

Articulating Principles of Subsidiarity in The School Heads Implementation of School-Based Management Through Stakeholders' Collaboration: A Phenomenological Inquiry

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Index Terms:

subsidiarity, school-based management system, school heads, stakeholders

Abstract. This transcendental phenomenological study focused on analyzing and scrutinizing the principles of subsidiarity in the implementation of School-Based Management by school heads through collaboration with stakeholders. The participants were selected from the School Division of the City of Calamba using purposive sampling. The study revealed that school heads have demonstrated adaptability in implementing the new School-Based Management (SBM) framework. Most expressed that the transition from the former SBM principles to the current six dimensions was smooth. This study revealed that school heads faced challenges such as overwhelming responsibilities, difficulties in coordinating with stakeholders, stakeholder availability, time constraints, and limited participation from working parents. In response, school heads employed coping mechanisms rooted in teamwork, delegation, perseverance, and patience, often adopting grassroots-level communication to sustain engagement. The school heads also involved internal and external stakeholders through orientations, summits, and collaborative planning. Themes that emerged from the testimonies included: Adaptability of School Heads in SBM Implementation, Strategic Stakeholder Engagement Led by School Leaders, Barriers to Effective Stakeholder Participation, Coping Mechanisms for SBM Challenges, Leadership Growth through Collaboration, Stakeholders as Essential Contributors to SBM, Sustaining SBM through Recognition and Communication, and Continuous Improvement through Self-Assessment and Support. Seven recommendations for effective SBM implementation were prepared: Continuous training for school heads, adopting flexible strategies, and delegating tasks. Engage teaching and non-teaching staff. Strengthen parent involvement. Formalize LGU partnerships. Encourage student participation. Conduct future research for the improvement of SBM concerning the diverse situations of all public schools.

Introduction

The school is the heart of an educational institution. It is where we educate students to possess skills and competencies that will allow them to be productive members of society. Public schools in the Philippines have a school head or principal. The school head is the most senior administrator in an elementary or high school. The school head is responsible for the school's overall operations. (Estacio and Estacio, 2022).

To empower public school heads to manage their schools. The Department of Education recently issued a DepEd Order 007, s. 2024, titled "Policy Guidelines on the Implementation of the Revised School-Based Management System." This policy provided guidelines about the following areas in school operations and empowered the school heads and stakeholders' collaboration towards managing the six (6) dimensions specifically on (1) Curriculum and Teaching, (2) Learning Environment, (3) Leadership, (4) Governance and Accountability, (5) Human Resource and Team Development, and (6) Finance and Resource Management and Mobilization. The principle of subsidiarity is associated with the implementation of School-Based Management. This principle empowers public school heads and stakeholders to solve problems at the

school level. Central education authorities have given them autonomy and authority to make decisions because, at their level, they are more familiar with the issues and problems in the school operations.

The school heads of public schools in the Philippines aim to collaborate effectively with various stakeholders. The engagement of stakeholders is significant for the continuous development of the school. However, even the school heads do their best to involve them in the school programs. There are challenges to making it happen. Based on the study of Cabrillos (2024), most participants acknowledged that financial constraints may limit stakeholders' ability to provide time, resources, and support to school activities and programs. Competing priorities, such as duties at work, personal tasks, and other duties, may divert attention and energy from full involvement in school-related activities. Furthermore, family duties such as childcare, caregiving, and home activities may limit stakeholders' ability and willingness to attend school events, meetings, and decision-making sessions.

In addition, Eyana et al. (2024) found that school heads encountered various challenges in community and parental involvement and collaboration with industrial partners. School heads frequently struggle to establish transparent communication channels and cultivate collaborative relationships with stakeholders (Clarke, F. Wildy, M, 2024, as cited in Dicdican, 2024). These struggles may cause disagreement, mistrust, and resistance to change. For example, stakeholders may lose interest in supporting the school's objectives and motivation if they feel excluded from decision-making processes or believe decisions are unjustified (Chance et al., 2019, as cited in Dicdican, 2024).

The challenges stated in the above statements are becoming challenges for public school heads. These challenges can lead to the depreciation of the performance of the school. These kinds of problems should be overcome and addressed. Confronted with these challenges, the researcher conducted the study entitled "Articulating Principle of Subsidiarity In The School Heads Implementation Of School-Based Management Through Stakeholders' Collaboration: A Phenomenological Inquiry". This study may enlighten concerned and involved persons in empowering the school and its stakeholders' collaboration. It also shed light on developing a support system for every public school. It provided insights into evaluating the policies, guidelines, and memos about the collaboration of schools and stakeholders for School-Based Management.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 below illustrates the process of gathering and treating data shown in the triangulation method. Utilizing this method ensured the validity and credibility of the findings.

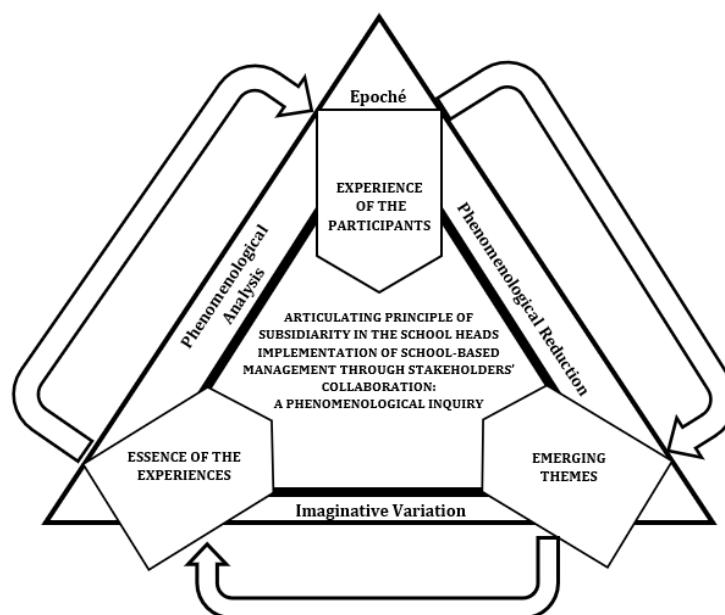


Figure 1. Triangulation Method

This figure was conceptualized based on the major processes of the transcendental phenomenology approach (Moustakas, 1994, as cited in Liao et al., 2021). In this study, the epoche approach employed illustrated the procedures for gathering and treating data to put aside preconceived ideas, judgments, or biases that may affect the researcher's ability to analyze the participants' shared experiences.

Research Questions

This transcendental phenomenological study explored school heads' challenges and coping strategies in collaborating with stakeholders for School-Based Management. It aimed to describe the experiences of school heads in practicing autonomy and authority in school operations.

Specifically, the study sought answers to the central and corollary questions.

Central Question:

What is the essence of the experiences in articulating the principle of subsidiarity in the School Heads implementation of School-Based Management through stakeholders' collaboration?

Corollary Questions

1. How do the public-school heads describe their implementation of School-Based Management through stakeholders' collaboration?
2. What themes emerge from the testimonies of the participants?

Methodology

Research Design

The researcher utilized a transcendental phenomenology design, recognized as the most viable method for thoroughly investigating participants' life-world experiences. This approach was the proper treatment of fresh and new phenomena. Moreover, they emphasized 'epoche' in length, which requires eliminating assumptions from the researcher. This implies that the researcher's claim, belief, and preconceptions about the phenomenon are ignored and overlooked throughout, creating the underlying essence (Pabro-Maquidato, 2021).

Participants and Sampling Technique

This study selected six school heads from the School Division of Calamba City. The selection of school heads as participants in this study was based on the following criteria: school heads who have stayed in the current school for at least one (1) year, demonstrated commitment to collaborative decision-making, and have a willingness to participate and share experiences. Different pseudonyms were assigned to the participants to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of their identities.

The purposive sampling technique used in this study helped the researcher conveniently select participants who perceive and experience the phenomenon related to the study's objectives. Each person is selected because they possess a specific quality that the investigator finds intriguing. Purposive sampling is often employed in qualitative research designs due to its approach (Hossan, Dato'Mansor, and Jaharuddin, 2023).

Validation of the Instrument

The researcher established the validated instrument by presenting it to his research adviser, language editors, and experts in the field of specialization in research and education to seek comments and suggestions to improve its statement structure and appropriateness to the target participants. The unfamiliar words were modified to ensure the questions were understandable, and complex sentence structures were rephrased and made concise.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher strictly followed ethical guidelines as specified in the research manual. Before conducting the study, the researcher prepared a letter of request for the School Division Superintendent of the School Division of the City of Calamba to seek her approval to conduct a study within the area of her jurisdiction.

After the letter was approved, the researcher informed the participants about the location and date for conducting the research interview. The researcher ensured the participants were well-informed and aware of this study's focus and objectives. The researcher was open to any queries from participants to avoid misunderstandings and conflict in gathering

data. The researcher also ensured that the interviews were conducted at the participants' convenience without affecting their work duties or personal matters. The collected data, with the video recording and field notes, were transcribed verbatim.

Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed the data using Moustakas' transcendental phenomenology of data analysis. The following were the processes in the phenomenological analysis that served as a guide for assessing the data gathered: (1) bracketing, (2) horizontalization, (3) clustering into themes, (4) textural description, (5) structural description, and (6) textural-structural synthesis (Villanueva and Buenbrazo, 2023). The researcher also used the triangulation method to ensure the validity, credibility, and reliability of the research findings. And avoid biases when analyzing and interpreting the participants' shared experiences (Noble and Heale, 2019).

Results and Discussion

This study used Moustakas' transcendental phenomenology data analysis. The researcher scrutinized and explored how the selected public-school heads utilize their autonomy and authority to implement School-Based Management. It determined the experiences of school heads in stakeholder collaboration to manage school operations, specifically curriculum and teaching, learning environment, leadership, governance, accountability, human resources, team development, and finance and resource management mobilization. Furthermore, it explored public school heads' challenges and coping mechanisms in implementing School-Based Management. Likewise, related literature for the findings and reflections is also provided. As such, this study was guided by the central question:

What is the essence of the articulating principle of subsidiarity in the School Heads' implementation of SBM through stakeholders' collaboration?

Meanwhile, the corollary questions have been answered in the tables provided.

1. How do the public-school heads describe their implementation of School-Based Management through stakeholders' collaboration?
2. What themes emerged from the testimonies of the school heads?

The following themes emerged based on the qualitative data analysis.

Participants	Responses (Original)	Observation	Subordinate Themes	Superordinate Theme
ABY	So, when we have heard these ABY expressed a positive New guidelines are School Heads' 2024, it is something easy or guidelines, D.O. No. 007, s. sentiment towards the new easier to understand Mixed Experiences 2024, comparing them to the compared to the in Implementing ones. previous guidelines. The previous ones SBM Policy speaker found the new Guidelines (DO 007, s. 2024) guidelines easier to understand and implement. The new guidelines are easier to comprehend and apply.			
BARBIE	As school head D.O. No. 007, s. BARBIE had a favorable Clearer structure; 2024 where even better as impression of the new easier to accomplish compared to the past SBM guidelines, D.O. No. 007, s. due to specific implementation, for it is 2024, stating that they are an guidelines easier to implement and improvement over the accomplish because it previous School-Based provides clear deviations or Management (SBM). guidelines on school operations			
CHRIS	With regards to DepEd Order CHRIS stated that this Overwhelming 007, it is very tough, tough to memorandum is very workload and be overwhelming... challenging and demanding responsibilities			

Participants	Responses (Original)	Observation	Subordinate Themes	Superordinate Theme
DIANE	Well, ahm collaborating with stakeholders regarding SBM is not that easy...	for school heads. Because of numerous tasks and responsibilities that can be overwhelming. DIANE shared her personal experience with stakeholder implementing School-Based Management (SBM). She also highlighted the challenges of communication and collaborating with trust-building stakeholders and the strategies that helped build trust and partnership.	Challenges in collaboration; success through communication and trust-building	
EVE	So, kapag sinabi natin experience... institutionalized DepEd Order 007, s. 2024 has na and SBM... So madali na kumbaga para sa amin himayin ang bawat isa.	EVE expressed that the preparedness due to institutionalized SBM they had already practices institutionalized School-Based Management (SBM).	Familiarity and preparedness due to institutionalized SBM	
FATIMA	Sa totoo lang wala naman talaga kami challenges... So lahat ng mga activity namin, old lahat ng mga files namin nan dyan organized...	FATIMA expressed that their Smooth transition from the from 4 principles to 6 School-Based dimensions; (SBM) organized framework with four documentation principles to the new framework with six dimensions was relatively smooth and simple.	Smooth transition from 4 to 6 dimensions; (SBM) organized framework with four documentation principles to the new framework with six dimensions was relatively smooth and simple.	

Table 1. School Heads' Mixed Experiences and Adaptability in Implementing SBM Policy Guidelines (DO 007, s. 2024)

Table 1 reveals that school heads have different experiences in implementing School-Based Management (SBM). The school heads ABY, BARBIE, EVE, and FATIMA showed a positive perception of the new guidelines of School-Based Management (SBM). Their expressions toward SBM are easier than the old ones, and too smooth to implement. They have a favorable opinion of the new School-Based Management (SBM) guidelines. Because new guidelines are considered easier to understand, and there were practices before about SBM. The participants' experiences suggest that the new guidelines are promoting a more decentralized and empowering approach to SBM, aligning with the principle of subsidiarity.

SBM enhances management and leadership outcomes through the collaborative efforts of key stakeholders, the dedication of school leaders, and governmental assistance (Roque, 2023). School-based management provides a framework for improved educational decision-making and is a platform for better decision-making in Education. It empowers individuals on the front lines to make decisions that directly address authentic challenges and issues facing the school (De Lara and Pañares, 2023).

School Heads CHRIS and DIANE, on the other hand, experienced challenges in School-Based Management implementation due to numerous tasks and responsibilities, and struggles to establish relationships with various stakeholders. School Head CHRIS and DIANE have highlighted the challenges and difficulties that school heads face in implementing DepEd Order 007, s. 2024. These challenges and difficulties, combined with the complexity of collaborating with stakeholders, emphasize the importance of the principle of subsidiarity to address schools' unique needs and challenges.

The lack of understanding among those concerned with SBM's implementation is one of its problems. SBM is vital in educational operations. For the learners' better future, schools, stakeholders, and the community should coordinate their obligations (De Lara and Pañares, 2023).

Participants	Responses (Original)	Observation	Subordinate Themes	Superordinate Theme
ABY	We gather the teachers first ABY described the school's Cascade approach: Collaborative and for the meeting and process of disseminating informing teachers Inclusive orientation... every time that information about changes in first, followed by Stakeholder we have our parent summit... the Department of Education parents and Engagement in we discussed the details (DepEd) to teachers, parents, stakeholders through SBM about the new guidelines. and stakeholders. summits and Implementation conferences			
BARBIE	In our school, we delegate BARBIE shared that his Task delegation and tasks involving the domains school has a well-structured stakeholder of SBM... We conduct approach to SBM orientation to support orientation to them for implementation, with clear SBM implementation familiarization of the SBM roles and responsibilities. activities.			
CHRIS	In each ahh dimension there CHRIS described the school's Community-based is a chairperson... we have a organizational structure and collaboration; program, a meeting with collaborative approach to structured those parent and barangay implementing School-Based committees per council... we asked for their Management (SBM) across dimension support. different dimensions, involving parents and the local community.			
DIANE	What's important in this is DIANE emphasized the Inclusion of both that you have to involve all of importance of involving all internal and external the stakeholders... in stakeholders, both internal stakeholders in decision-making of the and external, in decision-making internal and external making processes. stakeholders.			
EVE	Okay so, paano iinvolve yung EVE emphasized the Clear communication stakeholders... kinakailangan importance of clearly and orientation about na well defined... sa isang explaining School-Based SBM to promote meeting para mapaliwanag sa Management (SBM) to stakeholder kanila ito. various stakeholders, engagement including internal and external stakeholders, to encourage their participation and engagement.			
FATIMA	All our PPA's are properly FATIMA highlighted the Full parental and endorsed to our parents... So school's approach to community everytime na meron kami engaging parents and the participation through ginagawa... ini-invite namin si local community in school consistent Kap... nakakakuha kami ng activities, ensuring everyone coordination 100% percent na support. is informed and involved.			

Table 2. Collaborative and Inclusive Stakeholder Engagement in SBM Implementation

Table 2 reveals that school heads have responded unanimously about involving school stakeholders in School-Based Management (SBM). All the School Heads recognize that stakeholders are crucial to the success of School-Based Management (SBM) and that their involvement is necessary to ensure their support and participation. The SBM guidelines should be explained and defined for them. Their responses also highlight the importance of considering both challenges and opportunities in practicing the principle of subsidiarity, as well as the need for effective communication, stakeholder engagement, and capacity building.

The important component of effective SBM is ensuring that resources are mobilized in the most transparent, effective, and efficient approach possible. Thus, school stakeholders are well-informed about the school's resources and the resources required to deliver high-quality education and support to children. However, there is a need for improvement in resource planning and programming, as well as regular monitoring, assessment, and reporting. Monitoring resource management is critical for ensuring checks and balances between school stakeholders (Silabay and Alegre, 2023).

Participants	Responses (Original)	Observation	Subordinate Themes	Superordinate Theme
ABY	Actually, the challenge that ABY highlighted the challenge we have met is the proper of proper communication and communication... their with parents, which can lead availability issues some to delays in conferences, conferences or agreements agreements, and other were delayed. important matters.		Communication gaps stakeholder availability issues	Overcoming Communication Barriers in Stakeholder Collaboration for SBM
BARBIE	Time constraints and BARBIE highlighted the availability of needed challenges faced by teachers documents and MOVs... in implementing School-from teachers and availability of our Based Management (SBM) stakeholders stakeholders not attending due to time constraints, some meetings. needed documents, and MOVs.		Time constraints and limited participation from teachers and stakeholders	
CHRIS	When we send invitation... CHRIS highlighted the not all of our invited challenges and importance of stakeholder presence stakeholders appear... we are stakeholder engagement. He and commitment the one who go to them... emphasizes the need to find persuade them to collaborate. another way to communicate with stakeholders.		Difficulty in securing stakeholder presence and commitment	
DIANE	Well, probably yet is ahh DIANE emphasized the need dealing with the diverse for flexibility and adaptability schedules and diverse stakeholders... schedules when dealing with stakeholder minsan ay hindi nagma- stakeholders' conflicting backgrounds match. schedules.		Mismatched schedules and diverse stakeholders' conflicting backgrounds	
EVE	Siguro yung challenges sanay EVE confidently shared that na sanay na kami don... Ito her school is the only one demand due to lang yung school na nag-offering complete basic complete education ooffer ng complete basic education from kindergarten level coverage education... marami-marami to senior high school. syang kinakailangan i- So the challenge for her prepare. school is the need to prepare and address compliance in School-Based Management.		High compliance demand due to complete basic education coverage	
FATIMA	Ayon may mga nae-encouter FATIMA described the rin kaming challenges... lalo challenges of engaging working parents due na kapag working ang working parents in school to time constraints parents... nakikipag-ugnayan activities and making it sila sa amin doon sa time difficult for them to attend kung saan libre sila. school events.		Difficulty engaging working parents due to time constraints	

Table 3. Overcoming Communication and Scheduling Barriers in Stakeholder Collaboration for SBM

Table 3 exposes the various challenges of the School Head when collaborating with school stakeholders to implement School-Based Management (SBM). All the School Heads described the challenges in implementing School-Based Management (SBM), particularly in communicating effectively with stakeholders, particularly parents who have busy schedules. This leads to challenges in disseminating information, gathering support, and coordinating activities. Aside from that, stakeholders may not fully understand SBM's purpose, benefits, and requirements. The importance of addressing challenges and promoting effective stakeholder engagement to implement the principle of subsidiarity in SBM. By doing so, schools can exercise autonomy and make informed decisions.

The role of the school stakeholders as partners in creating changes and development through acquiring quality education is an urgent concern, especially in this time of Basic Education. However, not all stakeholders know their roles as partners of the school in attaining its vision and mission. There are school stakeholders who are having a hard time collaborating with the school programs and projects, working together, and sharing responsibilities with the community (Anabo, 2024).

Participants	Responses (Original)	Observation	Subordinate Themes	Superordinate Theme
ABY	We still insist, we still doing our best, at kung saan mapapalakas yung ugnayan ng stakeholders tsaka ng school, ng community...	ABY emphasized their commitment to building strong relationships with stakeholders despite the challenges in building stakeholder collaboration.	Commitment to building stakeholder relationships with engagement through the adaptability and outreach	Proactive and Strategic Coping Mechanisms in Enhancing Stakeholder Collaboration for SBM Implementation
BARBIE	In DepEd, it is constantly accepting any form of commitment to School-Based challenges... working overtime, supervising, and possible means to meet the monitoring, and evaluating the school activities...	BARBIE showcased her Perseverance and extra effort to meet Management by trying all SBM demands	Perseverance and extra effort to meet Management by trying all SBM demands	
CHRIS	Patience, we need more patience... we reschedule... or importance of patience and initiative in we are the ones to come to adaptability when working scheduling and them.....to pursue the proposed program and taking initiative to meet project.	CHRIS highlighted the Patience, flexibility, or importance of patience and initiative in adaptability when working scheduling and outreach stakeholders. So he is stakeholders to pursue the collaborations.	Patience, flexibility, or importance of patience and initiative in adaptability when working scheduling and outreach	
DIANE	Just like what I have mentioned, perseverance is the key...	DIANE highlighted the Perseverance as a key importance of perseverance value in stakeholder in overcoming challenges collaboration when working with diverse stakeholders.	Perseverance as a key importance of perseverance value in stakeholder in overcoming challenges collaboration	
EVE	So lahat ng bawat kanya-kanya syang chairperson at may mga members narin...	EVE emphasized the Systematic delegation importance of systematic and institutionalized practices in implementing School-Based Management in the institution. She added that it is important to assign clear roles and responsibilities to each dimension, with a chairperson and members.	Systematic delegation importance of systematic and institutionalized practices in implementing School-Based Management in the institution. She added that it is important to assign clear roles and responsibilities to each dimension, with a chairperson and members.	
FATIMA	Wala naman imposible kung may pagkakaisa diba? So yon lagi dapat may pagkakaisa, mag pagkakaunawaa, bigayan kung бага ganun.	FATIMA believed that Unity, Understanding, nothing is impossible if there and mutual support in unity, understanding, and achieving goals. Her expression showed essential factors for achieving success.	Unity, Understanding, nothing is impossible if there and mutual support in unity, understanding, and achieving goals. Her expression showed essential factors for achieving success.	

Table 4. Proactive and Strategic Coping Mechanisms in Enhancing Stakeholder Collaboration for SBM Implementation

Table 4 indicates that students employed various coping mechanisms in dealing with challenges in implementing School-Based Management (SBM). All the School Heads stressed the value of persistence, patience, and collaboration while implementing School-Based Management (SBM) principles into reality. They emphasize the necessity of establishing trusting bonds with stakeholders, being adaptive and flexible when attending to their requirements, effectively communicating, and working together as a team. This involves being understanding and patient when collaborating with a variety of stakeholders, and assigning roles and tasks to empower them. Aside from that, the participants demonstrate how the principle of subsidiarity can be applied in SBM, empowering schools to make decisions that are tailored to their unique needs and contexts. By decentralizing decision-making and involving stakeholders, schools can promote more effective and responsive management. The principal should exhibit a caring attitude, enthusiasm for learning, strong work discipline, and exemplary human relations to create a positive work environment.

The Administration fosters continuous communication and collaboration between internal and external stakeholders, as well as regular feedback mechanisms to address changing expectations and concerns, resulting in a dynamic and responsive approach. Furthermore, providing professional development programs for stakeholders is crucial for enhancing their understanding of School-Based Management (SBM) techniques and fostering a shared vision for the educational institution's success (Saliendrez and Dem Merlin, 2024).

Participants	Responses (Original)	Observation	Subordinate Themes	Superordinate Theme
ABY	Kahit na gaano kasipag o kagaling ang namumuno... Kung wala ang mga yan sa in a school setting require support ating ginagawang more than just individual management sa school hindi effort. She believed tayo makaka accomplish ng stakeholders are essential for isang bagay. School-Based Management.	ABY stressed that effective leadership and management strong stakeholder School Leadership	requires Strengthening	Through Collaborative Learning with Stakeholders
BARBIE	It always takes a village to raise a child... without the importance of working convergence of our together with stakeholders. shared goals stakeholders, we could not achieve what is just and worthwhile.	BARBIE emphasized the Collective importance of working responsibility and shared goals		
CHRIS	Stakeholders... will not support you if they don't see importance of a clear and transparency the complete proposal... comprehensive proposal well-prepared especially projects for school when seeking support of proposals facilities improvement. stakeholders for the school's needs.	CHRIS emphasized the Importance of a clear and transparency and		
DIANE	The learning is that we should always be flexible... Flexibility is a key term.	DIANE highlighted the Adaptability when importance of flexibility engaging with diverse stakeholders for effective collaboration.		
EVE	"No man is an island" ... So, kahit na ikaw ang principal significance of collaboration diversity of roles, and hindi mo kakayanin na mapa and collective effort in mutual learning gagawin mo yung SBM na achieving success, mag-isa ka. particularly in the context of School-Based Management (SBM).	EVE described the Value of teamwork, diversity of roles, and collective effort in mutual learning		
FATIMA	Ayon, kinakailangan din na ito isa lang sa narealized importance of considering namin... iniintindi rin namin stakeholders' needs, perspectives and sila... nagbibigay din kami. perspectives, and valuing mutual respect their time to strengthen the stakeholder relationship.	FATIMA highlighted the Consideration of stakeholder needs, perspectives and valuing mutual respect		

Table 5. Strengthening School Leadership Through Collaborative Learning with Stakeholders

Table 5 reveals that a lot of thoughts had arisen from their responses to the given interview question on the important learnings from collaborating with stakeholders in implementing School-Based Management (SBM). All the School Heads emphasized the essential learnings from collaborating with stakeholders to implement your school's School-Based Management. These learnings are that stakeholders' engagement is essential to success, working with stakeholders requires understanding and flexibility, effective collaboration needs both giving and receiving, and no one can succeed by themselves. The participants' responses demonstrate how stakeholder engagement and collaboration can promote the principle of subsidiarity in SBM. By involving stakeholders and fostering collaboration, schools can make more informed decisions and promote school ownership.

The school head is the school leader, and being an effective leader means being accessible to teachers, staff, parents, students, and community members. He considers his actions before taking them, is calm in difficult situations, and

prioritizes the school's needs before his own. An effective principal stands up to fill in holes as needed, even if it is not a part of his routine (Meador, 2019, as cited in Gaspar, 2022).

Participants	Responses (Original)	Observation	Subordinate Themes	Superordinate Theme
ABY	Alright I may describe this to ABY a knot connecting one importance of another... Makita nila na collaborations maganda ang produkto ng stakeholder. She believed unity and School-Based Management	discussed the Stakeholders as Stakeholders as success Essential Pillars in the Success of	strong connectors; depends on their the Success of	
BARBIE	Stakeholders are the fuel of BARBIE emphasized that Stakeholders as the the SBM for they are the stakeholders are the key driving force and driving force of the school in factors of success in School-energy behind SBM realizing the DepEd Mission, Based Management (SBM). success Vision, and Core Values.			
CHRIS	Stakeholder really help a lot... CHRIS emphasized the Stakeholders provide assurance na every classroom significant role of essential support is conducive... hind nga lahat stakeholders in supporting beyond government ng pangangailangan ng and addressing the needs of capacity paaralan ay maipo-provide teachers, students, and the ng gobyerno.	school community, particularly in ensuring that every classroom is conducive to teaching and learning.		
DIANE	Our stakeholders are the key DIANE emphasized that the Stakeholders as components... Kung wala sila stakeholders are vital implementation hindi rin mai-components of SBM; without enablers implement ng ayos... stakeholders, the system cannot be effectively implemented.			
EVE	Ang tagumpay ng SBM ay EVE emphasized that the Collaborative efforts tagumpay ng lahat... mula sa success of School-Based from all sectors lead students, sa teachers, sa Management is a collective to SBM success parents... lahat ay achievement, nakakatulong sa success ng resulting from the ano... collaborative efforts of various stakeholders. These stakeholders include students, teachers, parents, private sector entities, and local government units (LGUs), barangays.			
FATIMA	Lahat ng aming programa FATIMA acknowledged that Stakeholder nasa SBM yan... hindi naman stakeholders play a vital role involvement is critical magma-materialize... without in supporting the in project realization the help ng ating implementation of School- and planning stakeholders. Based Management.			

Table 6. Stakeholders as Essential Pillars in the Success of School-Based Management (SBM)

Table 6 illustrates the common description of the school heads about the importance of the stakeholders in the success of School-Based Management (SBM). All the School Heads emphasized the importance of stakeholders to the success of School-Based Management (SBM). They emphasized the necessity of partnership, collaboration, and shared responsibility while highlighting the interdependence of stakeholders. Empowerment, collaboration, and effective stakeholder involvement are essential for promoting school success. The responses of these school heads demonstrate the importance

of stakeholder engagement in SBM and its alignment with the principle of subsidiarity. By engaging with stakeholders, schools can promote school decision-making with shared responsibility.

Community participation, particularly by parents and school committees, is essential for the successful implementation of SBM. Active community involvement not only fosters a sense of ownership for the school but also provides important financial and non-financial assistance. Collaboration between schools and communities' results in a more inclusive educational environment that responds to students' needs (Azlan, 2025).

Participants	Responses (Original)	Observation	Subordinate Themes	Superordinate Theme
ABY	We, always see to it that they ABY are involved... we always stakeholder mention the people behind recognized these activities. So, we give the time. them certificate of recognition.	highlighted that should be consistent all stakeholder involvement programs	Recognition	and Sustaining Stakeholder Engagement in Through Recognition, Communication, and Transparency in SBM Implementation
BARBIE	Motivation is very important BARBIE emphasized that the Motivation in any field... more than the motivation drives for meaningful reward system or achieving positive results in participation and performance appraisal. School-Based Management. positive results			
CHRIS	Parent summits... we CHRIS emphasized that giving Public appreciation, recognize them by providing recognition and gratitude inspiration, and a talk, certificates, and shows that the school values tangible recognition sometimes tokens... its stakeholders and creates strong relationships with them.			
DIANE	Proper communication... and DIANE highlighted the Constant giving a reward system to our importance of effective communication and stakeholders... to motivate communication and rewards as sila na tumulong. motivation in engaging stakeholder stakeholders. And it will be motivators achieved by maintaining constant communication and providing a reward system.			
EVE	Stakeholder ay nagkaroon ng EVE demonstrated its Digital and printed ano suporta ahh ina-appreciation for acknowledgments, acknowledge through FB stakeholders' support transparency through page... also during Gawad through various channels. detailed reporting Pisara. Flyers na binibigay Additionally, the school para maupdate din sila. prioritizes transparent communication by regularly updating stakeholders.			
FATIMA	Through rewards and FATIMA showed appreciation Regular appreciation recognitions... nagbibigay for stakeholders' support through ceremonies kami ng certificate... nire-through rewards and and school events recognize namin sila kapag recognition, fostering a positive relationship and may programa... encouraging continued engagement.			

Table 7. Sustaining Stakeholder Engagement Through Recognition, Communication, and Transparency in SBM Implementation

Table 7 presents the significance of recognizing and appreciating stakeholders' contributions to School-Based Management (SBM). All the School Heads emphasized the importance of regular communication and updates, transparency in acknowledging stakeholders' support, providing certificates of appreciation and recognition, and involving stakeholders in school activities and decision-making. These responses of school heads demonstrate the significance of recognizing and

appreciating stakeholders in SBM. By acknowledging stakeholders' contributions, schools can build trust, motivate stakeholders, and promote ownership and collaboration. This approach aligns with the principle of subsidiarity, empowering stakeholder relationships and promoting decentralized decision-making. Better decisions would be made if more parents were involved through better communication between the school and the stakeholders.

Schools are doing well in terms of awards and recognition. The majority of schools have a rising SBM level of practice. The regular recognition and honors demonstrate their dedication to excellence, while the progressive SBM levels provide a solid foundation for ongoing growth and long-term development in educational practices (Sison and Fuentes, 2025). SBM must enhance creativity, adopt effective innovation strategies, and modernize to prioritize customer education. This should be considered by school principals, teachers, committees, and other education stakeholders (Komalasari, Arafat, and Mulyadi, 2020).

Participants	Responses (Original)	Observation	Subordinate Themes	Superordinate Theme
ABY	Siguro sa tingin ko itong hindi para magpahirap... self assessment mo yung school...	ABY has the perspective that the new guidelines are a tool for school improvement through self-reflection and growth. She believed the guidelines would drive positive change and improvement in the school.	Self-assessment as a valuable tool for school improvement	Strengthening SBM Implementation Through Support, Self-Assessment, and Stakeholder Engagement
BARBIE	Since DO No. 007 s. 2024 is still on its soft implementation... need constant assistance...	BARBIE viewed that the new SBM guidelines are still in their trial phase, and schools need regular guidance and support to navigate their implementation.	Need for continuous technical need regular support to navigate their implementation.	
CHRIS	Ayon ang hinihiling ko assistance... city government and division office should help find stakeholders for small schools.	CHRIS expressed the desire to have technical support and technical assistance from top underserved schools management, specifically the division office and city government, to aid the less fortunate schools like his school. He believed smaller schools often lack resources and assistance.	Appeal for equal technical support, especially for underserved schools	
DIANE	You have to gain the trust of your stakeholders... showing transparency in all aspects.	DIANE believed that the implementation of School-transparency in Based Management relies heavily on building trust with stakeholders. One way to establish this trust is by promoting transparency in all aspects of school operations.	Trust-building and School-transparency in Based Management	
EVE	Consistency in implementation programs... and continued recognition from DepEd for schools with effective SBM.	EVE expressed her suggestion of for other schools to have institutional recognition for good programs, projects, and practices activities. However, the Department of Education continues to recognize schools that have established effective School-Based Management.	Consistency and institutional recognition for good programs, projects, and practices	

Participants	Responses (Original)	Observation	Subordinate Themes	Superordinate Theme
FATIMA	Okay naman ang guidelines ng SBM... we make sure our guidelines are documented properly.	FATIMA recognized the SBM Proper orientation, being more documentation, and activities are documented effective in providing careful direction in the implementation of School-Based Management.		

Table 8. Strengthening SBM Implementation Through Support, Self-Assessment, and Stakeholder Engagement

Table 8 presents school heads' suggestions or recommendations based on the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM). All the School Heads commonly suggested that in the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM), there should be technical assistance and support, there should be transparency, trust, and stakeholder engagement, consistency and continuity in implementing SBM programs and projects, recognizing and rewarding to motivate stakeholders, and providing clarity and orientation about SBM implementation. The statements from these school heads demonstrated the importance of SBM implementation and its alignment with the principle of subsidiarity. By empowering local decision-making, fostering collaboration, and promoting local ownership, schools can implement SBM in a way that is responsive to their unique needs and contexts. This approach can lead to improved responsiveness, increased effectiveness, and enhanced accountability in school management. To improve SBM implementation and outcomes, principals, teachers, and school committees must increase their capacity to implement SBM; staff must improve their ability to make operational and instructional changes; and central and local governments must develop their capacity to support schools in implementing SBM. The SBM indicator, planning, emphasizes the relevance of features of the school's vision and mission, changes in the educational process, and curricular program modifications (Amon and Bustami, 2021). School-Based Management is a sort of decentralization that prioritizes the individual school as the primary improvement unit and emphasizes the redistribution of decision-making authority to the school level as the primary means of encouraging and sustaining progress. The school-based management program was created and designed to increase transparency and accountability in two ways: by empowering the school community to identify educational priorities and allocate school maintenance and operating budgets to those priorities (particularly curriculum enrichment programs); and by utilizing annual implementation plans and school undertakings (Saro et al, 2022).

Synthesis of Themes

This qualitative study explores the experiences and perceptions of school heads in implementing School-Based Management (SBM). Through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, this study uncovered eight main themes that highlight the complexities and challenges of SBM implementation. These themes are: (1) *School Heads' Mixed Experiences and Adaptability in Implementing SBM Policy Guidelines* (DO 007, s. 2024), (2) *Collaborative and Inclusive Stakeholder Engagement in SBM Implementation*, (3) *Overcoming Communication and Scheduling Barriers in Stakeholder Collaboration for SBM*, (4) *Proactive and Strategic Coping Mechanisms in Enhancing Stakeholder Collaboration for SBM Implementation*, (5) *Strengthening School Leadership Through Collaborative Learning with Stakeholders*, (6) *Stakeholders as Essential Pillars in the Success of School-Based Management (SBM)*, (7) *Sustaining Stakeholder Engagement Through Recognition, Communication, and Transparency in SBM Implementation*, and (8) *Strengthening SBM Implementation Through Support, Self-Assessment, and Stakeholder Engagement*. The findings of the study have significant implications for school administrators, policymakers, and stakeholders aiming to enhance educational outcomes. The insights from this study can guide effective SBM implementation, strengthen school leadership, and ultimately boost student achievement.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Findings

The study revealed that school heads have demonstrated adaptability in implementing the new SBM framework. Most expressed that the transition from the former SBM principles to the current six dimensions was smooth, largely due to institutionalized practices already in place. However, a few school heads noted challenges such as overwhelming responsibilities and difficulties in stakeholder coordination, especially when new to their assignments. This highlighted the dual nature of school leadership, where success is influenced by both experience and contextual factors. Strategic stakeholder engagement emerged as a vital component of SBM implementation. School heads involved internal and external stakeholders through orientations, summits, and collaborative planning. However, barriers such as stakeholder availability, time constraints, and limited participation from working parents were common issues. In response, school

heads employed coping mechanisms rooted in teamwork, delegation, perseverance, and patience, often adopting grassroots-level communication to sustain engagement.

Themes emerged from the testimonies included: Adaptability of School Heads in SBM Implementation, Strategic Stakeholder Engagement Led by School Leaders, Barriers to Effective Stakeholder Participation, Coping Mechanisms for SBM Challenges, Leadership Growth through Collaboration, Stakeholders as Essential Contributors to SBM, Sustaining SBM through Recognition and Communication and Continuous Improvement through Self-Assessment and Support.

Issues and Implications

1. Issue: Uneven Capacity of School Heads to Manage SBM Implementation. While many school heads found the updated SBM framework manageable, others—particularly those in newly assigned posts—struggled with overwhelming workloads and stakeholder coordination.
Implication: This indicated a gap in onboarding and capacity-building programs for new school leaders. The successful implementation of SBM is heavily dependent on the leader's prior experience and the presence of institutionalized systems. A lack of training or transitional support may hinder the effective execution of SBM mandates.
2. Issue: Inconsistent Stakeholder Participation due to Time and Availability Constraints. Stakeholders, especially working parents and some LGU partners, could not always attend meetings or participate in planning due to conflicting schedules.
Implication: SBM's effectiveness is undermined when key contributors are unable to participate in collaborative decision-making. This calls for more flexible engagement mechanisms (e.g., asynchronous consultations, recorded sessions, or weekend assemblies) to accommodate the diverse availability of stakeholders.
3. Issue: Limited Technical Assistance for SBM Implementation in Underserved Schools. Several school heads from small or resource-limited schools reported difficulties in meeting SBM documentation and reporting requirements due to a lack of personnel and logistical support.
Implication: The equity gap in SBM implementation persists. Without targeted technical support, schools with fewer human resources may lag in both compliance and quality, potentially widening the divide in educational outcomes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and emerging issues of the study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM). These suggestions aim to address identified challenges, strengthen collaborative practices, and sustain the gains of participatory school governance. Each recommendation is crafted to be practical, context-sensitive, and aligned with the roles and capacities of the respective stakeholders.

1. The administration may provide continuous training and mentoring programs for newly appointed school heads to ensure confident and competent SBM leadership.
2. School heads may adopt flexible strategies and delegate responsibilities through SBM committees to promote shared accountability and effective workload management.
3. Teaching and non-teaching personnel may actively engage in SBM planning and support implementation by sharing best practices and working beyond assigned tasks when needed.
4. Parents and guardians may strengthen their involvement by attending school orientations, volunteering in activities, and maintaining regular communication with teachers.
5. LGUs may formalize partnerships with schools and consistently support school programs.
6. Students may participate in school programs, promote inclusivity, and practice responsible leadership by voicing concerns and contributing ideas to school improvement.
7. Future researchers may examine SBM implementation in diverse contexts, such as rural or marginalized communities, and use participatory methods to capture real-time insights.

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Competing Interests Statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this article.

Data Availability Statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study; all data used were obtained from previously published sources as cited in the reference list.

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Appendices

No appendices are attached to this study.