



Leadership Strategies, Challenges, and Level of Effectiveness in Implementing School Based Management Among Elementary Schools In Viga East and West Districts

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Abstract

Effective leadership is widely recognized as a critical factor in the success of School-Based Management (SBM), particularly in decentralized education systems where school heads are tasked with decision-making, resource allocation, and stakeholder engagement. Despite extensive research on SBM implementation, most studies have focused on well-resourced and urban contexts, leaving limited understanding of how leadership strategies function in geographically isolated, resource-constrained elementary schools. Addressing this gap, the present study investigated the leadership strategies, challenges, and level of effectiveness in implementing SBM among elementary schools in the Viga East and West Districts, Philippines. Employing a descriptive-correlational research design, data were collected from 143 respondents, including school heads and teachers, through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Leadership strategies examined included participative decision-making, instructional leadership, resource mobilization, and vision-setting, while challenges were assessed across limited stakeholder engagement, inadequate training and capacity building, insufficient resources, and resistance to change. SBM effectiveness was evaluated in terms of improved learning outcomes, transparency and accountability, stakeholder involvement, and program sustainability. Findings revealed highly observed leadership strategies, moderate challenges, and high SBM effectiveness. Correlation analyses indicated that leadership strategies strongly influenced SBM outcomes, while effective management of challenges further enhanced program implementation. These results underscore the importance of adaptive, context-responsive leadership in resource-constrained rural schools and provide actionable recommendations for policy and practice to strengthen decentralized governance and educational outcomes.

Keywords: School-Based Management, leadership strategies, implementation challenges, SBM effectiveness, rural elementary schools, Philippines



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INTRODUCTION

Effective educational leadership remains a central factor in shaping school performance, teacher engagement, and student outcomes, particularly in decentralized governance systems such as School-Based Management (SBM). Globally, SBM has been recognized as a strategy that empowers school heads to make decisions on instructional practices, resource allocation, and stakeholder engagement, thereby improving overall school effectiveness.

In the Philippine context, SBM has long been institutionalized as a key framework for decentralizing authority to schools, giving school heads autonomy to tailor decisions according to their community's needs (Maca, 2019). Leadership strategies, including participative decision-making, instructional oversight, resource mobilization, and vision-setting, are widely acknowledged as critical in operationalizing SBM, as they directly influence teacher performance, student achievement, and institutional sustainability (Fadero & Fetalver,

2025; Cordial, Evangelista, & Bermudo, 2025). However, implementing these strategies often requires balancing multiple responsibilities while navigating resource constraints, contextual challenges, and varying levels of stakeholder involvement. Research indicates that effective leadership not only guides instructional improvement but also fosters transparency, accountability, and collaborative engagement, which are essential for sustaining SBM initiatives in diverse school settings (Cordial, Evangelista, & Bermudo, 2025).

Despite extensive studies on SBM leadership in urban and accessible provinces, research focusing on geographically isolated and resource-constrained areas remains limited. Rural school settings, such as those in Viga East and West Districts, present unique challenges, including limited access to professional development, insufficient instructional materials, logistical constraints, and varying levels of community involvement. Prior studies have predominantly explored SBM implementation in relatively well-resourced contexts, leaving a gap in understanding how leadership strategies function in remote elementary schools, where contextual barriers may significantly influence program effectiveness (Semanero, Berania, & Reyes III, 2023; Abaraon, Illescas, Perez, & Hamora, 2022). Moreover, the interrelationship between leadership strategies, implementation challenges, and SBM outcomes has been insufficiently explored in these rural contexts. While existing literature highlights the role of instructional leadership, participative governance, and resource management in enhancing school performance, there is a lack of empirical evidence on how these strategies interact with localized barriers such as resistance to change, stakeholder engagement deficits, and insufficient resources. This gap limits the ability of policymakers and educational practitioners to design interventions that are responsive to the nuanced realities of remote school environments. Addressing this gap is critical to ensure that SBM policies translate into tangible improvements in learning outcomes,

governance effectiveness, and program sustainability in resource-limited districts.

In response to these gaps, the present study investigates the leadership strategies employed by elementary school heads in Viga East and West Districts, the challenges they encounter, and the level of effectiveness in implementing SBM. Specifically, it examines participative decision-making, instructional leadership, resource mobilization, and vision-setting as key leadership strategies; identifies implementation challenges, including limited stakeholder engagement, inadequate training, insufficient resources, and resistance to change; and assesses SBM effectiveness in terms of improved learning outcomes, transparency and accountability, stakeholder involvement, and sustainability of school programs. Additionally, the study explores the interrelationships among leadership strategies, implementation challenges, and SBM effectiveness to generate evidence-based recommendations for enhancing leadership practices and addressing barriers to decentralized governance. By focusing on the distinctive context of rural, resource-constrained elementary schools, this research contributes localized empirical evidence to the growing body of literature on SBM in the Philippines and provides actionable insights for policy and practice aimed at strengthening school leadership, governance, and educational outcomes in similar contexts.

Statement of the Problem. This study examined the leadership strategies employed by elementary school heads in the Viga East and West Districts, the challenges they encountered, and the level of effectiveness of School-Based Management (SBM) implementation. It further sought to determine the interrelationships among leadership strategies, implementation challenges, and SBM effectiveness, thereby generating evidence-based insights to strengthen decentralized school governance. Below are the research questions:

1. What leadership strategies are employed by school heads in implementing school-based

management in elementary schools in Viga East and West Districts in terms of:

- 1.1 Participative Decision-Making;
 - 1.2 Instructional Leadership;
 - 1.3 Resource Mobilization; and
 - 1.4 Vision and Goal Setting?
2. What are the challenges encountered in the implementation of school-based management in these schools along:
- 2.1 Limited Stakeholder Engagement;
 - 2.2 Inadequate Training and Capacity Building;
 - 2.3 Insufficient Resources; and
 - 2.4 Resistance to Change?
3. What is the level of effectiveness of school-based management implementation in elementary schools in Viga East and West Districts in terms of:
- 3.1 Improved Learning Outcomes;
 - 3.2 Transparency and Accountability;
 - 3.3 Stakeholder Involvement; and
 - 3.4 Sustainability of School Programs?
4. Is there a significant relationship between leadership strategies and the challenges in implementing school-based management?
5. Is there a significant relationship between leadership strategies and the effectiveness of school-based management?
6. Is there a significant relationship between the challenges encountered and the effectiveness of school-based management?
7. Based on the findings, what action plan can be proposed to enhance leadership strategies and address challenges to improve the effectiveness of school-based management in elementary schools in Viga East and West Districts?

Null Hypotheses. At 0.5 level of significance, the following null hypotheses were tested:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between leadership strategies and the challenges in implementing school-based management.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between leadership strategies and the effectiveness of school-based management.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between the challenges encountered and the effectiveness of school-based management.

Scope of the Study. This research focused on the leadership practices, challenges, and effectiveness of School-Based Management (SBM) implementation among elementary school heads in the Viga East and West Districts during School Year 2025–2026. The study examined leadership strategies across participative decision-making, instructional leadership, resource mobilization, and vision and goal setting, while also identifying implementation challenges, including limited stakeholder engagement, inadequate training and capacity building, insufficient resources, and resistance to organizational change. Additionally, the investigation evaluated SBM outcomes in terms of student learning performance, transparency and accountability, stakeholder participation, and sustainability of school programs. The study further analyzed the interrelationships among leadership strategies, encountered challenges, and SBM effectiveness to provide evidence-based recommendations for strengthening decentralized school governance and enhancing institutional performance.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework This study is anchored on Transformational Leadership Theory and Contingency Theory, which together provide a robust explanatory lens for understanding how leadership practices shape School-Based Management (SBM) effectiveness within varied school contexts. Transformational Leadership Theory explains how school heads motivate and empower teachers through shared vision, participative decision-making, intellectual stimulation, and individualized support. These leadership behaviors foster collective responsibility, strengthen teacher commitment, and promote collaborative practices that are

essential for effective SBM implementation (Bush & Glover, 2016). More recent studies further demonstrate that transformational leadership enhances teacher competence, stakeholder engagement, and organizational coherence, particularly within decentralized education systems (Bush & Glover, 2021; Ang et al., 2025). In the Philippine setting, leadership practices such as mentoring, inclusive governance, and community partnership-building have been shown to reinforce school performance and stakeholder trust (Cordial et al., 2025; Villarama et al., 2024).

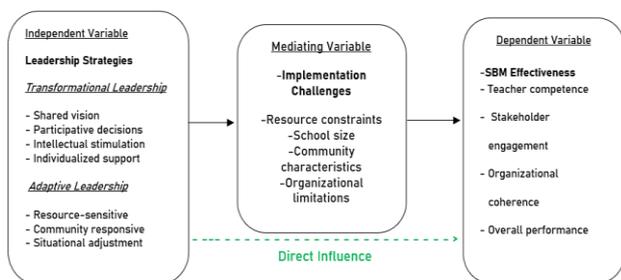


Figure 1
Conceptual framework illustrating the relationship between leadership strategies and School-Based Management effectiveness, with implementation challenges as a mediating variable.

Complementing this perspective, Contingency Theory emphasizes that leadership effectiveness is not universal but context-dependent. School heads must adapt leadership strategies to situational conditions such as resource availability, school size, community characteristics, and organizational constraints (Chikoko et al., 2020). Empirical evidence indicates that context-responsive leadership enhances governance quality and sustains SBM outcomes, particularly in rural and resource-constrained environments (Matias et al., 2024; Rapatan et al., 2025; Cordial, 2025a, 2025b). Integrating these theories, Figure 1 presents a refined conceptual framework that clearly delineates the relationships among variables. Leadership strategies function as the independent variable, directly associated with SBM effectiveness as the dependent variable. Implementation challenges are positioned as a mediating variable, representing contextual conditions that may either facilitate or constrain the translation of leadership practices into

effective SBM outcomes. This mediating pathway clarifies that leadership impact is not linear but operates through adaptive responses to contextual barriers. Overall, the framework provides a coherent and simplified representation of how transformational and adaptive leadership practices interact with contextual challenges to shape SBM effectiveness and overall school performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

School-Based Management (SBM) in elementary schools is strongly shaped by the leadership strategies employed by school heads, whose roles extend beyond administrative oversight to include instructional guidance, resource mobilization, and stakeholder coordination. Within decentralized education systems, leadership functions as a central mechanism through which policy intentions are translated into school-level practices that influence teacher performance, stakeholder participation, and program effectiveness. Examining leadership strategies within specific local contexts, particularly in geographically isolated and resource-constrained settings, is therefore essential for identifying enabling conditions and persistent barriers that affect SBM implementation.

Leadership Strategies and School-Based Management Effectiveness. Recent literature converges on the view that leadership strategies are a critical determinant of effective SBM implementation. Across studies, participatory decision-making, instructional leadership, strategic resource management, and vision-oriented practices consistently emerge as key drivers of teacher competence, stakeholder engagement, and institutional coherence. Cordial, Evangelista, and Bermudo (2025) demonstrated that structured mentoring, professional development, and the integration of technology-enhanced instructional practices contribute to improved teacher performance and classroom outcomes. Similarly, Ang et al. (2025) reported that participatory governance and flexible resource utilization are positively

associated with student achievement and attendance, underscoring the role of inclusive leadership in strengthening school outcomes.

Evidence from rural contexts reinforces these patterns. Rapatan et al. (2025) found that transparent governance, collaborative leadership, and strategic planning significantly enhanced SBM effectiveness in rural elementary schools, while Lauta (2025) identified principal competencies such as interpersonal effectiveness and the promotion of a learner-centered climate as strong predictors of SBM performance across leadership, stakeholder involvement, and resource management domains. Synthesized collectively, these findings suggest that leadership strategies operate as an integrated set of practices that enable schools to align instructional goals, organizational processes, and stakeholder contributions. This body of literature supports the conceptualization of leadership strategies as a multidimensional independent variable influencing SBM effectiveness.

Further studies highlight the broader institutional implications of leadership. Cordial (2025a) emphasized that leadership practices grounded in stakeholder engagement and community collaboration strengthen schools' adaptive capacity within decentralized governance systems. Likewise, Rahman and Hakim (2025) showed that instructional leadership and strategic vision are instrumental in translating policy mandates into measurable learning outcomes, particularly in resource-limited settings. Taken together, these studies affirm that leadership strategies not only shape immediate instructional processes but also sustain SBM effectiveness by fostering shared accountability and organizational alignment.

Challenges in SBM Implementation in Resource-Constrained Contexts. While leadership strategies are essential, the literature consistently indicates that SBM effectiveness is mediated by contextual and systemic challenges. Studies point to recurring

constraints that limit school heads' ability to operationalize leadership practices fully. Manzano and Illescas (2023) identified inadequate funding, administrative workload, and uneven stakeholder participation as persistent barriers to effective governance in Philippine public elementary schools. Similarly, Semanero, Berania, and Reyes III (2023) highlighted documentation gaps, limited training opportunities, and weak institutional support as impediments to achieving higher SBM maturity levels.

Research in rural and federated school settings further illustrates how contextual constraints shape implementation outcomes. Rapatan et al. (2025) observed that coordination difficulties, resource scarcity, and leadership fragmentation undermine institutional coherence in rural provinces. Cordial (2025a, 2025b) extended this discussion by linking gaps in disaster preparedness, community engagement, and organizational capacity to broader structural limitations that affect policy implementation. Synthesized across studies, these findings suggest that leadership effectiveness is contingent upon contextual conditions related to resources, human capital, and organizational support. As such, SBM outcomes cannot be attributed to leadership practices alone but must be understood within the constraints imposed by the school environment.

Contextual Gaps and the Need for Localized Evidence: Viga East and West Districts. Despite the growing body of research on leadership and SBM, existing studies are largely concentrated in more accessible provinces, such as Eastern Samar, Lanao del Sur, and Agusan del Sur, which may not fully capture the realities of geographically isolated and under-resourced areas like the Viga East and West Districts. Moreover, many studies examine leadership and SBM outcomes in broad terms, without systematically disaggregating leadership into specific subdomains or linking them to measurable SBM indicators such as learning outcomes, transparency, stakeholder involvement, and program sustainability.

Addressing these gaps, the present descriptive-correlational study focuses on operationalizing leadership strategies, implementation challenges, and SBM effectiveness into clearly defined and measurable dimensions within a localized context. By examining the interrelationships among leadership practices, contextual challenges, and SBM outcomes, the study extends existing literature that often treats these variables in isolation. As emphasized by Cordial, Evangelista, and Bermudo (2025), effective SBM requires the convergence of leadership capacity and contextual support. This integrated approach contributes localized, policy-relevant evidence that informs targeted interventions and strengthens decentralized school governance in rural Philippine settings.

METHODS

Research Design. This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the leadership strategies, challenges, and effectiveness of School-Based Management (SBM) implementation among elementary schools in the Viga East and West Districts for the School Year 2025–2026. The descriptive component summarized leadership practices, including participative decision-making, instructional leadership, resource mobilization, and vision setting, as well as implementation challenges such as limited stakeholder engagement, inadequate training, insufficient resources, and resistance to change. The observed effectiveness of SBM programs was evaluated in terms of student outcomes, accountability, stakeholder participation, and program sustainability. The correlational component assessed the interrelationships among leadership strategies, challenges, and SBM effectiveness, providing evidence-based insights for optimizing decentralized school governance (Creswell & Creswell, 2021; Fraenkel et al., 2020). Data were collected through structured surveys and semi-structured interviews with school heads and teachers, allowing triangulation of quantitative and qualitative findings. This design enabled

rigorous evaluation of contextualized leadership practices and informed strategic recommendations for enhancing SBM implementation in resource-constrained, rural Philippine schools (Villarama et al., 2024; Mertens, 2022; Bush & Glover, 2021).

Population, Samples and Sampling Technique.

The study population consisted of 222 respondents, comprising public elementary school teachers and school heads from Viga East and Viga West Districts for the 2025–2026 academic year. To ensure representative sampling, Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error was employed, resulting in a total sample of 143 participants. This included 85 teachers and 12 school heads from Viga West, and 40 teachers and 6 school heads from Viga East. Stratified proportional sampling was applied to reflect district-specific distributions, ensuring balanced representation across roles and locations. This approach enhanced the reliability and generalizability of the findings regarding leadership strategies, implementation challenges, and SBM effectiveness (Etikan et al., 2016; Taherdoost, 2017).

Instrumentation. The study utilized a researcher-developed and structured questionnaire to assess leadership strategies, implementation challenges, and the level of effectiveness of School-Based Management (SBM) among elementary schools in Viga East and West Districts. The instrument comprised three parts. Part I evaluated leadership strategies across four dimensions: participative decision-making, instructional leadership, resource mobilization, and vision and goal setting. Part II examined challenges in SBM implementation, including limited stakeholder engagement, inadequate training and capacity building, insufficient resources, and resistance to change. Part III measured the perceived effectiveness of SBM implementation in terms of improved learning outcomes, transparency and accountability, stakeholder involvement, and sustainability of school programs. Responses were recorded on a 4-point Likert scale, where higher scores reflected stronger

leadership practices, more serious challenges, or greater SBM effectiveness. The instrument was validated through expert review, pilot testing, and triangulated with qualitative interviews to ensure reliability, contextual relevance, and actionable insights (Creswell & Creswell, 2021; Mertens, 2022). The evaluation and scoring rubric is presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Evaluation and Scoring of Leadership Strategies, Implementation Challenges, and SBM Effectiveness

Assigned Points	Numerical Range	Leadership Strategies	Challenges Encountered	Level of SBM Effectiveness
4	3.25–4.00	Strongly Agree / Highly Observed	Strongly Agree / Serious Challenge	Strongly Agree / Highly Effective
3	2.50–3.24	Agree / Observed	Agree / Moderate Challenge	Agree / Moderately Effective
2	1.75–2.49	Disagree / Less Observed	Disagree / Slight Challenge	Disagree / Slightly Effective
1	1.00–1.74	Strongly Disagree / Not Observed	Strongly Disagree / Not a Challenge	Strongly Disagree / Not Effective

*Note: All variables were measured on a 4-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating stronger agreement, greater challenges, or higher SBM effectiveness across leadership, implementation, and outcome dimensions.

Data Analysis. The study employed both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses to evaluate leadership strategies, implementation challenges, and SBM effectiveness. Frequencies, percentages, and weighted means summarized the prevalence and extent of observed leadership practices and challenges, while Pearson correlation coefficients assessed the relationships among leadership strategies, challenges, and SBM effectiveness, providing an evidence-based understanding of decentralized school governance in the Viga East and West Districts (Creswell & Creswell, 2021; Field, 2020).

Ethical Considerations. Ethical compliance was rigorously upheld throughout the study. Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants to ensure voluntary participation and a clear understanding of the research objectives, procedures, and intended use of the data. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained by removing personal identifiers from all datasets and securing all records to protect participant privacy, while participants were informed of their right to

withdraw at any stage without penalty. Data were utilized solely for academic purposes, and findings were reported with honesty and transparency, avoiding fabrication, falsification, or misrepresentation in accordance with established ethical standards (Mertens, 2022; Israel & Hay, 2021). Consistent with ethical transparency, the study also acknowledged inherent methodological limitations, including potential self-report bias, the cross-sectional design, and the context-specific scope of the investigation. Overall, adherence to ethical principles strengthened participant trust, minimized potential risks, and ensured the integrity of examining leadership strategies, implementation challenges, and School-Based Management effectiveness, thereby providing a sound and responsible basis for policy-relevant recommendations.

RESULTS

The following section presents a comprehensive analysis of the findings on leadership strategies, implementation challenges, and the effectiveness of School-Based Management (SBM) in elementary schools within the Viga East and West Districts. Initially, the results in Table 2 indicate that school heads exhibit highly observed leadership strategies in implementing SBM, with an overall weighted mean of 3.57, interpreted as “Strongly Agree/Highly Observed.”

Table 2
Composite Summary of Leadership Strategy Indicators Supporting School-Based Management Implementation

Variable	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviations	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Participative Decision Making	3.54	±0.018	Strongly Agree/ Highly Observed	3
Instructional Leadership	3.61	±0.033	Strongly Agree/ Highly Observed	1
Resource Mobilization	3.52	±0.041	Strongly Agree/ Highly Observed	4
Vision and Goal Setting	3.59	±0.040	Strongly Agree/ Highly Observed	2
Overall weighted mean	3.57	±0.037	Strongly Agree/ Highly Observed	

Instructional Leadership ranks highest (3.61 ±0.033), highlighting school heads’ strong focus on guiding teaching and learning. Vision and

Goal Setting follows closely (3.59 ±0.040), emphasizing clear direction, while Participative Decision-Making (3.54 ±0.018) and Resource Mobilization (3.52 ±0.041) are slightly lower but still strong. The low standard deviations indicate minimal variation among responses, showing consistency in perceptions across respondents. These findings suggest that leadership practices are uniformly implemented, fostering engagement, structured governance, and effective support for SBM initiatives.

Subsequently, Table 3 shows that school heads encounter moderate challenges in implementing SBM. Insufficient Resources ranked highest (3.23, SD ±0.04), indicating a widely recognized constraint with minimal variability, suggesting consensus among respondents. Inadequate Training and Capacity Building (3.06, SD ±0.09) and Limited Stakeholder Engagement (2.98, SD ±0.09) reflect moderately observed barriers with slightly higher dispersion, implying some differences in perception. Resistance to Change scored lowest (2.85, SD ±0.05), showing a relatively smaller but still notable challenge. Overall, the mean of 3.03 with SD ±0.14 suggests moderate challenges with low-to-moderate variability, highlighting areas requiring targeted leadership and support.

Table 3
Composite Summary of Implementation Challenges Affecting School-Based Management

Variable	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviations	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Limited Stakeholder Engagement	2.98	± 0.09	Agree/ Moderate Challenge	3
Inadequate Training and Capacity Building	3.06	± 0.09	Agree/ Moderate Challenge	2
Insufficient Resource	3.23	± 0.04	Agree/ Moderate Challenge	1
Resistance to Change	2.85	± 0.05	Agree/ Moderate Challenge	4
Overall weighted mean	3.03	± 0.14	Agree/ Moderate Challenge	

Moreover, Table 4 indicates that SBM implementation in the surveyed schools is perceived as highly effective. Transparency and Accountability scored the highest (3.54, SD ±0.02), reflecting strong consensus among respondents and minimal variability. Sustainability of School Programs (3.52, SD

±0.01) also demonstrates consistently high effectiveness with negligible disperd Learning Outcomes (3.45, SD ±0.05) and Stakeholder Involvement (3.41, SD ±0.08) are slightly lower but still strongly effective, with SDs indicating moderate agreement among participants. The overall mean of 3.48 (SD ±0.04) suggests a generally high level of SBM effectiveness, with small variability highlighting reliable implementation across leadership domains.

Table 4
Composite Summary of Effectiveness Indicators in School-Based Management Implementation

Variable	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviations	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Improved Learning Outcomes	3.45	±0.05	Strongly Agree/ Highly Effective	3
Transparency and Accountability	3.54	±0.02	Strongly Agree/ Highly Effective	1
Stakeholder Involvement	3.41	±0.08	Strongly Agree/ Highly Effective	4
Sustainability of School Programs	3.52	±0.01	Strongly Agree/ Highly Effective	2
Overall weighted mean	3.48	±0.04	Strongly Agree/ Highly Effective	

In terms of relationships, Table 5 shows a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.559$) between leadership strategies and the challenges encountered in implementing SBM. Since the computed value exceeds the critical value at the 0.05 significance level ($0.559 > 0.164$), the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a statistically significant relationship. This suggests that stronger, well-applied leadership strategies tend to mitigate challenges, whereas weaker or inconsistent leadership may exacerbate obstacles in SBM implementation.

Table 5
Correlational Analysis of Leadership Strategies and Challenges in School-Based Management Implementation

Variables	Statistical Test	Computed Value	Critical Value @ .05	Decision	Interpretation
Leadership Strategies VS The Challenges in Implementing School-Based Management	Pearson r	0.559	0.164	Reject Ho	Significant Relationship

Further, Table 6 indicates an extremely strong positive correlation ($r = 0.995$) between leadership strategies and SBM effectiveness, with the computed value exceeding the critical value at the 0.05 significance level ($0.995 >$

0.164), thereby establishing statistical significance. While this result suggests a close association wherein effective leadership strategies, such as participative decision making, instructional guidance, resource mobilization, and vision setting, are strongly aligned with improved SBM effectiveness in terms of learning outcomes, transparency, stakeholder involvement, and program sustainability, the magnitude of the correlation warrants cautious interpretation. The unusually high coefficient may reflect potential multi collinearity between measured constructs, common method variance arising from self-reported perceptions, or context specific factors inherent in the sample. Moreover, the cross-sectional design limits causal inference, and the reliance on perceptual measures may amplify observed relationships. These considerations underscore the need for prudence in generalizing the findings and suggest that future studies incorporate larger and more diverse samples, longitudinal designs, and additional statistical diagnostics to validate and refine the observed relationship.

Table 6
Correlational Analysis of Leadership Strategies and School-Based Management Effectiveness

Variables	Statistical Test	Computed Value	Critical Value @ .05	Decision	Interpretation
Leadership Strategies VS The Effectiveness of School-Based Management	Pearson r	0.995	0.164	Reject Ho	Significant Relationship

Finally, Table 7 indicates a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.634$) between challenges encountered and SBM effectiveness. The computed value exceeds the critical value at the 0.05 significance level ($0.634 > 0.164$), confirming a statistically significant relationship. This suggests that the presence and management of challenges—such as limited stakeholder engagement, inadequate training, insufficient resources, and resistance to change—directly influence SBM effectiveness. Effectively addressing these challenges can further enhance learning outcomes, transparency, stakeholder involvement, and program sustainability.

Table 7
Correlational Analysis of Challenges Encountered and School-Based Management Effectiveness

Variables	Statistical Test	Computed Value	Critical Value @ .05	Decision	Interpretation
Challenges Encountered VS The Effectiveness of School-Based Management	Pearson r	0.634	0.164	Reject Ho	Significant Relationship

Proposed Action Plan to Enhance Leadership Strategies and Address Challenges to Improve the Effectiveness of School-Based Management in Elementary Schools in Viga East and West Districts

Rationale. The findings indicate that school heads exhibit strong leadership strategies, particularly in instructional leadership and vision setting, yet moderate challenges, such as insufficient resources, inadequate training, limited stakeholder engagement, and resistance to change, persist. Addressing these challenges while reinforcing effective leadership strategies is essential in maximizing the effectiveness of SBM, improve its learning outcomes, enhance transparency, and ensure program sustainability. Table 8 presents the action plan matrix to enhance leadership strategies.

Objectives. Below are the objectives of the proposed action plan:

1. Strengthen leadership capacities of school heads in participative decision-making, instructional oversight, resource mobilization, and vision alignment.
2. Mitigate key implementation challenges to SBM in resource-constrained and rural school settings.
3. Enhance overall effectiveness, sustainability, and stakeholder participation in SBM programs.

DISCUSSION

The present study examined leadership strategies, implementation challenges, and the effectiveness of School-Based Management

Table 8

Action plan matrix to enhance leadership strategies and address challenges to improve the effectiveness of school-based management in elementary schools in Viga East and West Districts.

Constraint Challenge	Strategic Objective	Activities / Strategies	Persons Involved	Time Frame	Resources Needed	Expected Outcomes
1. Insufficient Resources	Strengthen resource generation and utilization to support SBM programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a School Resource Mobilization Plan - Strengthen partnerships with LGUs, NGOs, and private sectors for financial and material support - Conduct training on budget prioritization and transparent fund management - Maximize utilization of MOOE aligned with SIP goals - Conduct workshops on instructional leadership, participative governance, and SBM monitoring 	School Heads, SDO Officials, LGUs, Teachers	Q1-Q4 2026	MOOE funds, partnership agreements, training materials	Improved resource availability and financial accountability in SBM implementation
2. Inadequate Training and Capacity Building	Enhance leadership competencies and technical skills of school heads and teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement mentorship and peer coaching programs - Introduce digital literacy and SBM management tools - Organize regular stakeholder consultation and feedback sessions 	School Heads, Teachers, SDO Training Coordinators	Q1-Q4 2026	Training modules, facilitators, digital tools	Increased leadership effectiveness and teacher capacity for SBM implementation
3. Limited Stakeholder Engagement	Foster active participation of parents, community members, and local organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create School Development Committees with active community representation - Launch community awareness campaigns on SBM programs - Conduct change management workshops 	School Heads, Teachers, Parents, LGUs, Community Leaders	Q1-Q4 2026	Meeting venues, IEC materials, communication platforms	Enhanced stakeholder involvement, collaborative decision-making, and shared accountability
4. Resistance to Change	Promote a culture of innovation, collaboration, and openness to SBM reforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognize and reward innovative practices - Encourage teacher and staff involvement in planning and evaluation - Develop SBM Leadership Guidelines and best practice protocols 	School Heads, Teachers, SDO Officials	Q1-Q4 2026	Training materials, incentives, monitoring tools	Reduced resistance, improved acceptance of SBM initiatives, and sustainable implementation
5. Variability in Leadership Practices	Standardize and strengthen leadership strategies across schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct quarterly leadership review and assessment - Facilitate inter-school collaboration and learning visits 	School Heads, SDO Officials	Q1-Q4 2026	Guidelines, assessment tools, coordination support	Consistent application of leadership strategies, improved governance, and SBM outcomes

(SBM) in Viga East and West Districts, highlighting the interplay between leadership, contextual barriers, and governance outcomes in resource-constrained rural settings. Results from Table 2 indicate that school heads demonstrate highly observed leadership strategies (mean = 3.57), with Instructional Leadership scoring highest (3.61 ±0.033), followed by Vision and Goal Setting (3.59 ±0.040), Participative Decision-Making (3.54 ±0.018), and Resource Mobilization (3.52 ±0.041). Minimal variability in responses suggests uniform implementation across schools, reflecting structured governance, teacher engagement, and effective resource utilization. These results align with prior research emphasizing that structured mentoring, professional development, and technology-enhanced instruction significantly improve teacher competence and classroom outcomes

(Cordial, Evangelista, & Bermudo, 2025). Participatory decision-making, resource flexibility, and stakeholder engagement also positively influence student achievement and attendance (Ang et al., 2025), while transparent governance and strategic resource management enhance SBM effectiveness in rural schools (Rapatan et al., 2025; Lautu, 2025). Collectively, these studies confirm that leadership strategies including instructional oversight, participative decision-making, resource mobilization, and vision-setting directly impact SBM outcomes.

Despite strong leadership, moderate challenges persist (Table 3; mean = 3.03 ±0.14). Insufficient Resources (3.23 ±0.04) emerged as the primary barrier, followed by Inadequate Training and Capacity Building (3.06 ±0.09), Limited Stakeholder Engagement (2.98 ±0.09),

and Resistance to Change (2.85 ±0.05). Low-to-moderate variability suggests general consensus on these challenges. These findings are consistent with previous studies highlighting systemic barriers such as limited funding, weak institutional support, and administrative burdens (Manzano & Illescas, 2023; Semanero, Berania, & Reyes III, 2023; Rapatan et al., 2025; Cordial, 2025b, 2025c), emphasizing that leadership must be complemented by structural and contextual support to optimize SBM outcomes.

SBM implementation was perceived as highly effective (Table 4; mean = 3.48 ±0.04), with Transparency and Accountability (3.54 ±0.02) and Sustainability of School Programs (3.52 ±0.01) scoring highest, followed by Improved Learning Outcomes (3.45 ±0.05) and Stakeholder Involvement (3.41 ±0.08). Minimal variability indicates a shared perception of SBM success, suggesting that leadership strategies are translating into tangible governance and educational outcomes. These results corroborate prior research demonstrating that leadership strategies aligned with stakeholder engagement enhance institutional capacity, teacher competence, and decentralized governance (Cordial, 2025a; Ang et al., 2025; Rapatan et al., 2025).

Correlation analyses (Tables 5 to 7) revealed a moderate positive relationship between leadership strategies and challenges ($r = 0.559$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that effective leadership can help mitigate barriers, while inconsistent leadership may exacerbate them. Leadership strategies and SBM effectiveness demonstrated an extremely high correlation ($r = 0.995$, $p < 0.05$). While this underscores the critical role of participative decision-making, instructional oversight, resource mobilization, and vision-setting in driving program success, such a high correlation warrants caution. The near-perfect association may indicate potential multi collinearity or conceptual overlap between these constructs or reflect reliance on perception-based measures rather than independent observations. Future studies should consider statistical controls, factor

analysis, or alternative modeling techniques to validate these relationships and ensure construct distinctiveness. Additionally, challenges and SBM effectiveness showed a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.634$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that effectively managing contextual barriers enhances program outcomes. Collectively, these results suggest that adaptive leadership and proactive challenge management are mutually reinforcing, facilitating successful SBM implementation in rural elementary schools (Cordial, Evangelista, & Bermudo, 2025).

In summary, school heads in Viga East and West Districts exhibit highly observed leadership strategies critical for guiding SBM initiatives, particularly in instructional leadership and vision-setting. Moderate challenges including insufficient resources, inadequate training, limited stakeholder engagement, and resistance to change persist, necessitating targeted interventions. SBM implementation is highly effective across transparency, sustainability, learning outcomes, and stakeholder involvement, reflecting the positive impact of leadership practices. The significant correlations between leadership strategies, challenges, and SBM effectiveness confirm that strong leadership mitigates barriers and enhances governance, while effective challenge management further supports program success.

To strengthen SBM implementation, a multi-faceted approach is recommended. Continuous professional development should enhance leadership capacities in participative decision-making, instructional oversight, resource mobilization, and vision alignment, standardizing practices across schools. Resource constraints can be addressed through school resource mobilization plans, partnerships with LGUs, NGOs, and private sectors, and transparent fund management. Capacity building should include mentorship, peer coaching, and digital literacy programs to improve competencies in SBM monitoring and instructional leadership. Stakeholder engagement can be fostered through regular

consultation sessions, School Development Committees, and community awareness campaigns. Promoting a culture of change management via workshops, recognition of innovative practices, and active staff involvement in planning and evaluation will reduce resistance. Monitoring and standardization of leadership practices through SBM guidelines, regular reviews, and inter-school learning visits will ensure consistency and continuous improvement.

These findings carry significant implications for policy and practice in rural, resource-limited contexts. Policymakers should prioritize capacity-building programs, allocate resources to sustain SBM, and promote community engagement. Practitioners should adopt a balanced approach combining strong leadership, participative decision-making, and proactive challenge management. By operationalizing leadership strategies and SBM outcomes into measurable dimensions and examining their interrelationships, this study provides localized evidence from Viga East and West Districts, advancing both conceptual understanding and practical strategies for SBM implementation in rural Philippine schools.

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