

Strategic and Innovative Leadership as Predictors of School-Based Management Performance

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Abstract

School-based management (SBM) is used as a governance strategy to enhance school effectiveness through decentralized decision making and accountability. Leadership activities of the principals are significant in the effective adoption of SBM. Although previous research has investigated leadership practices and SBM outcomes in terms of descriptive and correlational models, few studies have identified the relative influence of differentiated leadership dimensions on SBM performance when utilizing nationally representative data. The present study investigates the antecedents of SBM performance such as strategic management and innovative leadership using secondary analyses. The study used quantitative type of descriptive-predictive research design with school heads as the unit of analysis using data from school heads and teachers in public secondary schools in the Province of Rizal for School Year 2022-2023. Statistical methods: Descriptive statistics, multiple regressions were used. The findings showed that leadership vision, democratic management style, innovative-based management practices and community relations were predictors of SBM's performance. Results underscore targeted leadership competencies as critical to SBM implementation effort, and they offer empirical affirmations for leadership training programs and policy directions for basic education.

Keywords: Strategic Leadership; Innovative Leadership; School-Based Management; Educational Leadership Predictive Analysis

1. Introduction

Effective school leadership is a crucial factor in achieving school governance, improving instructional quality, and sustaining organizational development. In decentralized education systems like the Philippine basic education sector, School-Based Management (SBM) positions principals as key actors in aligning teaching, learning, management, and community engagement with institutional goals. The success of SBM largely depends on the leadership capacities of head teachers, particularly in strategic management and innovative leadership. Leadership effectiveness in decentralized settings is also strengthened when institutions adopt clear performance and accountability mechanisms that align leadership practices with measurable outcomes and continuous improvement initiatives (Jacoba, Santos, Armas, & Gamit, 2024; Santos, 2020).

Strategic management enables school leaders to articulate a clear vision, allocate resources effectively, and direct efforts toward long-term goals, while innovative leadership emphasizes adaptability and creativity to respond to evolving educational challenges. Philippine leadership frameworks, such as the National Competency-Based Standards for School Heads and the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSSH), highlight the importance of strategic direction, innovation, and accountability in effective school leadership. In practice, leadership systems that prioritize quality assurance, standardization, and evidence-based governance tend to reinforce organizational discipline and improve institutional responsiveness (De Lara & Santos, 2024; Gamit, Santos, Armas, & Villegas, 2024).

Research shows that strategic leadership connects educational policy with school-level practice. Guiamalon (2025) emphasized that school heads' vision, goal articulation, and participative planning are essential for developing effective school improvement plans and sustaining SBM initiatives. Principals who engage stakeholders, identify school needs, and demand accountability within decentralized systems achieve higher organizational performance and more effective SBM implementation. Related organizational evidence suggests that performance improvements are strengthened when leaders institutionalize systematic quality approaches and align human resource mechanisms with development goals (Santos, 2023; Yu & Santos, 2025).

Innovative leadership has gained attention as schools face rapid change and heightened accountability. Hernandez, Mendoza, and Pacheco (2023) found that strategic thinking, innovative problem-solving, and strong interpersonal skills among school heads significantly enhance management and supervision effectiveness. Tuang and Quintos (2025) further demonstrated that innovative leadership fosters a collaborative school climate, encourages professional growth, and strengthens collective responsibility, all of which are critical for SBM success. Similar insights from digital transformation studies suggest that leadership adaptability and capacity-building are increasingly important in managing technology-related shifts and system disruptions (Binaluyo, Santos, & Agustin, 2024; Gamit, 2023).

SBM relies on localized decision-making, and leadership effectiveness is fundamental to its success. Botha (2006) showed that principals' involvement of stakeholders and decision-making practices significantly influence SBM functionality and school improvement outcomes. In the Philippines, Anabo (2024) highlighted that fostering a shared vision, providing instructional support, and engaging stakeholders complement strategic and innovative leadership, collectively enhancing SBM performance. Evidence from education-sector digital integration further indicates that school systems benefit when leaders promote ICT-enabled support structures that strengthen teaching delivery, documentation, and operational continuity (Gamit, 2023; Tuliao, Santos, & Ortega, 2025).

Despite evidence linking leadership to SBM success, most research has been descriptive or correlational, leaving limited understanding of which leadership dimensions most strongly predict SBM performance. This study addresses this gap by examining the predictive role of strategic management and innovative leadership in SBM performance, aiming to provide evidence that can inform policy decisions and strengthen leadership development in Philippine schools. This direction is consistent with broader Philippine-based research emphasizing structured organizational development, capacity-building initiatives, and system-level improvement as foundations for sustainable institutional performance (Cara, Gamit, & Santos, 2025; Hipolito & Santos, 2025).

2. Materials and methods

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-predictive research design using secondary data analysis, which is suitable for examining predictive relationships among variables without manipulating the research environment. The dataset was sourced from a completed doctoral dissertation conducted in the Province of Rizal during School Year 2022–2023. The original study investigated strategic management, innovative leadership, and the performance of school heads. The present study, conducted by the adviser of the original research, reanalyzed the data to address a distinct research objective focusing on predictive relationships.

2.2 Research Setting

The study was conducted in both Rizal Province and Antipolo City focusing on two (2) divisions.

2.3 Respondents

The data were gathered from school heads and teachers of public secondary schools in Rizal Province and Antipolo City. Total enumeration was employed in the primary data collection.

2.4 Research Instruments

Data collection utilized researcher-developed questionnaire checklists aligned with national leadership standards, while SBM practice was assessed using established level-of-practice SBM indicators.

2.5 Data Collection

The researcher followed the Gantt Chart of Activities in the conduct of the study. This includes the formulation of the research problem up to the revision of the manuscript and submission of the final copy. After the validation of the instrument, permission to conduct the study was obtained from the concerned authorities. The questionnaire-checklist was administered to the respondents through the Google survey form considering the guidelines in the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Retrieved data were encoded and processed utilizing Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Based from the interpreted data, summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations were formulated.

2.6 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to present leadership practices and SBM performance levels. To identify which dimensions of leadership significantly predicted SBM performance, multivariate regression analysis was conducted at a 0.05 level of significance.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

The study ensured the protection of the rights and welfare of all respondents. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose of the study. Confidentiality and anonymity of all information provided were strictly maintained, and data were used solely for research purposes. The researcher ensured that the respondents were treated with respect and that no harm, whether physical, emotional, or psychological, would result from their participation in the study..

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Level of Strategic Management of School Heads

Table 1 shows that school heads exhibit a high level of strategic management across all dimensions, with Leadership Vision and Democratic Management receiving the highest ratings. This suggests that school heads not only articulate a clear vision for their schools but also actively engage stakeholders in decision-making processes, fostering a participatory and collaborative school culture. High scores in Visionary, Transformational, and Coaching Management indicate that school heads anticipate future challenges, inspire and motivate staff, and provide guidance for professional growth, demonstrating an overall forward-thinking leadership approach.

These findings are supported by international research underscoring the role of strategic and visionary leadership in educational settings. Strategic planning combined with visionary leadership enhances educational quality by fostering innovation, addressing future challenges, and ensuring sustainability, with school leaders playing a pivotal role in shaping school culture and guiding stakeholders toward shared goals (Reynita, Zulaikha & Rahmawati, 2025). In addition, studies have found that principals' strategic leadership is positively related to school performance outcomes, including student achievement, through the translation of strategic plans into effective instructional and organizational practices (Zakaria et al., 2021). Collectively, these studies emphasize that strategic leadership—characterized by clear vision, democratic engagement, and transformative practices—is essential for driving school improvement, promoting professional development, and achieving educational goal

Table 1: *Level of Strategic Management of School Heads*

DIMENSION	MEAN	INTERPRETATION
Visionary Management	High	Practiced to a great extent
Democratic Management	High	Practiced to a great extent
Transformational Management	High	Practiced to a great extent
Coaching Management	High	Practiced to a great extent
Leadership Vision	High	Practiced to a great extent

3.2. Extent Level of Innovative Leadership of School Heads

Table 2 indicates that innovative leadership practices among school heads are highly evident across all dimensions, with particularly strong performance in Management and Community Relation Aspects, suggesting that school heads not only implement effective and creative management strategies but also actively foster positive relationships with the broader school community. High ratings in Emotional and Implementation Aspects reflect their capability to manage emotions, adapt to challenges, and translate innovative ideas into actionable practices, which aligns with research that identifies innovative leaders as those who cultivate a culture of continuous improvement, collaboration, and creative problem-solving in educational settings (Riddel & Zulfikar, 2025). This is consistent with findings that principals' innovative leadership is associated with higher levels of teacher innovative behavior, commitment, and the development of supportive school environments, where interpersonal skills, shared vision, and dynamic initiatives drive innovation (Tuang & Quintos, 2025). Overall, these findings highlight that school heads consistently demonstrate innovation-oriented leadership behaviors that enhance school effectiveness and strengthen community engagement, reinforcing the importance of innovation in educational leadership literature

Table 2: *Extent Level of Innovative Leadership of School Heads*

Dimension	Mean	Interpretation
Emotional Aspects	High	Evident
Management Aspects	High	Evident
Implementation Aspects	High	Evident
Community Relation Aspects	High	Evident

3.3. Level of School-Based Management Performance

Table 3 shows that most schools are operating at the maturing to advanced levels of School-Based Management (SBM), indicating that decentralized governance mechanisms are being effectively implemented in the school context. The presence of functional systems in the majority of schools reflects a growing capacity for local decision-making in areas such as resource management, program implementation, and stakeholder participation, while the several schools at the advanced level demonstrate sustained best practices in leadership, management, and community involvement. These results suggest that SBM contributes to stronger school performance, greater accountability, and more responsive educational practices tailored to the needs of students and stakeholders. The international literature on SBM supports these findings, noting that decentralization of authority to the school level—when accompanied by autonomy, stakeholder engagement, and accountability—can improve school effectiveness and performance outcomes, though success often depends on context and implementation quality (Nurhayati, 2025). Research from global contexts also shows that SBM's emphasis on local autonomy and participatory governance aligns with improved management practices and higher school performance when structural supports are in place, reinforcing the value of sustained decentralized governance in educational reform (World Bank analysis of SBM and learning outcomes).

Table 3: *Level of School-Based Management Performance*

SBM Level of Practice	Frequency	Interpretation
Developing	Few	Emerging practices
Maturing	Majority	Functional systems in place
Advanced	Several	Sustained best practices

3.4. Predictors of School-Based Management Performance

Table 4 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis examining the predictive effects of strategic and innovative leadership on School-Based Management (SBM) performance. The model was statistically significant, indicating that the leadership variables collectively account for a meaningful portion of the variance in SBM outcomes. Specifically, Leadership Vision, Democratic Management, Innovative Management Practices, and Community Relations emerged as significant predictors. This suggests that school heads who articulate a clear vision, involve stakeholders in decision-making, implement innovative strategies, and foster strong community ties are more likely to achieve higher SBM performance. Other leadership dimensions, although positively related, did not reach statistical significance, highlighting the critical role of these four dimensions in driving effective decentralized governance.

These findings are consistent with both local and international research emphasizing that strategic and innovative leadership behaviors are essential for school effectiveness and performance outcomes. Visionary and democratic leadership enable school heads to align school goals with the needs of the community, promote collaborative decision-making, and motivate staff toward shared objectives (David, 2021; Torres, 2020). Similarly, innovative management practices and strong community relations have been shown to enhance organizational adaptability, teacher engagement, and stakeholder support, all of which are crucial for the successful implementation of SBM (Zakaria et al., 2021; Riddel & Zulfikar, 2025). International studies further support this, demonstrating that principals' strategic and innovative leadership significantly predicts school performance by improving instructional quality, resource management, and community involvement (Leithwood et al., 2020). Overall, the results underscore that school heads' strategic vision, participatory management, innovation, and community engagement are key predictors of SBM success, reinforcing the importance of targeted leadership development in achieving decentralized governance and improved educational outcomes.

Table 4: *Regression Analysis of Strategic Management and Innovative Leadership Predicting SBM Performance*

Predictor Variable	β	t	p-value	Interpretation
Leadership Vision	+	—	< .05	Significant predictor
Democratic Management	+	—	< .05	Significant predictor
Innovative Leadership – Management Aspects	+	—	< .05	Significant predictor
Innovative Leadership – Community Relations	+	—	< .05	Significant predictor
Other Leadership Dimensions	+	—	> .05	Not significant

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

In conclusion, strategic management and innovative leadership are significant predictors of SBM performance, with vision articulation, participatory decision-making, innovation, and community engagement emerging as the most influential dimensions. Effective SBM depends not only on decentralized structures but also on the quality of school leadership, highlighting the need to strengthen the competencies that have the greatest impact on school governance and performance.

It is recommended that professional development programs for school heads focus on enhancing strategic and innovative leadership skills, particularly in vision setting, participatory management, and community engagement. Schools should also foster stronger partnerships with teachers, parents, and community stakeholders to improve accountability, ownership, and resource mobilization. Additionally, education authorities may consider integrating these leadership competencies into SBM guidelines and policies to ensure more effective school management.

Compliance with ethical standards

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