

# Leadership Styles of the School Heads that Influence the Implementation of School-Based Management

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**Abstract:** This qualitative study explored the lived experiences and viewpoints of teachers in the Irosin District during the 2025–2026 academic year to create a clearer understanding of the complex processes in implementing School-Based Management (SBM). Guided by four research questions, the study examined teachers' interpretations of school heads' leadership styles, how these styles shape school culture, transparency, and accountability, the challenges faced in leading instructional improvement, and the development of a responsive leadership training program. The findings showed that successful SBM leadership involves a combination of leadership approaches, with democratic or participative and transformational styles viewed most favorably. These approaches were found to promote shared decision-making, strengthen teacher ownership, boost morale, and encourage a collaborative school environment. Conversely, autocratic leadership was perceived negatively for undermining transparency and participation. Teachers observed that school heads face significant constraints, including administrative overload, resource limitations, time pressures, stakeholder resistance, and capacity gaps in instructional leadership and change management. To address these gaps, a comprehensive capacity-building program was proposed, emphasizing core competencies in instructional and adaptive leadership, practical learning modalities such as action learning and blended learning, and philosophical foundations rooted in transformational and ethical leadership. Conclusions affirm that adaptive, inclusive leadership is critical for SBM success, while recommendations call for systemic support, workload rebalancing, and targeted training to enhance school heads' ability to lead instructional improvement effectively. The study underscores that SBM should be reframed as an empowering mechanism for improving student learning outcomes rather than a mere compliance exercise.

**Keywords:** School-Based Management (SBM), Leadership Styles, Democratic Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Instructional Leadership, Capacity Building, Decentralized Governance, Teacher Perceptions.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Leadership is important for the success of an institution, as well as organizing its members to perform effectively and efficiently in their workplace. Leadership inspires, monitors, and sets an example for the people to create positive change in the organization. Additionally, this skill empowers a leader to draw out the best in their team and motivates members to collaborate in pursuing a shared goal.

A school, as an educational institution, requires strong and effective leadership to function successfully. The knowledge and competence of school leaders play an important role in achieving the school's mission, vision, and goals. While schools are composed of teachers with diverse

talents, skills, and strengths, these qualities alone are not enough to ensure success. A capable leader is needed to guide, inspire, and unify teachers so they can continuously improve and perform at their best.

Leadership is essential to making School-Based Management (SBM) work effectively, especially when it comes to using school resources wisely and bringing out the best in teachers and staff. Strong leadership helps ensure that both material resources and human potential are managed in ways that support the school's goals and improve overall performance. SBM emphasizes greater school autonomy to improve educational quality through a structured and goal-oriented management process. It empowers schools to manage their resources and finances independently and to allocate them according to identified priorities. Through this

approach, SBM aims to enhance both efficiency and educational outcomes by allowing schools greater flexibility and control over their resources.

Moreover, SBM provides opportunities for school principals, teachers, and students to introduce innovations and improvements, especially in curriculum delivery, learning processes, and school management. These improvements are driven by their experiences, creativity, and professional expertise. The concept of SBM itself highlights the importance of effective management, which refers to the strategic use of available resources to achieve specific educational goals.

According to the MNE of the Republic of Indonesia, the primary goal of SBM is to improve educational quality by encouraging school autonomy and initiative in managing resources. It also seeks to increase stakeholder and community participation through shared decision-making, strengthen accountability among school leaders, and promote healthy competition among schools. Similarly, Nurkolis emphasized that SBM can improve student achievement by enhancing resource efficiency, strengthening teacher professionalism, supporting curriculum reforms, and fostering greater community involvement.

The school leaders role 3to lead, guide, and coordinate school activities. One of their most important tasks is to create a high-quality teaching and learning environment. School heads are accountable for supporting teachers in improving instructional practices to ensure positive learning outcomes for students. Effective principals are expected to demonstrate genuine and impactful leadership, articulate clear and meaningful visions, and nurture a positive school culture that promotes strong teacher performance and professional growth (Nanson, 2010; Saleem et al., 2020).

Indeed, school heads have different leadership styles. These affect how they and their subordinates communicate and perform in their workplace. Having an effective leadership style can make communicating and performing in the workplace much easier for both the leaders and staff. The ability to lead others is not an easy task. This makes an effective leadership style necessary for school heads. Leadership styles provide direction, motivation, and communication for their subordinates. Therefore, leaders must employ a leadership style that is suitable for their attributes and the job itself. Moreover, they should consider their subordinates because each of them is unique; thus, fitting in the right leadership style is a must. In transforming the leadership styles, a leader will undergo different phases. Taking into consideration the individual situations and employing the styles as a tool kit to achieve the goal, which is to evaluate the ability of the subordinates and enhance their motivation level.

In considering the appropriate leadership style, school heads should ensure that honesty, integrity, respect, and competence are practiced. These ingredients in leading people will make the school a positive and healthy

workplace. These will give positive energy to the subordinates to do their job without hesitation and stress. Malos (2012) said that, leadership is one of the primary elements as to whether an organization and its personnel will be successful. To be an effective leader, it is essential to have a clear understanding of the different leadership styles. Leadership style directly influences organizational effectiveness and employee performance. Gaining a comprehensive understanding of these styles allows leaders to refine their approach and enhance their overall effectiveness.

Among the various leadership styles, four are commonly practiced by leaders: autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire, and transformational. Autocratic leaders tend to make decisions independently, exercising full control over tasks and directions. They give clear instructions on what needs to be done and how it should be accomplished, with little to no involvement from team members. In this style, participation in decision-making is limited, and leaders rarely seek input, suggestions, or initiative from others (Smylie & Jack, 1990; Hoy & Miskel, 1992; John, 2002).

In contrast, democratic leadership encourages active participation from individuals or team members. Leaders who adopt this approach welcome ideas and opinions, facilitate open discussions, and carefully consider contributions before arriving at decisions.

A leader with a laissez-faire style provides followers with discretion, gives them a wide range of authority and allows them to watch over the people they are responsible for making important choices, fulfilling the missions but also working together and navigating through setbacks. It stresses on the philosophy of Laissez Faire in personal and professional concerns of one's own, leading to a trust building and a sense of self-management (Research Gate 2018). When a leader gives followers the freedom to make decisions, and allows them to take control of their own activities, this style of leadership is known as Laissez-Faire management. Not only is independence made organic under the regime of laissez faire, it is rendered as infinitely indestructible because cohabitation in group projects, difficulty in processes established and technique of operations will suggest. This leadership style is characterized by leaders who take a hands-off approach, offering support without direct interference. Team members are given the freedom to explore, develop, and refine their skills independently. This distinctive leadership approach was first identified and described by Hackman.

The transformational leadership style inspires and motivates the teams towards the attainment of unified goals. It focuses on changing the systems and processes that are not functional. Transformational leadership is viewed as one of the best leadership styles for inspiring individuals to succeed. Leaders who demonstrate this skill are aware of both the strengths and limitations of their team members and value the unique abilities each individual brings to the group.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach that ensures the successful implementation of School-Based Management (SBM). How SBM is carried out differs across countries, regions, and even among schools within the same community. These variations are shaped by each school's unique context, available resources, and organizational culture. As a result, the leadership style of school heads becomes a key factor in SBM implementation, as it can either strengthen or hinder its effectiveness.

School principals play a central role in organizing, mobilizing, and making the best use of educational resources. Through thoughtful planning and continuous improvement initiatives, their leadership helps drive the achievement of the school's vision, mission, goals, and objectives. To perform this role well, principals need strong leadership and management skills, along with the initiative to enhance overall school quality. Despite this, schools often face challenges such as limited stakeholder involvement, inadequate funding, and scarce resources.

These realities led the researcher to undertake this study. The research aims to identify the leadership styles commonly practiced by school heads and explore how these approaches affect the implementation of School-Based Management. Furthermore, the study seeks to develop a leadership training program intended to enhance SBM implementation by strengthening the leadership capacity of school heads.

## II. OBJECTIVES

The following objectives were developed to guide this qualitative study, which explores teachers' perspectives on leadership styles, SBM implementation, and capacity-building needs in the Irosin II District:

- To describe the manifestations and effects of various leadership styles employed by school heads, as perceived by teachers, in the context of School-Based Management implementation.
- To examine teachers' narratives on how specific leadership styles influence school culture, transparency, and accountability essential to successful SBM.
- To identify and classify the key challenges and constraints that teachers observe school heads encountering in leading instructional improvement under SBM, particularly in relation to administrative workload, resource limitations, and resistance to change.
- To develop a responsive leadership capacity-building program aimed at enhancing school heads' adaptive and inclusive leadership practices for effective SBM implementation, based on identified gaps and observed needs.

## III. METHODS

This study explored the leadership styles employed by school heads in the implementation of School-Based Management and examined how these styles influence SBM practices and outcomes. It also investigated the challenges school heads face as leaders in their respective schools. Based on the findings, the study proposed a leadership training program to strengthen SBM implementation through improved leadership approaches.

The participants of the study included sixteen (16) school heads and sixteen (16) classroom teachers from the Irosin II District. These participants were purposively selected due to their significant roles in school leadership, policy implementation, and decision-making processes, particularly in relation to School-Based Management.

## IV. RESULTS

Information collected from various sources was carefully examined to uncover important trends and patterns related to leadership and the implementation of School-Based Management. The analysis was anchored on the main research questions, and the results are organized around the key themes that emerged from the data. This approach provides a clear and well-rounded understanding of the study's findings.

### A. *Different Leadership Styles Employed by School Heads in the Implementation of School-Based Management*

#### ➤ *The Leadership Style of the School Head Directly Influences the implementation of SBM*

Teachers consistently expressed that the leadership style adopted by the school leaders plays a crucial role in determining the success or failure of School-Based Management initiatives. Leadership approaches were seen as influential in shaping school processes, stakeholder engagement, and overall SBM effectiveness. Participant 1 stated that "*leadership affects the results of every action*," and stressed the importance of a "*collaborative, proactive and progressive approach*" to ensure SBM success. Participant 2 echoed this, noting that success depends on "*how leadership is manifested*," particularly when tasks are delegated and team strengths are utilized. Participant 3 provided a concrete example: while the school feeding program failed due to lack of support, initiatives like the reading recovery program and campus beautification succeeded because the school head "*encouraged participation and listened to everyone's input*."

The impact of transformational leadership was widely recognized. Participant 6 described how a principal who "*inspires and motivates teachers, parents, and students*" fosters shared vision and innovation, leading to successful initiatives like student support programs and professional learning communities. Participant 11 added that transformational leaders "*create shared vision and foster a culture of continuous improvement*," encouraging active participation from all stakeholders. Participant 12 affirmed

that under transformational leadership, “teachers feel involved, and decisions are made collectively.”

In contrast, authoritarian leadership styles were associated with failure or limited success. Participant 6 explained that when a school head “makes all key decisions without consulting teachers, parents, or community members,” it leads to resistance and minimal involvement, undermining SBM’s goals. Participant 9 warned that “a lack of strong leadership, or reliance on autocratic styles, can hinder SBM initiatives” by failing to engage stakeholders. Participant 8 simply stated that “transformational leadership plays an important role in success... while autocratic leadership is a big factor in its failure.”

Participant 7 emphasized the need for visionary and inclusive leadership, stating that a school leader must “initiate inclusivity and adaptability” and foster “distributed leadership among teachers and parents.” Participant 10 highlighted the importance of “transparency, shared vision, decision-making processes, collaboration, and empowerment” in achieving SBM success. Participant 14 reflected that leadership style affects not only decisions but also “how people feel about being part of the school’s journey,” noting that “empowering leadership tends to bring SBM to life; controlling leadership can shut it down.”

Participant 13 likened the school head to a “team captain,” whose leadership style “greatly affects the entire operation of the school.” Participant 15 shared that their school head “listens carefully, encourages input, and makes everyone feel part of the process,” while Participant 16 concluded that leadership that “includes, listens, and empowers” supports SBM success, whereas “controlling or distant leadership can hold it back.”

#### ➤ *Inclusive and Supportive Leadership: The Cornerstone of Effective SBM Implementation*

Teachers and staff responses to leadership styles in SBM implementation vary significantly depending on how leadership is exercised and communicated. A recurring theme is that inclusive and supportive leadership fosters motivation, engagement, and collaboration. Participant 3 noted that when leadership is “open, respectful, and inclusive,” teachers “feel valued and part of the decision-making,” leading to greater commitment. Participant 12 affirmed that “teachers respond positively when they are included and trusted,” while Participant 16 added that “when leadership is inclusive and supportive, teachers and staff feel motivated.” Participant 15 emphasized that leadership “shapes the emotional climate where teachers decide whether to lean in or hold back,” highlighting the psychological impact of leadership style.

Transformational and participative leadership styles were consistently associated with positive outcomes. Participant 6 explained that under transformational leadership, teachers “feel more empowered and committed,” and are more likely to engage in decision-making and innovation. Participant 9 observed that supportive and participative styles “foster collaboration, ownership, and

accountability,” improving work engagement and reducing turnover. Participant 10 shared that allowing teachers to take part in decision-making boosts their motivation and encourages more creative involvement in school activities.

Conversely, authoritarian leadership styles tend to result in resistance or minimal engagement. Participant 6 warned that such styles “might lead to resistance or passive compliance,” while Participant 11 noted that autocratic approaches “might lead to decreased motivation,” especially if they conflict with the school’s culture. Participant 3 shared that when leadership is “too strict or one-sided,” teachers tend to pull back and only do what’s required.”

Some responses highlighted the importance of clarity and purpose in leadership. Participant 1 stated that “if the teachers know the purpose of an action, whatever approach you employ, everyone will follow,” suggesting that transparency and communication can mitigate resistance. Participant 2 observed that while some staff may initially be reluctant, they become more receptive “when properly guided and supported by the one who leads the team.”

Participant 7 described teachers as showing “enthusiasm and eagerness” when leadership is supportive, and Participant 5 noted that teachers “may feel more invested in SBM if they’re actively involved in decision-making.” Participant 13 succinctly stated that teacher responses are “highly dependent on the leadership style of the school head,” while Participant 14 emphasized that when leaders are “supportive and open,” staff “feel respected and included.”

The responses indicate that leadership styles emphasizing collaboration, inclusivity, and support are more effective in encouraging positive participation from teachers and staff in the implementation of SBM. In contrast, rigid or top-down approaches may hinder participation and reduce morale.

#### ➤ *Contextual Leadership in SBM: One Size Does Not Fit All*

Teachers shared diverse views on the most effective leadership style for their school context, with many highlighting that no single approach is suitable for all situations. Participant 1 stated, This emphasizes that no single leadership style works best in all situations, and that effective leadership requires adaptability and sensitivity to the specific needs and challenges of each school. However, a strong preference emerged for participative, transformational, and democratic leadership styles, which were seen as most effective in fostering collaboration, motivation, and shared responsibility.

Participative leadership was highlighted by several participants. Participant 3 shared that “a participative leadership style works best,” especially in a school facing many challenges, because it encourages teamwork and empowers others. Participant 16 agreed, stating that “participative leadership feels most effective in our school.”

Participant 2 emphasized the value of collaboration, saying it “makes each member feel the essence of belongingness.”

Transformational leadership was also widely endorsed. Participant 5 described it as effective because it “inspires and motivates teams to achieve a shared vision.” Participant 6 provided a detailed explanation, noting that transformational and instructional leadership together “promote a culture of continuous improvement, collaboration, and high expectations.” Participant 9 added that transformational leadership “fosters a shared vision for school improvement,” encouraging active participation in SBM. Participant 13 emphasized that it “empowers the potentials of subordinates and promotes collaboration and consultation.”

Democratic leadership was seen as particularly well-suited for school settings. Participant 10 observed that it “fosters collaboration, encourages teacher participation in decision-making, and promotes a sense of responsibility.” Participant 11 elaborated that democratic leadership “builds a positive school climate” and “develops future leaders” by encouraging open communication and shared decision-making. Participant 14 simply stated “democratic leadership,” while Participant 15 noted that “when we work as a team, changes through SBM feel real and lasting.”

Other participants highlighted instructional, situational, and servant leadership as effective in specific contexts. Participant 7 suggested that “instructional and situational, and distributed leadership styles are most effective,” as they promote shared responsibility and mutual support. Participant 8 favored “transformational and servant leadership,” explaining that proper motivation and support help teachers improve and reach common goals. Participant 4 emphasized the importance of a leader being “transparent, committed, and responsive to the needs of his/her people.”

The responses reflect a strong belief that collaborative, inclusive, and empowering leadership styles particularly participative, transformational, and democratic are most effective in supporting SBM implementation and fostering a positive school culture. These leadership styles not only boost teacher motivation and engagement but also support the principles of shared governance and ongoing school improvement.

#### *B. How School Heads' Leadership Styles Shape the Implementation of School-Based Management*

##### ➤ *Leadership Style as a Catalyst for Stakeholder Collaboration in SBM*

Teachers consistently highlighted that leadership style is crucial in fostering collaboration among both internal and external stakeholders during SBM implementation. Participant 1 noted that “stakeholders understand their importance in implementing school programs,” and therefore, leaders must adopt approaches that “satisfy their expectations.” Participant 3 reinforced this by stating that when a school head “builds trust and communicates clearly,” it brings teachers, parents, and community

members together. Conversely, if the leader is “distant or unapproachable,” people “lose interest and stop getting involved.”

Many participants highlighted the effectiveness of democratic, participative, and transformational leadership styles in fostering collaboration. Participant 6 explained that a participatory style “encourages open dialogue, shared decision-making, and mutual respect,” which strengthens trust and empowers stakeholders to contribute meaningfully. Participant 11 added that participative leadership “fosters strong relationships and promotes active engagement,” while Participant 12 emphasized that collaborative and transformational leadership “opens communication, builds trust, and encourages stakeholders to actively participate.”

Transparency and sincerity were also seen as essential traits. Participant 5 stated that “open and transparent communication can foster collaboration and teamwork,” and Participant 8 noted that “the more you are transparent and sincere... the more the teachers and community win their trust.” Participant 10 highlighted that leadership style “creates strong partnerships” by shaping school culture and communication patterns, leading to “better relationships and improved outcomes.”

Participant 9 described how inclusive leadership styles “create an environment where all stakeholders feel valued and empowered,” resulting in stronger partnerships and more effective SBM implementation. Participant 14 succinctly stated that when “leaders listen and involve everyone, trust grows, and collaboration happens naturally.” Participant 15 added that “the right leadership style can turn a group of individuals into a real school community.”

Some responses acknowledged that leadership must be context sensitive. Participant 2 remarked that “the success of SBM implementation can be attributed to how a leader leads,” and that the effectiveness of leadership styles depends on how they are utilized. Participant 4 emphasized that involving all stakeholders “deepens the relationship” and makes program implementation easier. Participant 7 affirmed that “every voice counts,” and shared that purpose is key to collaboration.

Participant 13 pointed out that collaboration only happens “if the leadership style encourages it,” and Participant 16 concluded that the right leadership style “can give a simple path in achieving school vision towards success.”

##### ➤ *Leadership Transitions and Their Impact on SBM Effectiveness: A Mixed Reality*

Teachers provided mixed responses regarding changes in SBM effectiveness following a shift in leadership style. While some reported no noticeable change, others observed significant improvements when leadership became more inclusive and supportive. Participant 1 and Participant 2 simply stated “No” and “None so far,” indicating that they had not experienced any change. Participant 7 and Participant 16 also responded with “None,” suggesting that

either leadership style remained consistent or its impact was not evident.

In contrast, several participants shared that a positive shift in leadership style led to better SBM outcomes. Participant 3 noted that when leadership became “more open and supportive,” there was “more teamwork,” and programs became “more aligned with what students needed.” Participant 6 provided a detailed explanation, stating that transitioning from a “top-down, authoritative leadership style to a more participatory and transformational approach” resulted in “noticeable improvement in stakeholder engagement, decision-making processes, and overall school performance.” This shift fostered “innovation, better resource utilization, and more responsive strategies,” ultimately leading to “measurable gains in teaching and learning outcomes.”

Participant 9 affirmed that “shifts towards more collaborative leadership styles” improved SBM effectiveness through “increased teacher engagement and community participation.” Participant 10 observed that such changes “led to increased teacher engagement, improved school culture, and better learning outcomes.” Participant 11 emphasized that a shift from autocratic to participatory leadership “fostered greater teacher buy-in, increased collaboration, and improved SBM implementation and outcomes,” including “enhanced motivation and greater accountability.”

Participant 13 reflected that “the moment you change your style everything will be affected,” stressing that “not all leadership styles are so effective” and that the right style must match the situation. Participant 15 shared that effectiveness improved “when stakeholders started to attend and support school projects,” linking leadership style directly to community involvement.

The responses suggest that a shift toward participative, transformational, and collaborative leadership styles tends to enhance SBM effectiveness by increasing stakeholder engagement, improving school culture, and aligning programs with actual needs. However, in some contexts, changes in leadership style may not be immediately felt or may require more time to manifest noticeable results.

#### ➤ *Leadership Style and Strategic Prioritization in SBM: Insights from the Ground*

Teachers shared varied insights on how leadership style affects the prioritization of school programs and projects. While some, like Participant 1, believe that “leadership style does not influence prioritization... but it affects the success,” most responses highlighted that leadership style is key in determining and shaping priorities. Participant 2 explained that prioritization “depends on the focus of the school head’s mission and vision,” suggesting that leadership direction guides what programs are emphasized.

Many participants highlighted that inclusive and transformational leadership styles lead to more relevant and

responsive prioritization. Participant 3 noted that when a school head “listens to the school community,” priorities become “more relevant and targeted,” such as focusing on student welfare or teacher training. Participant 6 elaborated that leadership style “shapes how decisions are made, who is involved, and what values guide resource allocation,” with participatory leaders aligning priorities with shared goals and learner outcomes. Participant 9 added that transformational leaders “prioritize initiatives aligning with a shared vision,” involving stakeholders in decision-making.

Participant 5 emphasized that leaders “with a clear vision can prioritize projects aligning with organizational goals,” while Participant 10 observed that different leadership styles “lead to different approaches in decision-making, resource allocation, and engagement.” Participant 11 reinforced that leadership style “significantly influences how school programs and projects are prioritized,” affecting the overall focus and resource distribution.

Some responses stressed the importance of stakeholder involvement. Participant 12 stated that leaders who “involve stakeholders tend to prioritize programs based on actual needs,” assessing resources and staff capacity. Participant 7 highlighted that “shared responsibility among teachers and community” ensures proper coordination and good outcomes. Participant 8 warned that a lack of consultation during implementation can skew prioritization, as “it affects a lot to which comes first.”

Participant 13 offered a contrasting view, asserting that prioritization “is dependent on the need assessment, not on the leadership style,” suggesting that data and context should drive decisions more than leadership traits. However, Participant 14 pointed out that leadership style “shapes whether programs feel imposed or supported,” which directly affects stakeholder commitment. Participant 15 added that effective leadership “often leads to balanced priorities,” such as focusing on both academics and student well-being. Participant 16 concluded that leadership provides “a basis to choose projects based on their needs.”

The responses indicate that leadership style influences not only what gets prioritized but also how programs are perceived, supported, and sustained. Inclusive, visionary, and participatory leadership styles tend to align priorities with actual school needs, foster stakeholder engagement, and enhance the effectiveness of SBM initiatives.

#### ➤ *Leadership-SBM Alignment: A Prerequisite for Effective School Governance and Program Implementation*

Teachers overwhelmingly agreed that misalignment between leadership style and SBM principles leads to significant challenges in school governance and program implementation. Participant 1 noted that when leadership does not reflect SBM values, “the result is very minimal,” and stakeholder participation may decline. Participant 2 added that SBM “cannot be properly implemented,” resulting in poor prioritization of projects and programs. Participant 3 described how such misalignment “creates confusion and frustration,” causing teachers to feel

disconnected and parents to withdraw from participation. Without shared decision-making, “programs lose support and often don’t last long.”

A recurring theme was a lack of collaboration and stakeholder engagement. Participant 6 explained that autocratic leadership “can stifle teacher and community participation,” leading to “low morale,” “limited ownership,” and “ineffective communication.” Participant 9 echoed this, stating that autocratic leadership “hinders collaboration and participation,” erodes trust, and undermines implementation. Participant 11 emphasized that such clashes “create significant challenges,” including reduced teacher engagement and ineffective resource allocation.

Participant 5 pointed out that teachers and staff “may resist new initiatives” if they are excluded from decision-making. Participant 7 warned that when decisions come solely from school heads, “and communication is absent,” collaboration suffers. Participant 8 observed that this leads to “lack of support or non-compliance,” and projects may fail to materialize. Participant 10 listed several consequences: “inefficient resource allocation, decreased teacher motivation, and lower student achievement.”

Participant 12 identified low stakeholder engagement as the biggest challenge, noting that exclusion leads to communication breakdowns and less effective programs. Participant 13 stated bluntly that “no positive outcomes can be expected” when leadership style contradicts SBM principles. Participant 14 added that communication becomes “one-way,” making problem-solving difficult. Participant 15 warned that schools may “miss chances for creative, local solutions,” which SBM is designed to support. Participant 16 concluded that misalignment results in “loss of chances and resources.”

The answers clearly show that SBM thrives on participatory, inclusive, and transparent leadership. When leadership styles are authoritarian, rigid, or disconnected from the school community, they undermine the core principles of SBM, shared governance, collaboration, and responsiveness, leading to disengagement, inefficiency, and diminished school performance.

#### *C. Challenges Encountered by School Heads in Leading Their Schools During the Implementation of School-Based Management.*

##### ➤ *Empowering Leadership through Support Systems: Strengthening SBM Implementation*

Teachers identified a variety of support systems that assist school heads in addressing the challenges of School-Based Management (SBM). A recurring theme was the critical role of the school community and stakeholders. Participant 1 emphasized that “the school community takes a huge role,” while Participant 2 described the community and stakeholders as “the most powerful support.” Participant 3 elaborated that support includes “training from the division office, peer coaching among school heads, and school

governing councils,” along with help from teachers and community partners who contribute resources and manpower.

Technical assistance and capacity-building programs were frequently mentioned. Participant 4 cited “consultation, feedback, forum, and technical assistance” as key mechanisms. Participant 6 provided a comprehensive view, stating that support systems should include “capacity-building programs, mentoring, and access to technical assistance,” along with “regular training workshops on financial management, instructional leadership, and participatory governance.” Participant 7 and Participant 10 also mentioned “training and capacity building” and “training and development programs” as essential supports.

Mentoring and peer support were highlighted as valuable tools. Participant 12 noted the importance of “mentoring from experienced school leaders,” while Participant 15 emphasized “coaching and mentoring from experienced leaders.” Participant 16 added that “peer learning groups share experiences and solutions,” creating a collaborative environment for problem-solving. Participant 9 described “active coping and seeking support from colleagues” as common strategies among school heads.

Policy frameworks and institutional support also play a role. Participant 11 explained that school heads are supported through “DepEd guidelines and technical assistance,” also “school-level monitoring and evaluation systems”, “learning action cells (LACs).” These platforms provide opportunities for professional development and collaborative problem-solving. Participant 10 added that “policy frameworks, resource allocation, and collaborative networks” are part of the support structure.

Finally, training programs and benchmarking were seen as essential for understanding and applying SBM principles. Participant 14 stated that “training programs help school heads understand SBM principles and how to lead with collaboration,” while Participant 13 simply noted the importance of “capacity-building activities.”

The narratives reflect a robust ecosystem of support that includes community involvement, technical assistance, professional development, mentoring, and institutional frameworks. These systems empower school heads to lead effectively, navigate challenges, and sustain the principles of SBM in their schools.

##### ➤ *SBM Challenges as Barriers to Learning: The Leadership Imperative*

Teachers consistently highlighted that the challenges faced in implementing School-Based Management (SBM) directly and significantly affect teaching and learning outcomes. Participant 1 stated that “failure in SBM will directly affect the teaching and learning outcome because the center of SBM is the children,” highlighting that any disruption in SBM affects learners both directly and indirectly. Participant 2 pointed to a “poor learning environment” as a consequence, while Participant 8 noted

that an “unsupportive learning environment fails to have positive learning outcomes.”

A common theme was the delay and inefficiency in program implementation, which affects instructional quality. Participant 3 explained that challenges “can delay program implementation and reduce the quality of teaching,” leading to teacher frustration and lower student engagement. Participant 4 added that difficulties in program support and implementation “may affect the learning and teaching outcome.” Participant 6 elaborated that poor SBM execution leads to “delayed procurement, unclear school priorities, and poor monitoring,” which disrupts classroom instruction and student support services.

Teacher morale and workload were also frequently mentioned. Participant 5 warned that “increased workload and stress can lead to teacher burnout,” affecting their ability to deliver high-quality instruction. Participant 12 noted that poor SBM implementation “affects resource allocation, teacher morale, and student support systems,” while Participant 11 stated that it “hinders the teacher’s ability to effectively deliver instruction,” resulting in lower student engagement and achievement.

Participant 9 emphasized that “a lack of collaborative decision-making can lead to inefficient resource allocation,” depriving teachers of essential materials and support. Participant 10 added that this leads to “inconsistent teaching quality and lack of focus on student needs,” breaking down the collaborative effort needed to improve outcomes. Participant 14 observed that “less collaboration means fewer creative ideas,” which can stifle innovation in teaching practices.

Participant 7 stressed that poor planning of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) affects both school and student performance. Participant 13 pointed out that “many school leaders are not yet fully capacitated along SBM,” which limits their ability to lead effectively. Participant 15 summarized the impact as “poor school performance,” while Participant 16 noted that challenges affect “lessons and student activities.”

The different views reveal that SBM-related challenges, especially those tied to leadership, planning, and stakeholder engagement, can significantly hinder teaching effectiveness, reduce student achievement, and weaken the overall learning environment. Addressing these challenges is essential to ensure that SBM fulfills its goal of improving educational outcomes through decentralized, participatory school governance.

#### *D. Suggested Leadership Training Program to Strengthen the Implementation of School-Based Management*

##### ➤ *Building Leadership Competencies for SBM Success: Insights from the Teaching Force*

Teachers identified a wide range of leadership competencies that should be prioritized in training programs to support effective SBM implementation. A recurring

theme was the importance of instructional supervision and strategic planning. Participant 1 emphasized “instructional supervision and school program cycle,” while Participant 3 listed “communication, decision-making, strategic planning, people management, and instructional supervision” as essential skills for school heads. Participant 6 highlighted “strategic leadership and stakeholder engagement” as key competencies, explaining that these enable leaders to “set clear goals, make data-informed decisions, and align resources with school improvement plans.”

Interpersonal and intrapersonal skills were also noted as critical. Participant 2 stressed that these should be “given emphasis,” while Participant 12 added “communication, collaboration, decision-making, problem-solving, and the ability to motivate others” as vital for effective leadership. Participant 8 echoed the need for “communication, strategic thinking, and decision-making,” and Participant 15 emphasized “problem-solving and decision-making.”

Several participants pointed out the importance of collaboration and stakeholder involvement. Participant 5 suggested “involving stakeholders in decision-making,” and Participant 10 recommended prioritizing “collaborative decision-making, resource management, shared vision, and continuous improvement.” Participant 14 emphasized “collaboration to build strong teams and encourage everyone’s participation,” while Participant 13 noted that more training should be directed toward “grassroots implementors” who are directly involved in SBM execution.

Transformational and visionary leadership were also seen as foundational. Participant 9 stated that “transformational leadership is fundamental to SBM’s success,” as it helps leaders “articulate a compelling vision, inspire stakeholders, and foster a culture of collaboration and accountability.” Participant 11 added that training should focus on “visionary leadership, instructional leadership, and collaborative leadership,” which enhance teaching quality and foster a positive learning environment.

Participant 4 described effective leaders as “transparent, collaborative, and committed,” while Participant 7 suggested that all Key Result Areas (KRAs) should be aligned in training. Participant 16 emphasized the need for “instructional leadership,” where leaders actively support teaching through supervision, feedback, and professional development.

The insights reflect that training programs for SBM should prioritize competencies that promote strategic thinking, collaboration, instructional leadership, stakeholder engagement, and effective communication. These skills empower school heads to lead with clarity, inclusivity, and responsiveness, assuring that SBM principles are successfully implemented and sustained.

##### ➤ *Designing Responsive Leadership Training: Equipping School Heads for SBM Excellence*

Teachers recommended a diverse and comprehensive set of topics and modules for leadership training programs

aimed at strengthening SBM implementation. A recurring theme was the significance of instructional leadership and strategic school improvement planning. Participant 1 suggested modules on “school leadership, curriculum, monitoring and evaluation,” while Participant 3 emphasized “participative leadership, school improvement planning, community engagement, resource management, and monitoring and evaluation.” Participant 14 proposed a focused module on “Collaborative School Improvement Planning,” which involves co-creating the School Improvement Plan (SIP) with stakeholders using data and consensus.

Leadership competencies and ethics were also highlighted. Participant 2 recommended “developing personal and work ethics,” and Participant 5 emphasized “developing leadership skills, shared decision-making, and collaborative problem-solving.” Participant 6 proposed a module titled “Leading with Vision: Building a Collaborative School Culture,” which emphasizes building trust, effective communication, and strategic planning. Participant 8 suggested a module on “Developing Leadership Competencies: An Edge to Leadership Success.”

Understanding leadership styles and adaptability was another key area. Participant 9 suggested a module titled “Understanding Leadership Styles,” which would cover transformational, transactional, servant, autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership approaches, along with their practical applications in different contexts. Participant 11 advocated for a well-rounded program including “communication, emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, decision-making, team building, and change management,” along with strategic thinking, coaching, mentoring, and diversity and inclusion.

Practical and strategic skills were also emphasized. Participant 10 listed “fostering leadership skills, effective communication, goal setting, time management, organizational planning, team building, conflict resolution, and delegation.” Participant 12 added “stakeholder engagement, data-driven decision-making, financial management,” and program evaluation. Participant 15 stressed the need for modules that are “human-centered, grounded in real practice, and aligned with SBM principles,” helping leaders lead with empathy and confidence.

Participant 13 called for more training at the grassroots level, noting that “more trainings were conducted in the higher office compared to the real program implementers.” Participant 16 recommended “reflective leadership,” encouraging leaders to continuously assess and improve their practices.

The ideas narrated reflect a strong desire for training programs that blend strategic planning, ethical leadership, stakeholder engagement, instructional supervision, and practical management skills. These modules should be designed to empower school heads to lead collaboratively, adaptively, and effectively within the SBM framework.

➤ *Designing Responsive Leadership Training: Equipping School Heads for SBM Excellence*

Teachers emphasized that leadership training should be carefully tailored to each school’s specific context, challenges, and goals. Participant 1 noted that training programs should be “need-based” or “competency-based” to address actual leadership demands. Participant 10 suggested starting with a comprehensive assessment to identify the school’s challenges and opportunities, as well as its strengths, weaknesses, and particular needs, to support sustainable improvement. Similarly, Participant 11 stressed the importance of conducting a detailed assessment to determine leadership gaps and ensure that the training content and methods are appropriately designed to address those areas effectively. Several participants underscored the significance of ensuring contextual relevance. Participant 3 explained that training should be “adjusted based on what the school needs,” such as including strategies for community engagement if that is a challenge. Participant 12 added that training should consider “school size, community background, available resources, and the current capacity of our staff.” Participant 14 emphasized using “real, relatable scenarios” and “daily life challenges” to make training feel relevant and immediately applicable.

Leadership competencies were also a focus. Participant 5 suggested enhancing skills like “decision-making,” while Participant 16 emphasized building “personal leadership skills, like emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, and resilience.” Participant 6 provided a comprehensive view, stating that training should address “instructional leadership, conflict resolution, and community engagement,” and include “practical workshops, mentorship programs, and scenario-based learning.”

Collaborative and inclusive approaches were also recommended. Participant 7 proposed a “collaborative assessment” and offering training to teachers as well. Participant 15 stressed that training should be “aligned with SBM principles,” while Participant 13 advocated for “a series of incremental trainings coupled with applications” to ensure continuous capacity building.

Participant 2 suggested that training should be “simple yet impactful,” and Participant 8 noted that it should help leaders “deal with [their] leadership practice” more effectively. Participant 9 emphasized the importance of “needs assessments” to identify gaps and tailor training to focus on relevant skills like “data analysis” and “community engagement strategies.”

The answers reflected a strong consensus that effective leadership training must be personalized, practical, and grounded in the real-world context of each school. It should be built on a foundation of assessment of needs, focus on both technical and interpersonal competencies, and be delivered in a way that empowers school leaders to lead with confidence, empathy, and strategic clarity.

➤ *Interactive and Blended Learning for Leadership Development: Strengthening SBM Through Contextualized Training*

Teachers strongly favored interactive and blended formats for leadership training, emphasizing the need for practical, engaging, and context-relevant learning experiences. The most frequently mentioned format was workshops, with Participant 1, Participant 12, and Participant 16 directly recommending them for their hands-on and collaborative nature. Participant 5 added that “hands-on activities, group activities, and case studies” enhance learning, while Participant 13 emphasized “in-person training workshops and practical applications.”

Many participants advocated mentoring and peer learning as essential components. Participant 2 suggested a combination of “workshops and mentoring,” and Participant 3 supported a “mix of workshops and peer mentoring.” Participant 8 simply stated “mentoring,” while Participant 14 also recommended “workshops and peer mentoring.” Participant 7 proposed “LAC sessions and mentoring” as effective formats for continuous professional development.

Several responses highlighted the value of a blended or multi-modal approach. Participant 6 described an ideal format as “a combination of experiential learning with a coaching-focused, interactive format,” incorporating “workshops, case studies, role-playing, peer feedback, and ongoing mentorship.” Participant 10 recommended a mix of “interactive workshops, coaching, mentoring, and practical exercises like action learning and 360-degree feedback,” alongside online resources for self-directed learning. Participant 11 agreed that “a combination of formats tends to be most effective,” blending workshops, mentoring, and online courses to create a comprehensive and flexible program.

Participant 9 emphasized the importance of addressing multiple learning styles, noting that “workshops provide interactive, hands-on experiences, while online courses offer flexibility and self-paced learning,” and mentoring offers personalized guidance. Participant 4 suggested “professional development training and benchmarking,” while Participant 15 recommended “related activities and trainings” that are grounded in real practice.

A strong preference for interactive, flexible, and context-sensitive training formats. A blend of workshops, mentoring, coaching, and online learning, customized to the needs of school leaders, can promote deeper understanding, practical application, and ongoing leadership development in line with SBM principles.

➤ *Proposal for a Blended Leadership Development Program*

● *Rationale*

The evolving demands of educational leadership in the context of School-Based Management (SBM) require school heads to possess a dynamic blend of administrative, instructional, and strategic competencies. As

decentralization continues to shape school governance, the role of school leaders has expanded beyond compliance to include participatory decision-making, instructional enhancement, and stakeholder engagement.

Despite their important responsibilities, many school heads struggle to balance these roles because they have limited access to leadership development programs that address their specific needs. Traditional training approaches often fall short, as they lack flexibility, contextual relevance, and ongoing support necessary for meaningful leadership growth. This gap highlights the need for a more innovative, practical, and responsive approach to professional development.

The proposed Blended Leadership Development Program integrates multiple learning strategies, such as interactive workshops, mentoring, peer collaboration, online learning modules, and experiential activities. The program is created to respond to the diverse needs of school leaders while remaining flexible, inclusive, and easy to adapt across different settings. More importantly, it is grounded in the key principles of School-Based Management and transformational leadership, helping school heads build strong, effective, and sustainable leadership practices over time.

This program aims to empower school heads to lead with confidence, competence, and clarity. By combining theory with practice, and individual reflection with collaborative learning, the program will foster leadership that is both effective and inclusive.

Ultimately, the initiative supports the broader goal of improving school performance and learner outcomes by strengthening the leadership capacity at the school level, where change is most impactful.

➤ *Program Objectives*

The main goal of the Blended Leadership Development Program is to equip the school heads to effectively lead SBM through a comprehensive, context-sensitive learning experience. This includes developing competencies in instructional leadership, strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, and resource management.

A key goal is to promote transformational and distributed leadership practices that empower school communities and foster inclusive decision-making. The program will also strengthen the ability of school heads to use data for planning, monitoring, and evaluating school programs.

Another objective is to create a sustainable leadership support system through mentoring and peer learning. By building networks of practice, school heads can share experiences, solve problems collaboratively, and continuously improve their leadership strategies.

The program also aims to integrate technology-enabled learning through online modules and digital resources,

making professional development more accessible and flexible. This supports lifelong learning and ensures that school heads can engage with content at their own pace.

Finally, the program seeks to align leadership development with DepEd's strategic priorities, ensuring that school heads are equipped to implement policies effectively and contribute to the broader goals of equity, access, and quality education.

## V. DISCUSSION

### A. Various Leadership Styles Utilized by School Heads in Implementing School-Based Management.

#### ➤ Leadership Styles Identified in the Implementation of SBM

Teachers' accounts reveal that school heads employ a wide variety of leadership styles within the context of SBM. These include democratic, transformational, authoritarian, situational, transactional, and empowering leadership, each with distinct implications for school governance and stakeholder engagement.

The democratic/Participative Leadership style was the most frequently cited and positively received. Democratic leaders engage teachers, parents, and stakeholders in the decision-making process, promoting collaboration and inclusiveness. Verbo, Fernando, and Cabrera (2023) found that democratic leadership significantly correlates with higher levels of SBM practice, as it promotes shared governance and transparency.

Transformational leaders inspire and motivate their school communities toward shared goals. Eze (2024) emphasized that transformational leadership enhances teacher performance and student achievement by fostering innovation and a positive school culture. This style is particularly effective in driving school improvement and aligning stakeholders around a common vision.

Some teachers observed top-down leadership styles characterized by strict policy enforcement and unilateral decision-making. While this style may ensure compliance, it can hinder collaboration and reduce stakeholder engagement. Eze (2024) noted that while transactional and authoritarian styles maintain order, they may not foster long-term commitment or innovation.

Situational leadership reflects adaptability to changing school needs. Leaders using this style adjust their approach based on context, balancing firmness with empathy. Najah, Zamroni, and Suranto (2021) identified situational leadership as essential for managing diverse challenges in SBM, especially in traditional school settings.

Transactional leaders focus on structured tasks, rewards, and penalties. This style ensures efficiency and accountability but may lack the motivational depth of transformational leadership. Verbo et al. (2023) found that

transactional leadership was commonly used to maintain performance standards in SBM implementation.

Empowering leaders recognize individual strengths and guide teachers through challenges. This people-centered approach builds trust and enhances team performance. Najah et al. (2021) described empowering leadership as a blend of managerial and motivational roles that modernize school management and foster stakeholder engagement.

The diversity of leadership styles observed in SBM reflects the complexity of school governance. While democratic and transformational styles are most positively received and aligned with SBM principles, situational and empowering leadership offer flexibility and support. Authoritarian and transactional styles, though present, may require balancing with participative practices to ensure inclusive and effective school management.

The implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) has highlighted a dynamic interaction of leadership styles that greatly impact school outcomes. Among the most prominent is transformational leadership, where school heads inspire and motivate stakeholders to pursue shared goals beyond mere compliance. This style fosters innovation, collaboration, and a heightened sense of belongingness among teachers, parents, and community members, which aligns closely with the participatory principles of SBM.

Conversely, transactional leadership is also crucial, particularly in maintaining accountability and ensuring compliance with policies and standards. Leaders who adopt this style focus on structured processes, performance monitoring, and reward systems to maintain order and achieve short-term objectives. While it may not evoke deep emotional engagement, it provides the necessary framework for consistent implementation and measurable results within SBM.

Distributed leadership has proven to be especially effective in SBM contexts, as it involves sharing decision-making responsibilities among multiple stakeholders. This style empowers teachers, parents, and even students to contribute meaningfully to school governance, promoting transparency and inclusivity. It reflects the core principles of SBM by decentralizing authority and encouraging collective responsibility for school improvement.

The success of School-Based Management does not depend on one leadership approach alone, but rather on a thoughtful blend of transformational, transactional, and distributed leadership practices. Each style contributes uniquely to the development of empowered school communities, responsive governance, and improved learner outcomes. Leaders who can adapt and integrate these styles based on context and stakeholder needs are best positioned to sustain the gains of SBM and drive continuous school improvement.

### *B. The Influence of School Heads' Leadership Approaches on School-Based Management Practices*

#### ➤ *Leadership Style as a Determinant of Participatory and Strategic Decision-Making in School Programs*

The leadership style chosen by school heads greatly affects both the approach and quality of decision-making for school programs. Participative type of leadership, has been shown to foster collaboration, inclusivity, and shared ownership among stakeholders. When school leaders engage teachers and staff in consultations and consensus-building, it enhances transparency and leads to more thoughtful and sustainable decisions (Ajumogobia & Gaawa, 2025). This collaborative approach not only empowers teachers but also strengthens their commitment to carrying out school initiatives.

Transformational leadership is also essential in guiding strategic decision-making. Leaders who communicate a clear vision and encourage innovation help ensure that school programs align with long-term objectives. This leadership style promotes a sense of purpose and supports professional growth among teachers, ultimately enhancing school performance (Eze, 2024). Transformational leaders are often viewed as agents of change, cultivating a culture of continuous improvement and collective responsibility.

Conversely, authoritarian or inconsistent leadership styles can hinder effective decision-making. When decisions are made unilaterally or without adequate communication, it can lead to confusion, reduced morale, and implementation challenges. Ingersoll, Sirinides, and Dougherty (2018) emphasized that teacher involvement in decision-making is positively correlated with school performance, suggesting that exclusionary practices may undermine school effectiveness.

Some school heads adopt a blended approach, combining authoritative expectations with transformational vision. This can be effective when high standards are maintained alongside clear communication and support. Empowering leadership, characterized by actively listening to teachers and including them in decision-making, strengthens confidence and promotes a positive school environment (Eze, 2024). This style of leadership fosters collaboration, enhances communication, and supports the overall success of school programs.

The way school heads lead greatly influences how inclusive and focused school decision-making becomes. Leadership approaches that are participative and transformational tend to encourage collaboration, shared ownership, and long-term effectiveness in school programs. In contrast, more authoritarian or inconsistent leadership styles can create obstacles to teamwork and make goals less clear.

On the other hand, strategic decision-making thrives under leaders who demonstrate instructional and strategic leadership qualities. These leaders use data-driven insights, align decisions with long-term goals, and ensure that resources are effectively allocated to support learning

outcomes. Their ability to balance vision with operational precision enables schools to implement programs that are both innovative and grounded in evidence-based practices.

Moreover, participatory decision-making is most evident in schools led by those who embrace distributed leadership. By delegating authority and enabling various stakeholders to participate in decision-making, these leaders cultivate a sense of ownership and accountability. This inclusive approach enhances community involvement and ensures that school programs address the diverse needs and aspirations of students and their families.

Leadership style is a key factor in shaping the participatory nature and strategic direction of decision-making in schools. Leaders who can adapt their style to promote collaboration, strategic thinking, and shared responsibility are better positioned to drive meaningful and lasting improvements in school programs. Ultimately, the success of educational initiatives depends not only on what decisions are made, but on how and by whom those decisions are shaped.

#### ➤ *Leadership Style as a Catalyst for Effective and Inclusive SBM Implementation*

Leadership style is essential in determining the success and inclusiveness of School-Based Management (SBM) implementation. Successful SBM relies not only on structural decentralization but also on relational leadership that promotes collaboration, transparency, and shared responsibility among stakeholders.

Participative leadership is particularly influential in promoting inclusive SBM practices. When school heads actively engage teachers, parents, and community members in decision-making, it fosters a culture of accountability and mutual respect. According to Ajumogobia and Gaawa (2025), participative leadership enhanced teacher satisfaction and stakeholder engagement, which are critical for the sustainability of SBM initiatives. This style encourages open dialogue and consensus-building, leading to more thoughtful and supported decisions.

Transformational leadership also contributes significantly to SBM success. Leaders who communicate a clear vision and motivate stakeholders to work toward common goals help ensure that school programs align with long-term educational objectives. Eze (2024) emphasized that transformational leadership fosters innovation, professional growth, and positive school climate factors that are essential for mature SBM implementation. Transformational leaders inspire teachers and stakeholders, fostering a sense of purpose and shared responsibility.

Empowering leadership further strengthens SBM by building trust and encouraging active participation. Simatupang et al. (2024) asserted that empowering school heads fosters transparency and collaboration, allowing teachers to take initiative and actively participate in school development. This method not only boosts morale but also

improves the quality of decision-making and the implementation of school programs.

However, authoritarian and laissez-faire leadership styles can hinder SBM effectiveness. When decisions are made unilaterally or communication is inconsistent, it may lead to disengagement and reduced accountability. Botha (2006) warned that such leadership approaches are misaligned with the democratic ethos of SBM and may result in ineffective program execution and stakeholder dissatisfaction.

Situational leadership, which adjusts to the specific needs of the school context, provides flexibility and responsiveness. Leaders who modify their approach according to particular challenges and stakeholder dynamics are better equipped to manage resources and align SBM initiatives with changing goals (Simatupang et al., 2024). This adaptability is especially important in diverse school settings where a single leadership style may not be suitable for all situations.

Leadership style is a critical determinant of SBM success. Participative, transformational, and empowering leadership approaches foster inclusive, transparent, and effective SBM implementation. These styles promote stakeholder engagement, strategic alignment, and a positive school climate, while authoritarian and inconsistent styles may pose challenges to collaboration and sustainability.

#### ➤ *Leadership Constraints in Instructional Enhancement under SBM*

School heads play a pivotal role in driving instructional improvement under SBM, yet their leadership is often constrained by systemic and contextual challenges. These constraints include limited resources, resistance to change, administrative burdens, and inconsistent stakeholder engagement.

Resource limitations are among the most pressing challenges. School heads frequently struggle to provide adequate instructional materials, technology, and professional development due to budget constraints. Rint and Astillero (2024) found that SBM demands more time in record-keeping and preparation, which impedes teachers' primary responsibilities and affects instructional quality. Similarly, Morales et al. (2023) emphasized that instructional leadership is closely tied to resource management and that shortages in materials and technology hinder innovation and instructional support.

Resistance to change among staff also poses a significant barrier. Teachers may be deeply rooted in traditional practices, making it difficult to adopt new instructional strategies. Quinito and Andaya (2025) observed that while teacher leadership and collaboration are highly evident, guiding colleagues to improve instructional methods remains a challenge due to limited professional development and support systems. This resistance can slow down the implementation of reforms and reduce the impact of instructional leadership.

Administrative workload further complicates instructional enhancement. School heads are frequently weighed down by responsibilities such as documentation, coordination, and monitoring, which can limit their capacity to concentrate on teaching and learning. Rint and Astillero (2024) noted that SBM decreases time for teaching and challenges time management skills, especially when principals must balance instructional leadership with managerial duties.

Stakeholder engagement is another area of concern. While SBM promotes participatory governance, inconsistent involvement from parents and community members can weaken program implementation. Botha (2006) highlighted that effective SBM requires democratic and participative leadership, yet many principals struggle to build strong partnerships due to limited support or unclear roles.

Teacher compliance and accountability also affect instructional initiatives. Delays in meeting requirements, data gathering, and program execution can stem from unclear expectations or a lack of motivation. Morales et al. (2023) emphasized that instructional leadership must include monitoring, feedback, and professional development to ensure consistent teacher performance and student outcomes.

Despite these constraints, many school heads demonstrate resilience and commitment. They continue to observe classes, provide feedback, and support teachers, even amid administrative and resource challenges. Despite the empowering framework of School-Based Management, leadership constraints continue to hinder instructional enhancement in many schools. One major limitation is the lack of instructional leadership capacity among some school heads, who may be more focused on administrative tasks than on guiding teaching and learning. Without strong pedagogical leadership, efforts to improve instruction often lack coherence, direction, and sustained support, weakening the impact of SBM initiatives.

Another constraint lies in limited autonomy and decision-making authority, especially in contexts where decentralization is not fully realized. While SBM promotes localized governance, some school leaders still face bureaucratic barriers and rigid policies that restrict their ability to implement innovative instructional strategies. This gap between policy and practice hinders the flexibility required to address the specific learning needs of their communities.

Resource limitations also pose significant challenges. Effective instructional enhancement requires access to professional development, teaching materials, and technology all of which may be scarce in underfunded schools. Leaders may struggle to mobilize resources or engage stakeholders meaningfully when basic instructional needs remain unmet. This limitation impacts not only the quality of teaching but also reduces educators' morale and motivation.

While SBM offers a promising platform for school improvement, leadership constraints ranging from capacity gaps and limited autonomy to resource scarcity can significantly impede instructional enhancement. Addressing these challenges requires targeted support for school leaders, policy reforms that empower local decision-making, and sustained investment in instructional resources. Only then can SBM truly fulfill its potential as a driver of quality education.

➤ *Managing Administrative Responsibilities and Instructional Leadership*

School leaders are tasked with dual responsibilities: overseeing administrative operations and guiding instructional improvement. Successfully balancing these responsibilities is essential for effective School-Based Management (SBM) and overall school performance.

Many school leaders adopt a strategic and collaborative approach to manage this balance. According to the OECD (2023), principals must simultaneously oversee teaching and learning while managing budgets, facilities, and staff, requiring a blend of pedagogical insight and organizational acumen 1. This duality demands clear academic goals, classroom observations, and teacher support, alongside compliance and resource management.

Hands-on instructional leadership remains a cornerstone of effective school management. Leonor and Rodriguez (2025) found that school heads who maintain a visible presence in classrooms and actively engage in curriculum development and teacher mentoring significantly enhance instructional quality and school performance. Such leaders prioritize feedback, professional development, and curriculum alignment, even amid administrative pressures.

Delegation and empowerment are key strategies for managing workload. By entrusting master teachers and coordinators with instructional responsibilities, school heads can focus on strategic oversight. Tobin (2014) emphasized that effective principals delegate operational tasks while maintaining leadership in instructional areas, fostering a culture of shared responsibility and distributed leadership.

Time management and teamwork are also vital. Principals who allocate specific time for instructional leadership and implement collaborative systems to manage administrative duties can better concentrate on student learning. This strategy helps build strong school teams and fosters a positive learning environment.

Balancing administrative and instructional roles requires adaptive leadership, strategic delegation, and commitment to hands-on engagement. Principals who lead with transparency, collaboration, and a clear instructional vision are better to manage the complexities of SBM and promote school improvement. However, balancing administrative duties with instructional leadership continues to be a significant challenge for school leaders within the framework of School-Based Management (SBM). The demands of managing operations such as budgeting,

compliance, and personnel matters often compete with the equally important responsibility of guiding teaching and learning. When administrative tasks take precedence, instructional leadership can be neglected, which may negatively impact both the quality of education and teachers' professional development.

Efficient school leaders recognize that instructional leadership is not optional, but central to school improvement. They find ways to integrate instructional priorities into their daily routines, such as conducting classroom observations, facilitating professional development, and using data to inform teaching practices. By delegating certain administrative tasks and empowering other staff members, they create space to focus on curriculum, pedagogy, and learner outcomes.

However, this balance requires strategic time management, leadership capacity, and systemic support. Without adequate training, staffing, and resources, even the most committed leaders may struggle to fulfill both roles effectively. Policies that streamline administrative processes and promote shared leadership can help reduce the burden and allow school heads to concentrate more on instructional enhancement.

Balancing administrative duties with instructional leadership is essential for holistic school development. Leaders who effectively manage this balance create environments in which operational efficiency enhances, rather than obstructs, teaching and learning. Building leadership capacity, encouraging distributed leadership, and ensuring supportive policies are essential strategies to keep instructional leadership central to every school's mission.

➤ *Empowering Instructional Leadership*

Empowering school heads as instructional leaders is essential for fostering high-quality teaching and learning. Teachers' insights highlighted three key dimensions for enhancing instructional leadership: continuous professional development, collaborative engagement, and contextual responsiveness.

Continuous professional development is foundational to effective instructional leadership. School heads need to remain informed about current best practices, instructional strategies, and leadership methods. According to Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner (2017), professional development is most effective when it is continuous, collaborative, and aligned with instructional objectives. Participating in ongoing training, coaching, and reflective practice allows school leaders to exemplify instructional excellence and foster teacher development.

Collaborative involvement enhances instructional leadership by cultivating a culture of shared responsibility and mutual support. Goddard et al. (2015) found that teacher collaboration, supported by strong instructional leadership, enhances collective efficacy and student learning outcomes. By listening to teachers' ideas, encouraging peer mentoring, and fostering strong relationships, school heads cultivate a

positive school climate that supports innovation and ongoing improvement.

Contextual responsiveness means tailoring leadership practices to meet the specific needs of the school community. Pashmforoosh and Irby (2023) recommended a reflective cycle approach, in which instructional leaders continuously evaluate and modify their strategies based on feedback and changing school circumstances. This responsiveness ensures that leadership remains relevant, inclusive, and effective in diverse educational settings.

Other key strategies include time management, strategic delegation, and visibility. By forming instructional leadership teams and prioritizing classroom engagement, school heads can balance administrative duties with pedagogical responsibilities. Providing timely and actionable feedback, building trust, and maintaining open communication are also critical for empowering teachers and improving instructional practices.

Strengthening instructional leadership demands a comprehensive approach that combines professional development, collaboration, and adaptability. School heads who embrace these principles are better equipped to lead instructional improvement and foster a thriving learning environment.

➤ *Capacity Building as a Driver of Effective SBM Leadership and Implementation*

Capacity building is crucial for improving the effectiveness of school heads in implementing School-Based Management (SBM). Teachers' observations reveal that leadership development, instructional supervision, financial management, and strategic planning are among the most impactful areas of training that contribute to improved school governance and instructional outcomes.

Training programs focused on SBM equip school heads with the necessary competencies to manage resources, engage stakeholders, and lead instructional improvements. Botha (2006) emphasized that the leadership role of the school principal is a critical factor in the success of SBM, particularly in fostering participative and visionary leadership that aligns with school improvement goals. This shift from managerial to transformational leadership enables principals to become proactive facilitators of change.

Moreover, capacity-building initiatives such as workshops, mentoring, and formal courses help school heads develop confidence and competence in handling both technical and relational aspects of leadership. Tagle (2025) highlighted that continuous development in areas like school leadership, financial management, and stakeholder engagement leads to more inclusive, transparent, and learner-centered SBM practices. These programs also promote collaborative school cultures and data-driven decision-making.

The practical application of training is equally important. When school heads apply what they learn, such as designing SBM plans, developing evaluation tools, and conducting classroom observations, they transition from administrative managers to instructional leaders. Lorensius and Anggal (2021) argued that increasing the capacity of principals, teachers, and school committees is essential for effective SBM implementation, particularly in curriculum management and learning processes.

Despite some uncertainty among teachers regarding the specifics of their school heads' training, the overall impact is clear: capacity building enhances leadership effectiveness, strengthens stakeholder involvement, and improves school performance. These findings highlight the importance of ongoing investment in professional development to strengthen SBM leadership.

➤ *Leadership Style as a Determinant of SBM Success or Failure*

Teachers consistently emphasize that the leadership style of the school head has a direct impact on the success or failure of School-Based Management (SBM) initiatives. Leadership determines how decisions are made, how stakeholders are engaged, and how school programs are implemented and sustained.

Transformational leadership is widely acknowledged as a key driver of SBM success. Leaders who inspire, motivate, and cultivate a shared vision foster a culture of innovation and collaboration. Ombao and De Jesus (2025) found that transformational and democratic leadership styles are the most effective in enhancing teacher performance, student achievement, and overall school improvement. These leaders empower teachers, encourage stakeholder participation, and align school goals with community needs.

Collaborative and inclusive leadership also plays a vital role. When school heads delegate tasks, listen to input, and build strong relationships, SBM initiatives thrive. Simatupang, Siahaan, and Sembiring (2024) emphasized that strategic leadership marked by transparency, stakeholder engagement, and contextual responsiveness is central to effective SBM implementation. This approach fosters trust, shared ownership, and accountability, which are essential for sustaining school reforms.

In contrast, authoritarian leadership styles are often linked to SBM failure. When school heads make unilateral decisions and exclude teachers and stakeholders, resistance and disengagement follow. Eze (2024) argued that autocratic leadership may ensure compliance but lacks the motivational and participatory elements needed for long-term success. Such styles can stifle innovation and reduce the effectiveness of SBM programs.

Additionally, situational adaptability is essential. Successful school heads tailor their leadership style to meet the specific needs of their school community. Morales, Espinosa, and Caballero (2023) highlighted that instructional leadership must be flexible and responsive to

school contexts, especially when balancing administrative duties with pedagogical goals.

The leadership style of a school head is not merely a managerial choice but a strategic factor that determines the success of SBM. Transformational, collaborative, and adaptive leadership styles foster inclusive decision-making, stakeholder engagement, and program sustainability. Conversely, rigid or controlling leadership can hinder progress and alienate the very people needed to make SBM work.

➤ *Inclusive and Supportive Leadership in SBM*

Inclusive and supportive leadership is broadly acknowledged as a fundamental element for successful School-Based Management (SBM) implementation. Teachers consistently note that when school heads lead with openness, respect, and collaboration, it promotes motivation, engagement, and a sense of ownership among staff.

Inclusive leadership promotes equity and shared decision-making. Adams, Hussain, and Tan (2023) argued that inclusive school leadership enhances participation and responsiveness by actively involving diverse stakeholders in school governance. This approach ensures that teachers feel valued and heard, which strengthens their commitment to SBM initiatives.

Supportive leadership fosters a positive school environment and boosts teacher morale. López-López, León Guerrero, and Crisol-Moya (2021) found that inclusive and supportive leadership practices, such as listening to staff, encouraging family involvement, and fostering open communication significantly improve institutional responsiveness and collaboration. These practices are essential for sustaining SBM reforms and building trust within the school community.

Transformational and participative leadership styles are consistently associated with successful SBM outcomes. Harianto et al. (2025) concluded that transformational leadership enhances teacher motivation, innovation, and collaborative culture, all of which are vital for SBM success. Participative leadership, which involves shared decision-making and distributed leadership, fosters accountability and reduces resistance to change.

In contrast, authoritarian leadership often leads to disengagement and passive compliance. Teachers report that rigid, top-down approaches diminish motivation and hinder collaboration. Inclusive leadership mitigates these effects by promoting transparency, shared vision, and open communication.

Hence, clarity of purpose and contextual responsiveness are vital. When school heads explain the reasoning behind their decisions and tailor their leadership to the needs of their school community, resistance decreases and engagement rises. The Department of Education of US (2025) emphasized that inclusive educational practices should be deliberately planned and supported by leadership

that is transparent, collaborative, and responsive to diverse needs.

Inclusive and supportive leadership is not merely a preferred style, it is a strategic necessity for effective SBM implementation. It fosters trust, collaboration, and shared ownership, enabling schools to thrive through collective effort and continuous improvement.

➤ *Contextual Leadership in SBM: One Size Does Not Fit All*

Teachers' insights on School-Based Management (SBM) leadership highlight a recurring theme: effective leadership should be attuned to the specific needs, challenges, and dynamics of each school. While participative, transformational, and democratic styles are widely favored, the overarching message is that contextual adaptability is key to successful SBM implementation.

Contextual leadership recognizes that no single leadership style is universally effective. Marishane (2020) introduced the idea of contextual intelligence in school leadership, highlighting that lasting school improvement relies on leaders who can adapt and integrate different leadership practices to address the complexities of their school environment. This approach moves beyond rigid models and encourages leaders to be flexible, responsive, and inclusive.

Guiamalon (2025) reinforced this perspective, demonstrating that school heads' effectiveness in strategic planning and school improvement is greatly shaped by their ability to adapt leadership approaches to the specific context of their school. Consequently, successful SBM leadership demands not only technical skills but also a thorough understanding of the school's culture, community, and changing needs.

Oc (2018) further emphasized the significance of context in determining leadership outcomes. His systematic review highlights that contextual factors, such as school size, community involvement, and staff dynamics, moderate the effectiveness of leadership styles and influence how leaders emerge and operate. This underscores the need for school heads to assess and adapt their leadership strategies continuously.

Teachers' preferences for participative, transformational, and democratic leadership reflect the value of collaboration, empowerment, and shared decision-making in SBM. These styles align well with the principles of decentralization and stakeholder engagement. However, their effectiveness is amplified when applied with contextual sensitivity, adjusting to the school's readiness, resources, and relational dynamics.

Contextual leadership is not a rejection of established styles but a strategic integration of them. School heads who lead with flexibility, responsiveness, and awareness of their school's unique context are better positioned to foster

inclusive governance, motivate staff, and drive continuous improvement under SBM.

➤ *Leadership Style as a Catalyst for Stakeholder Collaboration in SBM*

Teachers consistently highlight that the leadership style of the school head is crucial in promoting collaboration among internal and external stakeholders in School-Based Management (SBM). Strong leadership builds trust, transparency, and a sense of shared ownership, all of which are essential for successful stakeholder engagement.

Democratic, participative, and transformational leadership styles are commonly linked to effective stakeholder collaboration. These approaches encourage open communication, shared decision-making, and mutual respect. Tan (2023) noted that transformational and democratic leadership styles boost collaboration and teacher motivation, which positively influence school culture and stakeholder engagement. When school heads lead with sincerity and transparency, stakeholders feel valued and are more inclined to actively contribute to school initiatives.

Participative leadership encourages stakeholders to take active roles in planning and implementation. Lam-an (2023) found that collaborative efforts and positive school-stakeholder relationships significantly impact all aspects of SBM, including governance, curriculum, and resource management. This style builds trust and empowers stakeholders, creating a sense of shared responsibility and accountability.

Transformational leadership cultivates a shared vision and motivates stakeholders to pursue common goals, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation. Slater (2022) emphasized that collaboration is central to school improvement, and leadership that encourages trust, respect, and shared authority is crucial for effective stakeholder engagement.

Conversely, authoritarian or distant leadership styles tend to hinder collaboration. When leaders are unapproachable or make unilateral decisions, stakeholders may disengage or participate passively. Tan (2023) noted that autocratic leadership can stifle creativity and reduce stakeholder motivation, making it less effective in inclusive educational environments.

Context-sensitive leadership is equally important. Effective school heads adjust their leadership approach to fit the specific needs and dynamics of their school community. Slater (2022) highlighted that successful collaboration relies on leaders' ability to navigate trust, conflict, and diversity throughout the school improvement process.

Leadership style is a powerful catalyst for stakeholder collaboration in SBM. Inclusive, participative, and transformational leadership fosters trust, engagement, and shared ownership, while rigid or distant styles may undermine these outcomes. School heads who lead with transparency, responsiveness, and empathy are best

positioned to build strong partnerships and drive sustainable school improvement.

➤ *Leadership Transitions and Their Impact on SBM Effectiveness: A Mixed Reality*

Teachers' responses to leadership transitions in School-Based Management (SBM) reveal a mixed reality. While some report no noticeable change, others observe significant improvements when leadership styles shift toward inclusivity, collaboration, and support. These diverse experiences highlight the intricate nature of leadership transitions and their impact on school culture, stakeholder engagement, and program outcomes.

Leadership transitions can be disruptive or transformative depending on how they are managed. Noble (2022) emphasized that leadership changes affect a school's readiness for reform through processes such as distributing authority, fostering trust, and creating a shared vision. When new leaders adopt participative or transformational styles, they often reinvigorate SBM initiatives by aligning them with stakeholder needs and promoting collective ownership.

Tan (2023) reinforced this perspective, stating that transformational leadership strengthens collaboration, boosts teacher motivation, and improves overall school performance. A shift from authoritarian to democratic or participative leadership can lead to increased engagement, improved decision-making, and stronger community partnerships. These outcomes are particularly evident when leaders prioritize transparency, shared governance, and responsiveness.

However, not all transitions yield immediate results. Some teachers report no change, which may be due to consistent leadership styles, limited visibility of new practices, or the time required for cultural shifts to take root. As highlighted by the ERIC study (2023), stated that an impact of leadership transitions varies based on contextual factors such as school size, stakeholder dynamics, and the existing organizational culture.

Leadership transitions offer both challenges and opportunities. When managed strategically, they can catalyze SBM effectiveness by fostering innovation, strengthening stakeholder relationships, and aligning school programs with evolving needs. Conversely, poorly managed transitions or rigid leadership styles may stall progress and reduce morale.

➤ *Leadership Style and Strategic Prioritization in SBM*

Teachers' insights revealed that leadership style significantly influences how school programs and projects are prioritized under School-Based Management (SBM). While a few respondents believe prioritization is driven solely by contextual needs or assessments, the majority emphasize that leadership style shapes not only what gets prioritized but also how decisions are made, who is involved, and how resources are allocated.

Transformational and participative leadership styles are frequently associated with responsive and inclusive prioritization. Leaders who engage with stakeholders and align decisions with a shared vision tend to prioritize initiatives that reflect actual school needs. Larche (2025) emphasizes that strategic planning in educational management is most effective when it is inclusive, informed by data, and aligned with the school's mission and vision. Leadership style, therefore, becomes a guiding force in setting goals, allocating resources, and fostering collaboration.

Strategic leadership is key in shaping prioritization frameworks. Carvalho et al. (2021) asserted that strategic leadership entails proactive planning, engaging stakeholders, and responding effectively to the specific context. Leaders who adopt strategic thinking are better equipped to align priorities with long-term goals and adapt to evolving challenges. This approach ensures that prioritization is not arbitrary but grounded in a coherent strategy that reflects the school's values and aspirations.

Leadership transitions and evolving leadership styles also affect prioritization. Martinez-Garcia et al. (2025) highlighted that effective principals in today's educational landscape must possess strategic operational skills, cultural responsiveness, and collaborative mindsets. These traits influence how priorities are set, communicated, and implemented, especially in dynamic school environments.

Teachers also note that inclusive leadership fosters stakeholder buy-in and ensures that prioritization reflects collective input. When leaders consult teachers, parents, and community members, programs are more likely to be relevant, supported, and sustained. Conversely, top-down or authoritarian styles may result in misaligned priorities and reduced engagement.

Leadership style is a critical determinant of strategic prioritization in SBM. Inclusive, transformational, and strategic leadership approaches foster alignment with school goals, stakeholder engagement, and effective resource distribution. These styles not only guide what gets prioritized but also shape how programs are perceived, supported, and sustained.

➤ *Leadership-SBM Alignment: A Prerequisite for Effective School Governance*

School-Based Management (SBM) is built on principles of participation, inclusivity, and transparency. When leadership styles diverge from these principles, particularly when they are authoritarian or top-down, schools face significant governance and implementation challenges.

Teachers and stakeholders consistently report that misalignment between leadership style and SBM principles leads to low morale, poor prioritization, and program failure. Malasaga et al. (2024) found that stakeholders experienced miscommunication, lack of support, and exclusion from decision-making processes, which hindered effective SBM

implementation. Similarly, Consolacion et al. (2025) highlighted that although SBM enables schools to make context-specific decisions, its effectiveness largely relies on leadership that promotes collaboration and shared governance.

Trust is a cornerstone of SBM. When leadership is inclusive and transparent, trust among teachers, parents, and students' flourishes, leading to better collaboration and problem-solving. Malasaga et al. (2024) highlighted that transparency and communication within SBM are essential for stakeholder engagement and program success.

Consolacion et al. (2025) proposed a Collaborative School Governance Model that combines participatory practices, ongoing capacity-building, and aligned policies to strengthen school effectiveness and promote educational equity. This approach transitions from traditional hierarchical management to participatory governance, enhancing the school's ability to respond to student needs. The consequences of leadership-SBM misalignment include Reduced teacher motivation and morale, inefficient resource allocation, Lower student achievement, and Breakdown in communication and stakeholder trust. These outcomes underscore the need for leadership development programs that train school heads in participatory and inclusive leadership styles, aligning with the SBM framework. Misalignment between leadership style and SBM principles undermines the very foundation of school-based governance, leading to disengagement, inefficiency, and diminished educational outcomes.

➤ *Empowering Leadership Through Support Systems: Strengthening SBM Implementation*

Successful implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) depends not only on leadership style but also on support systems that enable school heads to address challenges and maintain participatory governance. Teachers and stakeholders consistently highlight the importance of community involvement, technical assistance, mentoring, and institutional frameworks in strengthening SBM.

The school community plays a pivotal role in supporting SBM. As noted by Malasaga et al. (2024), stakeholder collaboration fosters transparency, shared responsibility, and improved governance outcomes. Community partners contribute resources, manpower, and moral support, reinforcing the decentralized nature of SBM.

Training, consultation, and technical support are vital tools for strengthening school leadership. Consolacion et al. (2025) introduced a Collaborative School Governance Model that combines ongoing capacity-building with policy alignment to improve school effectiveness. Regular workshops on financial management, instructional leadership, and participatory governance equip school heads with the skills needed to lead effectively.

Mentoring from experienced leaders and peer learning groups creates a collaborative environment for problem-solving. Pepito and Acibar (2019) emphasized that coaching

and mentoring improve school heads' competencies and foster a culture of shared leadership. These support structures help school leaders manage responsibilities and adapt to evolving educational demands.

DepEd guidelines, Learning Action Cells (LACs), and school-level monitoring systems provide institutional backing for SBM. These frameworks ensure accountability and offer platforms for professional development. Malasaga et al. (2024) highlighted that such systems are vital for conflict resolution and sustaining SBM processes.

Training programs help school heads understand and apply SBM principles effectively. Consolacion et al. (2025) found that benchmarking and exposure to best practices enhance leadership capacity and promote innovation in school governance. The narratives and literature reflect a robust ecosystem of support that empowers school heads to lead with confidence and competence. These systems ranging from community engagement to institutional frameworks are essential for sustaining SBM principles and achieving educational equity. Empowered leadership, supported by collaborative networks and continuous development, is the cornerstone of successful SBM implementation.

#### *C. Challenges Encountered by School Heads in Leading Their Schools During the Implementation of School-Based Management (SBM)*

##### ➤ *SBM Challenges as Obstacles to Learning: The Role of Leadership*

School-Based Management (SBM) is a decentralization approach that enables schools to make decisions tailored to their specific contexts. However, when SBM implementation is hindered by leadership gaps, planning inefficiencies, and stakeholder disengagement, it directly impacts teaching quality, student achievement, and the overall learning environment.

Teachers consistently emphasize that SBM failures affect learners directly, as the child is the central focus of SBM. Febrero (2025) found that inconsistent communication, unclear directives, and insufficient training hindered SBM implementation, leading to confusion and delays in program execution, which compromise instructional quality and student support. Villanueva and Ortega-Dela Cruz (2022) identified curriculum-related challenges such as inadequate facilities, poor instructional materials, and low parental support as barriers to effective SBM implementation, especially in core subjects like English, Science, and Math.

Strategic leadership is essential to overcoming SBM challenges. Semanero (2022) emphasized that school heads must improve their guidance roles, communication with stakeholders, and development planning to ensure effective SBM implementation. Without strong leadership, schools struggle to align their goals with actual classroom practices.

Torregosa (2023) further argued that empowering school leaders and fostering shared governance are essential to bridging gaps in SBM implementation and improving school performance.

SBM-related challenges also affect teacher morale and workload. Rint and Astillero (2024) reported that SBM demands more time for documentation and preparation, which impedes teachers' primary responsibilities and reduces time for instruction. This leads to stress, burnout, and diminished teaching performance.

Poor SBM execution often results in inefficient resource allocation and a lack of collaboration, which hinders innovation and responsiveness to student needs. Teachers in Febrero's (2025) study noted that delays in procurement and unclear school priorities disrupted classroom instruction and student services.

Semanero (2022) highlighted leadership and governance issues such as lack of open communication, inadequate training, and weak stakeholder partnerships that undermine SBM's potential to create effective learning environments. Enhancing these areas is essential for boosting school performance and student achievement.

The literature clearly shows that SBM challenges, especially those tied to leadership and planning, can significantly hinder teaching effectiveness and student achievement. Addressing these barriers requires strategic leadership, continuous professional development, and robust stakeholder engagement. Empowering school heads with the necessary skills and support systems is imperative to ensure that SBM fulfills its goal of improving educational outcomes through decentralized, participatory governance.

##### ➤ *Building Leadership Competencies for SBM Success: Insights from the Teaching Force*

Effective School-Based Management (SBM) implementation requires school leaders to possess a diverse set of competencies that align with the principles of decentralization, shared governance, and instructional leadership. Teachers have identified key competencies that should be prioritized in leadership training programs to ensure SBM success.

Instructional supervision and strategic planning emerged as foundational competencies. Gonzales and Guevarra (2025) found that leadership had the strongest correlation with school effectiveness among SBM dimensions, emphasizing the need for school heads to master instructional leadership, strategic planning, and governance. These competencies enable leaders to align resources with school improvement plans and make data-informed decisions.

Skills such as communication, collaboration, and decision-making both interpersonal and intrapersonal are essential for fostering inclusive and responsive school environments. A systematic review by Dela Cruz (2024) highlighted that effective school leaders must demonstrate

emotional intelligence, problem-solving, and motivational skills to navigate the complexities of SBM.

Collaboration with stakeholders is a cornerstone of SBM. Rint and Astillero (2024) emphasized that leadership competence includes the ability to engage stakeholders in decision-making, manage resources effectively, and promote a shared vision for continuous improvement. These practices enhance transparency and accountability, which are vital for sustaining SBM.

Transformational leadership was identified as a key driver of SBM success. Gonzales and Guevarra (2025) noted that visionary leadership create a culture of collaboration and accountability, inspiring stakeholders to work toward common goals. This aligns with DepEd's National Competency-Based Standards for School Heads, which include instructional leadership, organizational management, and community engagement.

Teachers also emphasized the need to train grassroots implementers, those directly involved in SBM execution. Leadership development should extend beyond principals to include teacher-leaders and community partners. This inclusive approach ensures that all actors are equipped to contribute meaningfully to school governance.

The insights from the teaching force and supporting literature underscore the importance of strategic thinking, instructional leadership, stakeholder engagement, and effective communication in SBM leadership training. These competencies empower school heads to lead with clarity, inclusivity, and responsiveness ensuring that SBM principles are successfully implemented and sustained.

➤ *Designing Responsive Leadership Training: Equipping School Heads for SBM Excellence*

Effective School-Based Management (SBM) implementation requires school leaders to be equipped with a comprehensive set of competencies. Teachers have identified key areas for leadership training that align with SBM principles, emphasizing instructional leadership, strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, and ethical governance.

➤ *Instructional Leadership and School Improvement Planning*

Instructional leadership and strategic planning are foundational to SBM success. Baylon, Manla, and Mahinay (2025) found that leadership and governance were the most advanced dimensions among school heads in Cagayan de Oro, yet their impact on academic performance was nuanced and required sustained strategic planning. Modules on curriculum leadership, monitoring and evaluation, and collaborative SIP development are essential to empower school heads to lead with clarity and purpose.

➤ *Leadership Competencies and Ethics*

Leadership training must include modules on personal and professional ethics, shared decision-making, and

collaborative problem-solving. Robertson (2022) emphasized that developmental leadership centered on vision, commitment, and team-building—was more prevalent in schools that successfully implemented SBM reforms. These competencies foster trust and accountability, which are vital for participatory governance.

➤ *Understanding Leadership Styles and Adaptability*

Training programs should explore various leadership styles, transformational, servant, democratic, and autocratic, and their contextual applications. Napitupulu (2021) found that principals demonstrated innovative leadership behaviors significantly improved SBM implementation and school performance. Modules on emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, and change management help leaders adapt to diverse school contexts.

➤ *Practical and Strategic Skills*

Teachers recommended modules on goal setting, time management, organizational planning, and delegation. These practical skills are essential for managing school operations efficiently. Robertson (2022) also emphasized the significance of coaching and mentoring in SBM settings to strengthen leadership capacity at all levels.

➤ *Grassroots Capacity Building and Reflective Leadership*

Training should extend beyond central offices to include grassroots implementers—teacher-leaders and community stakeholders. Reflective leadership modules encourage continuous self-assessment and improvement. This aligns with the SBM framework's emphasis on continuous improvement and stakeholder collaboration.

The insights from the teaching force and supporting literature underscore the need for responsive, inclusive, and strategic leadership training. Modules should blend instructional supervision, ethical governance, stakeholder engagement, and practical management skills. By equipping school heads with these competencies, SBM implementation can be strengthened, leading to improved educational outcomes and more resilient school communities.

*D. Suggested Leadership Training Programs to Strengthen the Implementation of School-Based Management*

➤ *Designing Responsive Leadership Training: Equipping School Heads for SBM Excellence*

Teachers stressed that leadership training for School-Based Management (SBM) should be aligned to the unique context, challenges, and objectives of each school. This aligns with current research supporting needs-based, competency-focused, and context-sensitive training approaches.

➤ *Needs-Based and Contextualized Training*

Effective leadership training begins with a thorough assessment of school needs, including leadership gaps, community context, and available resources. Febrero (2025) found that inconsistent communication and unclear directives were major barriers to SBM implementation,

suggesting that training must address real-world challenges and be grounded in local realities.

➤ *Leadership Competencies and Ethics*

Training should focus on both technical and interpersonal competencies, such as instructional leadership, emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, and resilience. Pekmezi et al. (2020) emphasized that leadership development programs must include modules on time management, strategic planning, and conflict resolution to prepare leaders for evolving responsibilities.

➤ *Collaborative and Inclusive Approaches*

Collaborative training models, such as peer mentoring, scenario-based learning, and grassroots capacity building, are essential. Febrero (2025) highlighted that shared responsibility systems and collaborative leadership were effective strategies for overcoming SBM challenges. These approaches foster a culture of transparency and accountability.

➤ *Practical and Strategic Skills*

Training should include real, relatable scenarios and practical workshops that help leaders apply concepts directly to their school environments. Pekmezi et al. (2020) noted that immersive workshops and executive coaching helped leaders adopt effective strategies like “right-sizing workloads” and “single-tasking,” which improved productivity and reduced stress.

➤ *Strategic Leadership for SBM*

Strategic leadership is central to SBM success. A study by SciSpace (2023) highlighted the critical role of school leaders in leading initiatives and effectively managing resources for successful SBM implementation. Consequently, training programs should include modules on strategic planning, resource management, and stakeholder engagement.

➤ *Interactive and Blended Learning for Leadership Development*

Teachers strongly favored interactive and blended formats for leadership training, emphasizing the need for practical, engaging, and context-relevant learning experiences. This aligns with current research that supports multi-modal, experiential, and adaptive learning strategies for leadership development in School-Based Management (SBM).

➤ *Workshops and Hands-On Learning*

Workshops were the most frequently recommended format due to their collaborative and experiential nature. According to Smedley (2024), in-person workshops provide structured opportunities for leaders to engage in live instruction, networking, and community-building, which are essential for leadership growth.

➤ *Mentoring and Peer Learning*

Mentoring and peer learning were also emphasized as vital components. The SBM Leadership Institute integrates

mentoring throughout its year-long program, helping participants develop self-awareness and leadership skills through guided reflection and coaching. Peer mentoring fosters shared learning and builds trust among school leaders.

➤ *Blended and Multi-Modal Approaches*

Blended learning combines face-to-face training with digital tools, such as simulations, microlearning, and gamification. Symposium Learning (2021) highlights that blended formats allow for both autonomous learning and expert-guided contextualization, which is crucial for leadership development. This approach supports diverse learning styles and ensures that training is both flexible and impactful.

➤ *Scenario-Based and Contextualized Learning*

Teachers suggested that leadership training should focus on real-life situations and challenges specific to their schools to make it more practical and meaningful. This approach aligns with the Center for Creative Leadership's 70-20-10 model, which emphasizes a mix of formal training, social learning, and hands-on, experiential practice. In particular, scenario-based learning helps participants develop stronger problem-solving and decision-making skills by applying what they learn directly to real-world situations.

➤ *Digital Tools and Self-Paced Learning*

Online modules offer flexibility and accessibility, especially for busy school heads. These can include videos, interactive case studies, and feedback tools. However, research cautions that digital content must be paired with expert facilitation to ensure deep learning and behavioral change.

The literature and teacher insights converge on the value of interactive, blended, and context-sensitive training formats. A blend of workshops, mentoring, coaching, and online learning, customized to the needs of school leaders, can promote deeper understanding, practical application, and ongoing leadership development in line with SBM principles.

## VI. THE CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and interpretations, the researcher drew the following conclusions: School heads exhibit transformational, collaborative, and coaching-oriented leadership styles that correspond with the participatory and empowering characteristics essential for effective SBM implementation. Additionally, the leadership styles of school heads play a crucial role in the success of SBM by affecting decision-making, team dynamics, and overall school performance. Challenges in SBM implementation stem from insufficient contextualized training, limited mentoring opportunities, varied staff learning needs, and difficulty maintaining sustained engagement; A blended leadership development program combining interactive, collaborative, and flexible learning

formats is essential to strengthen SBM implementation through enhanced leadership practices.

Informed by these conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed: (1) School leaders continue to cultivate transformational, collaborative, and coaching-oriented leadership styles by engaging in leadership activities that promote empowerment, shared decision-making, and team development. (2) Training programs be designed to strengthen leadership styles that foster inclusive decision-making and continuous school improvement to ensure effective and sustainable SBM implementation. (3) Education authorities be provided contextualized leadership training and establish mentoring and peer support systems to help school heads address diverse learning needs and sustain SBM engagement. (4) A blended leadership development program be implemented that integrates interactive workshops, mentoring, peer learning, online modules, and experiential activities to enhance school heads' capacity to lead SBM effectively.

➤ *Significance of the Present Study:*

While this study provides important insights into the leadership styles of school heads and their influence on the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) in the Irosin II District, there are still several areas that require further exploration. The findings highlight the need for more in-depth research on the factors that shape leadership practices and how these practices affect school governance, teacher performance, and student learning outcomes.

Future research could expand the study to cover multiple districts or divisions, enabling comparative analysis across various educational contexts. Such an approach could reveal variations in leadership styles influenced by geographical location, school size, community involvement, and resource availability.

Another valuable guide for future research would be to examine the perspectives of other key stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and students, on how leadership styles influence the daily operations and overall effectiveness of SBM. Including these viewpoints could offer a more comprehensive analysis towards more understanding of the relationship between leadership and SBM, and help identify strategies to strengthen collaboration within the school community.

Finally, future research could focus on evaluating the effectiveness of leadership training programs specifically tailored for school heads. By assessing the outcomes of such interventions, it would be possible to determine whether targeted professional development in leadership skills translates into measurable improvements in SBM implementation and school performance. The insights from these studies could guide policymakers, educational leaders, and training institutions in designing evidence-based leadership capacity-building initiatives.

By pursuing these future directions, subsequent studies can expand on the current research, providing deeper and more nuanced insights that contribute to the ongoing enhancement of school leadership and governance within the Philippine education system.

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