpretation of the NVivo Word Cloud

To provide a visual overview of the concepts emerging from the interview data, an NVivo word cloud was generated from the twelve interview transcripts. The word cloud highlights the relative prominence of frequently occurring concepts across the dataset.

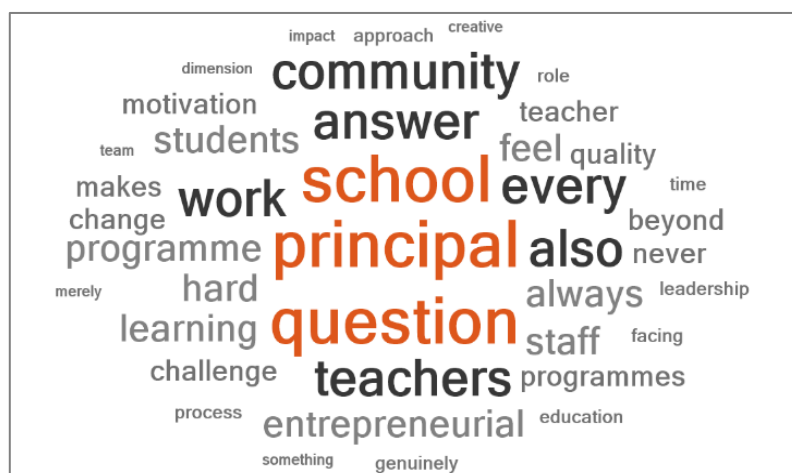


Figure 3. NVivo Word Cloud - Frequency of Key Concept Occurrences Across All Interview Transcripts

Source: NVivo 15 analysis output.

Figure 3 presents the NVivo word cloud generated from the frequency of key concept occurrences across the twelve interview transcripts. The visualization provides an overview of the concepts that appeared most frequently in participants' accounts and complements the thematic findings presented in Table 2. The prominence of terms associated with leadership, teachers, school, innovation, work, students, trust, and change indicates that participants consistently framed their experiences in terms of the interaction among leadership practices, teacher engagement, school improvement, and student-oriented change.

The frequency pattern shown in Figure 3 also provides contextual support for the five themes identified through thematic coding. Concepts related to leadership and school management align with Theme 1 and Theme 2, in which participants described entrepreneurial competence and humanizing leadership practices. References to innovation, teaching, and students are consistent with Theme 3, particularly the discussion of pedagogical and managerial innovation as a mechanism for improving educational quality. Similarly, the recurrence of concepts associated with work, commitment, and change supports Theme 4, which highlights leadership resilience and the development of a culture of perseverance. Finally, concepts associated with trust, community, and participation provide a linguistic indication of the relational dimension represented in Theme 5.

Importantly, the word cloud is interpreted as supporting descriptive evidence rather than as an independent analytical finding. The frequency of a word does not, by itself, establish its theoretical importance or causal significance. Its primary function is to provide a visual representation of recurring concepts in the interview corpus. At the same time, the substantive interpretation of participants' experiences is derived from the thematic coding, cross-informant comparison, and interview excerpts presented in the following sections.

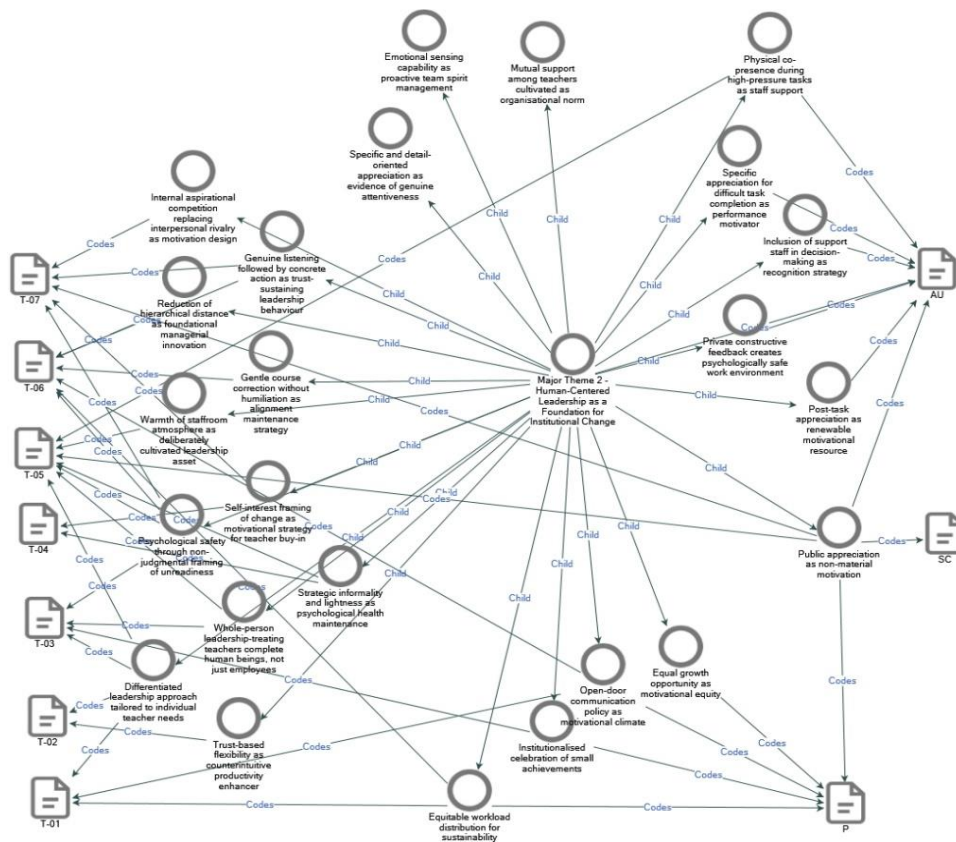


Figure 4. Project Map of Theme 2: Humanizing Leadership as the Foundation of Institutional Change.

Figure 4 illustrates the NVivo project map for Theme 2: Humanizing Leadership as the Foundation of Institutional Change, showing the interconnected relationships among interview sources, coding categories, and the central theme. The map indicates that humanizing leadership is constructed through several interrelated practices, including psychological safety, individualized attention, emotional sensing, mutual

support, trust, openness to change, appreciation, equal opportunities, and constructive feedback. The connections between teachers (T-01–T-09), administrative staff (AU), the principal (P), and the school committee (SC) demonstrate that these leadership practices are not derived from a single informant but are supported by multiple sources across the school community. The dense network of coded relationships around the central theme further suggests that humanizing leadership functions as an integrative process through which the principal creates a supportive environment, strengthens interpersonal relationships, encourages teacher participation and innovation, and builds shared commitment to institutional improvement. Thus, the project map provides visual evidence that psychological safety and relational trust constitute important foundations through which humanizing leadership contributes to institutional change in the resource-constrained primary school context.

Theme 1: Manifestation of Entrepreneurial Competence in School Leadership

This theme addresses the first research question by examining five dimensions of entrepreneurial competence that operate simultaneously and reinforce one another.

The first dimension is an asset-based orientation as a basic way of thinking. All twelve informants described the principal as a leader who begins not from what is lacking but from what can be maximized with what is already there. T-04, who handled the program accounts, put it most directly:

"She always starts from the question of what can be maximized from what we already have, not what is missing. That way of thinking is the opposite of just sitting and waiting for help from outside." (T-04)

The second dimension is the P5 creative recycling program, a single initiative that produces pedagogical, environmental, and economic returns simultaneously. The third dimension is the dual-channel resource strategy: pursuing funds through formal submissions to the District Education Office while simultaneously developing what the school already has internally. T-03 explained: "Both channels run in parallel, so the school is never merely waiting for external assistance but actively creating solutions from the inside." The procurement of 15 Chromebook units, one projector, and one WiFi router was carried out through the formal channel, as confirmed across all informant categories.

The fourth dimension is a willingness to take calculated risks. T-02 put the principle plainly: "She can turn constraints into opportunities, problems into programs, and concerns into strategies." The fifth dimension is building something that outlasts any single program. T-07 drew a sharp distinction: "There is a very significant difference between a school that has run an entrepreneurial program and a school that has entrepreneurial culture embedded in its DNA."

Theme 2: Humanizing Leadership as the Foundation of Institutional Change

This theme was not in the interview guide. It surfaced through an inductive process, returning consistently enough across informants to demand serious analytical attention. Of all the themes in this study, it carries the most original theoretical weight. The dimension that came up most often and most clearly is psychological safety, specifically how the principal treats teacher unreadiness. Rather than framing it as individual failure, she treats it as something normal and shared. T-03 described what it felt like from the inside:

"She never once made me feel stupid or left behind when I could not keep up with change as quickly as others. She always framed that unreadiness as something normal, something we could all overcome together, not as a shameful weakness. That approach was deeply liberating psychologically." (T-03)

T-09 gave the most direct summary of what that climate produces: "The single most important factor that makes teachers in this school bolder and more open to innovation is that psychologically safe climate." The second dimension is how the principal responds to teachers as individuals. T-05 observed that teachers fall into roughly three motivational types, and the principal reads these differences and adjusts accordingly. The third dimension is how the principal uses trust and flexibility. T-02, who went through a period of personal difficulty, found that the principal gave her space without asking for explanations: "That trust made me unwilling to disappoint her, so I actually performed better once my situation had improved."

Theme 3: Pedagogical and Managerial Innovation as a Quality Improvement Mechanism

This theme has the second-highest total number of coding references (126) and the most evenly distributed across informant categories, suggesting that innovation in instruction and management is the dimension of leadership most broadly felt across the school organization. The most consequential pedagogical innovation is a shift from content delivery to competency development. T-04 documented what this produced in practice: students she had previously seen as less active proved highly talented when given the chance to learn differently, a discovery she described as "opening my eyes to the fact that innovation in teaching is not merely a trend but a genuine necessity with direct consequences for students." The P5 program, as an experience-based character education program, was identified as the second pedagogical mechanism. T-08 documented the message it builds into students: "Every stage of the process is equally important; no stage is greater or lesser than another."

AU documented the transformation of the managerial system through a before-and-after contrast: from administrative work always running late to a more orderly and accountable system. The cumulative effect of these mechanisms is most clearly visible in the accreditation upgrade from B to A, alongside a 5.64 percent improvement in character scores in the 2024 School Education Report published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology.

Theme 4: Leadership Resilience and a Culture of Perseverance

This theme has the highest total number of coding references in the study (130) and contains the broadest range of documented resilience mechanisms. When AU asked the principal directly what keeps her going, the answer came without hesitation: she thinks about the students who will benefit. T-05 explained: "She does not experience her profession as a burden but as a calling, and that makes her resilience far stronger than someone who works merely out of obligation." The second mechanism is cognitive reframing of pressure. T-07 observed: "She does not see problems as burdens; she sees them as raw material to be managed." T-06 added: "The principal always narrates difficulties as a sign that we are working on something meaningful enough to be worth fighting for." The third mechanism works at the level of the whole school: over time, hard work has become the norm rather than a demand. T-03 described what that feels like from the inside: "Collectively, the spirit built together in this school has become a kind of culture, because working hard feels normal here, even enjoyable." T-05 also observed that the principal builds in moments to acknowledge and celebrate what has been achieved, a rhythm that keeps the team's energy from running out over time.

Theme 5: The Contribution of Leadership to Community Trust and Institutional Sustainability

This theme holds the lowest reference total (56), yet SC alone contributed 19 of those references, the highest single per-category figure in the entire dataset. What SC documented was a fundamental shift in how the school relates to its community: "Under this principal's leadership, the school no longer closes itself off. There is now openness, active communication, and a genuine invitation for parents and the community to get involved." The mechanism behind that shift is straightforward: the school brings the community in at the real planning stage, not after decisions have already been made.

The clearest evidence of what this has produced is in the enrolment figures. A growing number of families are actively choosing the case school as their first choice, not for lack of alternatives, but because they genuinely believe it serves their children well. T-08 pointed to something happening inside the school that connects to this: the principal assigns coordination responsibilities to teachers who have never held them before, thereby developing distributed leadership capacity that ultimately strengthens the overall organization.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that entrepreneurial school leadership in the resource-constrained primary school studied is shaped by the interplay among entrepreneurial competence, humanizing leadership, pedagogical and managerial innovation, leadership resilience, and community engagement. Rather than operating as

separate leadership attributes, these dimensions appear to reinforce one another in practice. The principal's asset-based orientation enabled the school to mobilize existing resources, develop creative programs, and pursue external support while maintaining internal initiative. At the same time, the emergence of psychological safety as a central feature of humanizing leadership suggests that entrepreneurial leadership is sustained not solely by resource mobilization or risk-taking, but also by creating an environment in which teachers feel sufficiently secure to express ideas, acknowledge difficulties, experiment, and participate in change. In this sense, the findings extend the understanding of entrepreneurial school leadership by showing how resource constraints can be addressed through both strategic resourcefulness and relational leadership.

The findings further show that psychological safety is closely connected with the school's capacity for pedagogical and managerial innovation. Teachers' accounts indicate that when mistakes, unreadiness, and difficulties are treated as part of the learning process rather than as personal deficiencies, teachers become more willing to experiment with instructional approaches and accept new responsibilities. This condition appears to support innovations such as the P5 creative recycling program, competency-oriented learning, improved administrative practices, and distributed leadership. The finding is consistent with the broader view that innovation requires organizational conditions that allow individuals to take interpersonal risks. However, the present case adds contextual insight by illustrating how such conditions can be cultivated within a primary school operating under resource constraints, where formal resources may be limited but relational resources such as trust, flexibility, recognition, and collaboration can be strategically developed.

A particularly important finding concerns the relationship between entrepreneurial leadership and resilience. The principal's tendency to interpret constraints as opportunities and problems as challenges to be managed was accompanied by a collective culture of perseverance among teachers. Resilience, therefore, appeared not merely as an individual psychological characteristic of the principal but as a leadership practice that gradually became embedded in the school's organizational culture. The evidence suggests that repeated experiences of solving problems, recognizing achievements, and involving teachers in responsibilities contributed to the normalization of perseverance. This interpretation is important because it positions resilience as an organisationally cultivated capacity rather than simply a personal quality of a school leader. Nevertheless, because this study focuses on a single school and relies primarily on qualitative accounts, this relationship should be understood as an interpretive explanation of the observed case rather than as evidence of a causal relationship.

The findings also provide a basis for proposing the Dual Conviction Model as a conceptual interpretation of entrepreneurial school leadership in resource-constrained settings. The model does not simply reproduce established motivation theories; rather, its distinctiveness lies in connecting two mutually reinforcing convictions identified across the case: the conviction that existing constraints can be transformed into opportunities and the conviction that people can be trusted and developed to participate in that transformation. The first conviction reflects an entrepreneurial orientation toward resources, problems, and opportunities, whereas the second reflects a humanizing orientation toward teachers, psychological safety, and distributed responsibility. Their interaction helps explain why entrepreneurial initiatives at the case school were not limited to individual programs but instead developed into broader practices of innovation, perseverance, and organizational participation. The Dual Conviction Model should therefore be regarded as a case-derived conceptual proposition rather than a universally validated causal model.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that school principals working in resource-constrained environments should not focus exclusively on obtaining additional financial or material resources. They should also develop an asset-based leadership orientation, create psychologically safe spaces for teachers to express ideas and difficulties, distribute responsibilities, recognize contributions, and encourage calculated experimentation. Education authorities and policymakers can support these practices by designing leadership development programs that integrate entrepreneurial competence with psychological safety, collaborative problem-solving, innovation management, and community engagement. Such interventions may be particularly relevant for schools where material constraints make conventional resource-based improvement strategies difficult to implement. However, the transferability of these implications should be considered with

caution because the evidence derives from a single primary school and reflects the experiences and perceptions of participants within that specific institutional and contextual setting.

Overall, the findings address the study's objective by demonstrating how entrepreneurial school leadership manifests in resourcefulness, humanizing leadership, innovation, resilience, and community engagement, and by showing the central role of psychological safety in connecting these practices. The study, therefore, suggests that entrepreneurial leadership in resource-constrained primary schools may be better understood not simply as the ability to generate resources or implement innovative programs, but as the capacity to transform constraints while simultaneously creating relational conditions that enable teachers to participate confidently in organizational change. This interpretation provides the foundation for the Dual Conviction Model and offers a context-sensitive contribution to the discussion of entrepreneurial school leadership in resource-constrained educational settings.

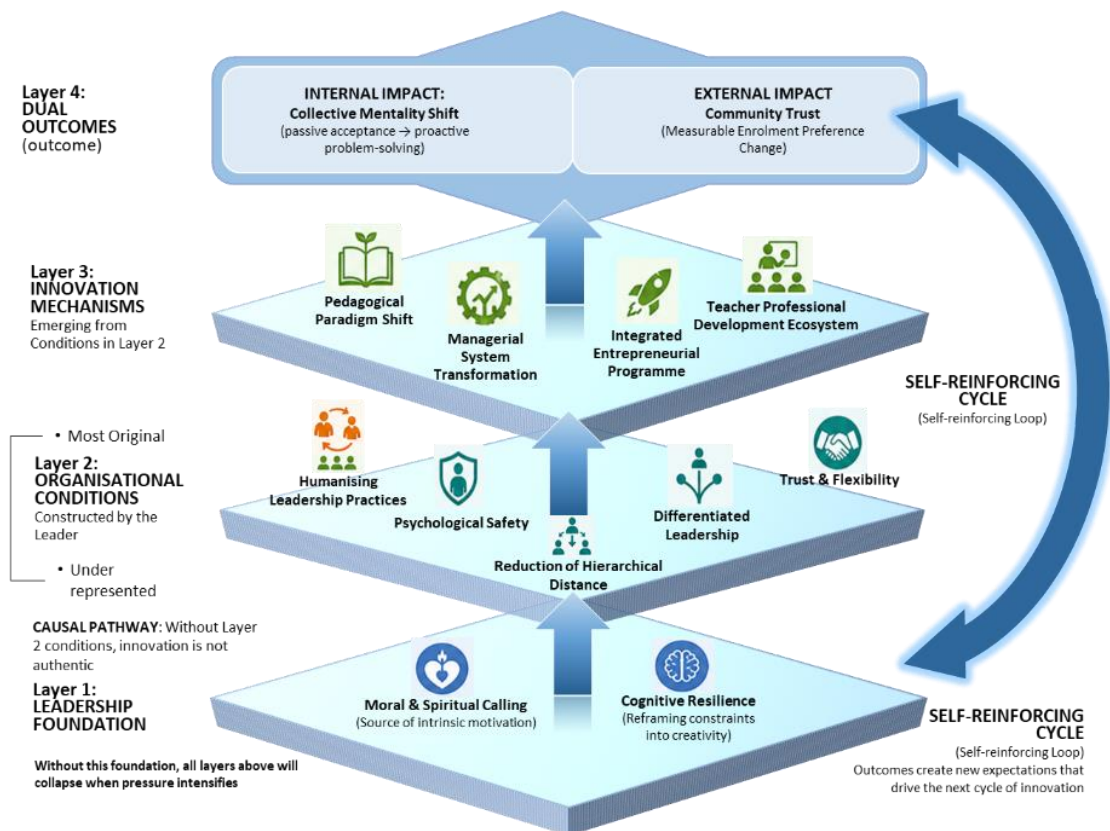


Figure 5. Integrative Framework: Humanizing Entrepreneurial Leadership - Four Causal Layers

The study's theoretical contribution is the integration of entrepreneurial school leadership and psychological safety within a humanizing leadership perspective. The framework proposes that opportunity recognition and resource mobilization are more likely to become sustained improvement practices when teachers experience dignity, trust, voice, and freedom to acknowledge uncertainty. The dual conviction model adds a complementary motivational proposition by linking meaningful purpose with perceived capability. These contributions are best understood as theory-building propositions generated from the case rather than definitive causal claims.

For practice, the findings suggest that principal development in resource-constrained schools should combine entrepreneurial competencies with relational capabilities. Leadership programs can train principals to map and mobilize existing assets, develop low-cost improvement initiatives, create psychologically safe spaces for teacher voice and experimentation, provide differentiated support for uneven readiness, and involve communities early in the planning process. These practices require relational and organizational capability rather than substantial additional financial resources.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to understand how entrepreneurial school leadership operates and contributes to quality improvement in resource-constrained primary schools. The findings indicate that entrepreneurial leadership is manifested through an asset-based orientation, humanizing leadership, pedagogical and managerial innovation, leadership resilience, and community engagement, with psychological safety emerging as an important condition that supports teachers' willingness to participate in innovation and organizational change. The study also proposes the Dual Conviction Model as a case-derived conceptual contribution, emphasizing the interaction between the belief that the work is meaningful and the belief that one is capable of contributing to it; unlike conventional motivation perspectives that primarily address individual motivational processes, this model connects meaning and perceived capability with leadership practices, psychological safety, and collective action within a resource-constrained school context. In practice, principals can strengthen entrepreneurial leadership by maximizing existing resources, creating psychologically safe spaces for teachers to express ideas and concerns, distributing responsibilities, recognizing contributions, and encouraging context-appropriate innovation. At the same time, policymakers can incorporate these elements into school leadership development and support programs. Because the findings are derived from a single qualitative case and a single period of data collection, they should be interpreted as context-specific insights rather than statistically generalizable or causal evidence. Future research should examine the proposed framework across multiple schools and contexts, use longitudinal designs to assess its sustainability, and quantitatively test the Dual Conviction Model and its proposed relationships. Overall, the study demonstrates that entrepreneurial leadership in resource-constrained primary schools involves not only mobilizing limited resources but also creating relational and psychological conditions that enable teachers to participate confidently in school improvement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors thank the principal, teachers, administrative staff, and school committee members of the case school in Tapanuli Tengah Regency, North Sumatra, for their time and their willingness to speak openly about their work. The authors used AI-assisted writing tools in the preparation of this manuscript. All substantive content, analytical interpretations, data, and conclusions presented in this paper are the sole intellectual work of the authors. All AI-assisted output has been reviewed, revised, and verified for accuracy by the authors, who bear full and exclusive responsibility for the integrity of this work.

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